CONSUMERS, PRODUCERS, AND CRITICAL BYSTANDERS:

Reflections of Rural School Dropout Youth on their Re-Construction of a "Need-To-Work" in a "New Economy" compared with an "Official Discourse" articulated in Manitoba government documents describing youth employment initiatives.

By Ernie Bart

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Abstract

This study examines the substance and nature of systemic barriers experienced by rural Southern Manitoba high school dropout youth in their endeavours to engage in employment opportunities coincidental with a "new" economy. Their narrative is compared with an "official" notion of employment promoted by government rhetoric and manifest in "transition-to-work" programs in Manitoba over the past decade. The discourse of these youth both contests and supports a dominant discourse along a number of lines including: non materialist values, work/life balance, labour as a noble cause, a reciprocal notion of work and learning, and community (not competition) at work. This discourse is in contrasts a "new" economy discourse characterised by emphasis on: more jobs, increased mobility of labour, lifelong learning, corporate alliances, proliferation of information communication technology, and global competition. The intent of this study was to characterise discourses in terms of elements common to each and to compare these commonalties to determine where they overlap and where they are in tension.

The research participants, four female and one male, were selected from three school divisions across rural Southern Manitoba, a region renowned for its traditional religious values. They ranged in age between 23 and 29 years and are completing their high school through Adult Education programs.

The recent proliferation of literature surrounding the "changing nature of work" provides a unique opportunity to investigate assumptions that are included under that heading (e.g. who is, and by what process does one come to be described as, a contributing member in our new global economy?). Programs representative of two different provincial governments since 1988 were selected to characterise an "official" discourse of employment in Manitoba. "Taking Charge!" was selected as representative of the Progressive Conservative government, 1988-1999. The "Manitoba Training Strategy" (2001) is used to identify elements of a discourse representative of the New Democratic Party from 1999 to the present.

This thesis argues that there is an "official" discourse surrounding work based on a generally uncontested notion a "new" global economy promoted by government, business and industry, and education, and this notion is challenged in this study. The challenge occurs on two levels, the theoretical and the practical. Theoretically, by the definition of discourse, a fully inclusive political community can never be realised since there must be a permanently a constitutive outside, an exterior to the community, that makes that community's existence possible. This occurs despite apparent endeavours by governments to be seen to construct one. On a practical level, the challenge is deepened by the differences between "transition-to-work" programs as planned and implemented compared with how these same programs are experienced by youth. This official discourse is contested by youth participating in this study based on their values, ideals, and experience as residents of Southern Manitoba at this time.

CHAPTER I

This study examines two discourses of work associated with the "new" global economy. The first, an 'official' or dominant discourse understood from a review of representative Manitoba Government documents and supporting literature. The second discourse is investigated through dialogue with youth that have dropped out of high school. For the purposes of this study, the narrative of youth constitutes an 'unofficial' or subordinate discourse. These discourses are not distinct they are fluid and do overlap, they embody both commonalties and differences.

Exploring both commonalties and differences of these discourses is based on the researcher's hunch that employment in the new economy no longer provides the worker with a stable identity. On the contrary, characteristics of the new economy, promoted by industry and agencies of government diminish feelings of self worth in the marketplace. Further, the ability of institutions (e.g. schools, labour unions) that have traditionally sheltered people against the sharp edge of a free market economy is being eroded. The discourses within any given culture not only serve to facilitate interactions among citizens in their ongoing work but also serve to keep everyone doing their work and valuing their contributions in the same way. The notion of discourse, at the very least, acknowledges that not everyone sees any given situation from the same perspective. The public discourse of government represents "a kind of political power which deliberately ignores individuals and looks only at the interests of totality" (Rabinow, 1984, p.14). Examining this public discourse as experienced by individuals who are meant to be the beneficiaries of public initiatives provides opportunity to critique the official discourse.

Background to the Study

As Career Internship Co-ordinator for the Prairie Rose School Division, I am privileged to work with high school students in establishing internships with business organisations. Students pursue the internship credit option for a variety of reasons including: career exploration, a means of gaining employment (part time or full time following graduation) and/or an opportunity to get out of "mind numbing" classes with the hopes that things are better "out there".

In 1999, I became involved in writing a proposal for an Adult Education program that would involve high school drop out youth in both classroom work and paid internship[1]. In drafting the proposal, I became aware of the myriad of criteria, specific to each of the funding agencies, which demanded accommodation in order for the project to proceed. Conspicuously absent from our deliberations were expectations articulated by potential clients. I wondered how well represented the personal needs of potential clients might be. I realised how little I actually knew about the circumstances in my own community that might motivate someone to register for the service we were designing and what obstacles he or she might encounter in participating.

The intent of the proposed transition-to-work program was to provide unemployed youth with opportunities to acquire knowledge and essential skills through a combination of pre-vocational orientation and internship. The program was approved, it ran for a six-month term but funding to continue this program was subsequently not renewed.

Statement of the Problem

Education stakeholders institute curricula based on an ideology that is generally an uncritically analysed genre (Selfe, 1999). These are persuasive (internally) and authoritative (externally in as much that they are often tied to educational funding) ideological discourse within the generally neglected but powerful genre of the public policy document. On the one hand, the document is bureaucratic rhetoric on the other, it shapes the vision of academic and community decision-makers. While the effects of government policy and initiatives are known to shape curriculum, little attention has been paid to how policy shapes the curriculum and to whose benefit. For example, the definition of literacy and the practices recognised as constituting "literate behaviour" have expanded to include 'technological literacy' creating in turn a new kind of illiteracy that may create barriers leading to discrimination, exclusion and poverty.

Government documents describing local initiatives and literature are analysed to determine underlying assumptions, ideology, and global pressures that influence job creation from an official perspective. Documents describing two specific initiatives, *"Taking Charge!"* and the *"Manitoba Training Strategy"* are analyzed. It is anticipated that specific characteristics of a new economy discourse will surface with sufficient clarity as to allow comparison with an "unofficial" one emanating from dialogue with research participants.

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[1] Typically, an internship involves unpaid work in exchange for on-the-job training. This proposal acknowledged the need for some income and participants were paid a stipend equivalent to minimum wage as they participated in the classroom pre-employment orientation and subsequent practicum.

Youth are bombarded daily with predictions of the number of times they will have to change occupations in their career and that in order to maintain their employment they must be prepared to leave their community and travel to where the work is. They are told that employers of lower-skilled workers such as retail, hospitality, and food services will probably become more automated in the near future leaving fewer and fewer places for those with little formal education and few high tech skills.

Youth are faced with expectations to become multi-skilled, possess high literacy, numeric and computer technology skills, and to demonstrate commitment to continual learning throughout their working lives. They are expected to gain these skills initially through formal education and subsequently through ongoing courses of study. Following the educational process results in full time and well-paid employment in an urban centre at a highly technological industry. To maintain their status as productive employees they are required to work long hours, in a highly competitive market since business interaction, with the support of ICT, now occurs 24 hours a day with competitors all across the world. That is the way it is supposed to work according to the official rhetoric.

So just what does happen to the youth that do not follow the model, the ones who, for starters, drop out of school? Open-ended interviews are utilised to explore the perceptions of the research participants in response to commonly held perceptions of the "new" economy. Dialogue with the research participants is analysed to establish characteristics of an "unofficial" Southern Manitoba discourse of work.

Research Question Statement

The purpose of this thesis was to examine the substance and nature of systemic barriers experienced by Southern Manitoba high school dropout youth in their endeavours to engage more fully in employment opportunities coincidental with a "new" economy. Specifically, this thesis examines the characteristics of the discourses of those experiencing adversity in participating in today's labour market as well as discourse characteristics presented by those who would prepare youth for that same labour market. This thesis goes on to compare work-related beliefs, experiences, and expectations expressed by select youth; with attributes and characteristics apparent in government supported transition-to-work initiatives in order to determine where these discourses are in alignment and where are they in tension.

Analysis of data gathered from documents describing government supported transition-to-work programs combined with a broader literature survey distinguishes elements common to an 'official' discourse. Commonalties within each discourse are compared and contrasted to gain some insight into the extent to which these discourses are in tension, overlap, and are intertwined.

As a means of approaching this question, the notion of a public official discourse of government and a private unofficial discourse of high school drop out youth are introduced.

Operational Definitions

Youth

The age range of youth is defined according to guidelines established by Human Resource Development Canada. Youth participants range in age between 23 and 30.

Discourse and New Economies

"Discourses are ways in which people co-ordinate and are co-ordinated by language, other people, objects, time, and places so as to take on a particularly socially recognisable identity" (Gee, 1996, p.131). A way of life emanates from a particular discourse and one's way of life is reflective of one's identity. Discourses then are more than ways of thinking and producing meaning, they constitute the nature of the body unconscious, conscious mind, and emotional life of the subjects they seek to govern (Mouffe, 1991, p.72). Hence competing discourses evolve.

> "*While politics aims at constructing a political community and creating a unity, a fully inclusive political community and a final unity can never be realised since there will be permanently a 'constitutive outside' an exterior to the community that makes its existence possible*"(Mouffe, 1991, p.78).

The narrative of research participants Doug, Beth, Anne, Marie, and Allison provides a unique glimpse into one such subordinate discourse. The extent to which each participant sees him/her self excluded or dominated is determined by his or her own particular view of society. Every discourse that constitutes a people always at the same time excludes a people, the 'excluded' are in fact necessary to the construction of the dominant culture. Discourse is described as subordinate or dominant to facilitate analysis. More accurately, a subordinate discourse operates within the dominant one.

Michel Foucault proposes that in every society, the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organised and redistributed according to a certain number of procedures, whose role is "to avert its powers and its dangers, to cope with chance events, to evade its ponderous, awesome materiality" (Lye, J., 1999, p.1).

A discourse may be understood in terms of the metaphors that are used to explain it. For example, the metaphor of globalisation is so pervasive and powerful that local governments and jurisdictions may appear currently to be powerless to resist this phenomenon. This "functionalist" perspective depicts organisations (large and small) as concrete entities populated by role-players and that the systematic study of these entities will give reliable and predictable knowledge about that organisation. This metaphor supports a claim that the social world is objective, real, concrete, that scientists stand outside of the world and record facts about it. This view enables the discourse of government to include reshaping people to fit into the new economy; it places populations inside and outside of an existing structure. Alternatively, and perhaps more telling of an "unofficial" discourse, organisations are not seen as objectively real phenomena but instead as constructs, products of individual agreement (Greenfield and Ribbins, 1993, pp.5-6). In other words, organisations are socially constructed and need to be understood in terms of human intention and history. Individuals themselves represent the reality of the organisation where consensual meaning making guides behaviour. The observer is always a participant in creating the reality that is being observed. In this discourse, organisations are inside people and are defined completely by them in the work, ideas in their heads, and their actions in the practical world. Discourse controls how organisations and institutions are viewed. Officially, the

workplace as an organisational site within a global economy may be represented as a concrete entity with a definable function, while unofficially this same place is understood by all those involved, in terms of a collection of impressions held by each individual.

Competing and conflicting discourses exist within any culture, one discourse must necessarily be understood in the context of another. The work of Derrida (1998) surrounding différance is particularly useful and informative in approaching the implications surrounding dominant and subordinate discourse. Derrida (1998) claims that only through différance is one thing itself and not another instead (e.g. the terms host and parasite, in which host is promoted ahead of the other. The second term is shown to constitute the conditions for the first). The notion of différance holds that any truth exists only relationally through différance. In approaching an understanding of discourse, the following section undertakes deconstruction, an affirmation that under layers of meanings are suppressed or assumed in order for a discourse to take its actual form (Pinkus, 1996, p.02). Deconstruction is undertaken as a means of exposing contradictions in a discourse that lays claim to the absolute.

An "official" discourse necessarily invokes repression and exclusion and is constructed by virtue of them. The concept of différance is useful in understanding exclusion and repression in terms of the construction of a discourse. Comparing discourses implies "both/and" logic instead of "either/or" logic when used to challenge the orthodoxy of the dominant belief. An official discourse bears within itself the necessity of its own critique (Pinkus, 1996, p.01).

New Economy

During the 1990's a preoccupation with the national debt and the elimination of deficit budgets in Manitoba and across Canada prevailed. The rhetoric of the balanced budget and fiscal crisis of the state was commonplace. In 1995, a cross Canada poll indicated that 86% of Canadians regardless of education or income controlling taxes and spending to reduce debt were a priority (Taylor, 2001, p.17). How these particular views came to dominate the political landscape is curious.

The Canada West Foundation (CWF), an organisation largely made up of business leaders from the western provinces, called for "reinventing" a government that was "bloated and inefficient". This image captured the imagination of the Canadian public and influenced a number of familiar initiatives including: contracting out to the private sector, entrepreneurship training for public servants, shift delivery of services to non-government organisations, and supporting services through user fees (Kachur, 1994).

The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA), made up of academics from Alberta, argued that the causes for rising debt were: inflated interest rates maintained by the Bank of Canada, failure to make wealthy individuals and corporations pay their fair share of taxes, and the drain on government revenues caused by high unemployment (Taylor, 2001, p.18). The CCPA promoted the view that controlling the deficit by making the tax system more progressive and stimulating economic growth through job creation would achieve better results than by deep cuts to service.

Debate over the root causes of debt and the deficit problem is founded in narratives that emphasise either "too much debt" or "too little revenue". The corporate community of Canada in the 90s promoted the "too much debt" agenda and the provincial governments of the day followed suite. The 'new' economy discourse clearly promoted a corporate for-profit agenda. At the same time, institutions involved in production of goods or services, or preparing people for work were faced with a number of considerations that were neither previously present nor included in a traditional discourse of work. These "new" considerations included; ecological considerations, instant access to information, a more informed citizenry, and an expectation for equity of opportunity for everyone.

Governments (under pressure and with the support of large corporate employers) pursued economic policy (e.g. free trade, deregulation, new technology, and privatisation) that resulted in many more low-paying, less-skilled, and part-time jobs, despite all the rhetoric about the demand for highly skilled workers. Critics of this characterisation of the new global economy predict that there will be far fewer workers required in maintaining equivalent levels of production and services in the future (Rifkin,1995, pp.166-167).

Interpretations of the "new" economy are highly contingent and require more than a collection of accumulated government survey facts (e.g. how many high-tech jobs remain unfilled in the ICT industry). The framework, or discourse, predetermines what is fact and how these facts are organised, and for what purpose. For example, providing incentives for large business to establish in rural areas then developing employment programs that prepare under-employed and uneducated youth to participate in minimum wage part-time jobs in these organisations exposes a particular discourse.

Participation in the New Economy

The recent proliferation of literature surrounding the "changing nature of work" provides a unique opportunity to investigate assumptions that our culture includes under this heading and who and by what process that one comes to be described as a contributing member of our free market society. Officially there are two ways to participate in the new economy, through employment and through formal education. These are addressed separately in the following section.

Employment

Current public policy is founded in an ideology supportive of the development of a training strategy to create a workforce sufficient in number, with globally competitive skills, so as to ensure provincial economic success. (Manitoba Training Strategy, 2001, p.02). The emphasis on "sufficient in number to ensure economic success" is quite clear.

From the earliest times, cultures have defined themselves or have been defined by the processes and products of the labour undertaken by their citizens (e.g. hunters, gathers, farmers, craftsmen, assembly line workers, and knowledge workers). When a dramatic shift in the kind of work that is valued or required by a culture to remain viable occurs (be it war, climatic change, new technology, etc.) then a corresponding way of framing that shift is likely to evolve. Before the behaviours of citizens in that culture can change, corresponding changes in discourse hence socialisation must occur (Casey, 1993, p.162). Western culture has, historically, relied heavily on a public school curriculum to socialise youth into the patterns of valued work. This trend appears to be further intensifying with

pressure from business and industry (Taylor, 2001, pp.40-51). Views on the role of curriculum in this socialisation range widely from the notion of the classroom as "battlefields of cultural wars" identified by Barlow and Robertson in their book <u>Class Warfare: The Assault on Canada's Schools</u> to the classrooms as a kind of benign environment where "students are allowed to choose their own paths in life" (Warrick, 1995, p.5).

"In most western countries the claim to work is regarded as a fundamental human right and unemployment is seen as a serious social problem. Yet work is often perceived as "unwanted painful toil to be avoided as much as possible" (Casey, 1993, p.150). Casey further claims that "the need to work is a socially constructed need, and that

> "*socialisation into the habits and processes of industrial production has been so successful that a breach in that experience for workers is experienced as a cultural abrogation and cause for considerable personal and social problems. Even in the situation of high redundancy pay outs and unemployment benefits workers prefer to participate in the paid workforce and demonstrate this need in a variety creative responses including accepting lower wages and co-operative take over of a company where they could remain employed*" (Casey,1993, p.151).

During periods of high unemployment, management has been known to use the threat of 'lay-off' and unemployment to counter worker demands for benefits and wages demonstrating how strong the socially constructed need to work actually is.

Throughout history, one's labour has been intimately linked with the provision of goods and services (and income) essential to the maintenance of human life. Today, one's occupation determines the extent to which life will be consumed by a struggle for maintenance. The availability of work as well as differential economic rewards attached to occupations, establish differential life chances and opportunities, to receive an education, to be healthy, to enjoy leisure activities, and in general to acceptable standard

of living. Official rhetoric associates the improvement of a 'standard of living' with high levels of production. Approaching the "standard of living" as though it were an experience common to all citizens is contested by those who, despite their labour, are unable to raise their economic level above the poverty line.

The most obvious function of work is an economic one. An 'instrumental' orientation toward work holds that 'life begins when work ends'. Alternatively, work may be described as "any activity which results in the provision of goods and services for others" (Rinehart, 1975, p.6). The second definition, more 'interpretative' seeks to include the personal and social ramifications of work (i.e. people seek jobs with which they can identify and from which they can derive self-esteem). It is apparent that people attach both economic and intrinsic significance to work. These are not seen as contradictory orientations and the boundaries between work and life can become quite blurred. The instrumental orientation to work is a practical response to the way work is structured in society; the interpretative one is a yearning for what work could be. In identifying characteristics of discourses of work attention must be paid to who is defining work for whom and for what purposes.

Education

"Participation" in the new economy increasingly involves formal education. Employers have influenced and continue to sway educational reform through their promotion of human capital theory (Cheal,1963, p.163). The human capital discourse holds that a society with more formally educated workers will be a more productive society. A relationship between more education and increased earnings at both the individual and

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societal level is assumed. At the same time, advocates of the 'knowledge' economy predict that the emerging economy will require large numbers of highly educated workers (Bell, 1973, p.359). Claims by employers about the poor quality of educational 'outputs' are often founded in a combination of 'human capital theory' and 'knowledge economy assumptions' (Taylor, 2001, p.27).

Increasing rates of underemployment despite increased levels of school attainment and government investment in education have increased challenges to the assertions about societal return on investment from education. 'Human capital' advocates respond in two ways, by suggesting that improved quality of schooling and encouraging 'lifelong learning' will revitalise economic growth, and that those with more education still do better economically than those with lower levels. Employers are critical of the values that they perceive are being promoted in schools, claiming that the decline of 'a work ethic' is cause for concern. For many jobs, the relationship between education and work appears to be both weak and variable from one industry to another (Levin, 1995, p.14).

Critics of the discourse of education for economic prosperity challenge several of the assumptions of the 'knowledge economy/human capital proponents.' The claim that the 'post industrial economy requires large numbers of highly skilled people' is countered by evidence of changes in the workplace are much more modest than initially predicted (Livingston, 1999, p.162). The assumption that there is a shortage of skilled labour is challenged by statistics that demonstrate that Canadian universities graduate more science and engineering students than either Germany or Japan (Barlow and Robertson, 1994, p.48). Presently, human labour in the production process is being reduced and devalued.

A new generation of intelligent machines and automated systems of control are replacing workers in staggering numbers on countless tasks (Rifkin, 1995, p.3). The 'education for economic prosperity discourse' is challenged by the claim that the problem resides more in the growing gap between peoples learning efforts/knowledge and the number of jobs requiring this level of skill that are available. This discourse obscures the general situation by emphasising skill shortages, claims about poor quality of job entrants, and credential inflation (Taylor, 2001, p.31).

Schools have a significant role to play in critiquing 'globalisation' and the 'new economy' rather than trying to keep these phenomena at bay (de Alba, A., Gonzalez, E., Lankshear, C. & Peters, M., 2000). By gaining an understanding of the current conditions one is better situated to resist alienation, cultural loss, family fragmentation, and dependence. What students need to know today is vastly different to what was required in the not so distant past. The conception of literacy developed by means of provincial/ national curricula and standards is "school literacy". School literacy encompasses those skills that most often lead to success in school (e.g. correct spelling, being able to write five part essays, being able to read and write for no obvious meaningful social purpose, etc.). Research shows that school literacy on its own does not necessarily increase success rates in literacy practices in 'out-of-school' contexts (Levin, 1995, p.14). Critical literacy approaches to education have demonstrated that "the selection and organisation of school knowledge contains dispositions and values that handicap certain groups while they benefit others" (Gee, 1996, p.151).

There is an increasing public expectance that credible "learning" is not restricted to schools, and that "work" is much more than mindless drudgery. On the contrary, where the market environment is turbulent (e.g. Information Communication Technology), employees are paid based on their ability to learn and adapt, not for what they have learned in some remote classroom. Hence, school and work remain intertwined but not in the traditional cause/effect sense. The belief that a "good" education is a precursor to a "meaningful" job, security, and the 'good' life may no longer hold (Levin, p.16, 1995).

New Economy Skills

According to Jeffry Piker, transition from school to work goes so poorly for many youth because standard curriculum tends to evade serious regard of what employment is really like by diminishing the labourer's role. When the curriculum 'about work' excludes the workers themselves from the process and content of what is being taught and learned, skills become more real than workers in the same way that productivity is seen to be more important than work (Piker, 1993, p.88). The objectification and externalisation of "working knowledge" that has characterised schooling for work in Canadian society has resulted in a number of contradictions that make educational reform difficult to achieve.

The discourse of management differs from that of labour. For example, the popular term 'skills' represents disembodied action, where as "technique" provides an alternative indicating a form of interaction between tool, environment and other workers. The term 'technique' is commonly used in labour education curriculum.

Piker (1993, p.93) proposes that characteristics of a worker centred curriculum that starts with a genuine respect for "working knowledge" and for the interests and concerns of people who possess it. He claims that "fellow learners are viewed as fellow workers", that "labour education has produced for itself a form of teaching and learning that locates learners competencies, knowledge, experiences and potential for concrete action at the centre of the process. The worker/learner is put at the centre of the action and the learner is presumed to have dignity and power. In a labour centred curriculum the teacher/learner hierarchy is restructured so that mutuality is present because the teacher/trainer is also worker. It has emphasised the importance of empathy as an instructional skill. Learners are called "participants" not students. A significant challenge for the worker/trainer is to integrate the discussion with workplace practices. The notion of "expertise" is thus demystified.

The analytic ability of the worker on the work site is an expectation rather than viewing the worker as non-theoretical (monkey sees monkey do.) Workers are seen to combine the practical and the theoretical in the completion of their work. The separation of the 'theoretical' and 'practical' is a construct invented by curriculum developers for their own purposes and has little to do with what is required 'on the job'. Labour curriculum has discarded the "hands-on/heads-on distinction that traditionally devalued the work and complexity of working knowledge of working people.

Recent and rapid development in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) fuel this tension. ICT is seen to threaten traditional institutions by 'transforming' social, economic, and cultural processes rather than making 'cautious incremental'

improvements in the delivery of services (e.g. education, health and medicine, e-commerce, tourism, access to government, community networks, etc.) Information Communication Technology has contributed to the number and the diversity of people who are informed by and participate in the dialogue on all issues in our culture. Rapid development in ICT has not caused this conversation, but it surely has influenced what is· said, to whom, how it is said, and who is heard. ICT, as an educational tool, has drawn attention to our own need as a culture to examine our own discourse of work.

Shosana Zuboff claims that "Learning is a new form of labour. It's no longer a separate activity that occurs before one enters the workforce or in remote classroom settings, learning is the heart of productive activity" (Zuboff, 1988, p.234).

Limitations of the Study

There are clearly some assumptions associated with this study. An understanding of the official discourse on the new economy has been limited to analysis of two provincial government transition-to-work programs. These were/are not the only initiatives undertaken by the government in this regard but were determined to be sufficiently representative so as to provide a sense of the government's response to this issue based on its ideology. Details of the criteria for their selection are included in the Methods section.

The subordinate or unofficial discourse determined from interviews with five Southern Manitoba youth is limited to a very particular, specific, and perhaps unique population. There are no attempts to generalise these observations beyond the narrow confines of this

study. Nonetheless there is an assumption that embedded in their narrative are common

characteristics telling of a common discourse. Observations on the différance in

discourses present opportunities to develop a clearer understanding of one discourse in

light of the other.

Analysis of discourse as though each were separate entities and not profoundly

interdependent as illustrated by Derrida's "différance" creates an illusion. In as much as

discourses overlap, analysis of each separate discourse is necessary. However, in the

final analysis, each discourse must be understood in the context of the other.

Delimitations of the Study

From the outset, there are no expectations that the findings associated with this research

may, in any way, be generalised beyond the narrow geographic boundaries of a region of

southern Manitoba. Further, the foreshadowing questions and commonalties that do arise

are not intended to suggest that the two discourses examined are the only discourse

options. There are indeed many discourses, both official and unofficial. The titles

official and unofficial discourses are general categories into which variations are roughly.

organised. This study will, if successful, draw attention to this phenomenon.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW
Discourse of a New Global Economy

This chapter presents an image of a "new" economy drawn from a review of literature and the rhetoric of governments, business, and industry, and is referred to as the "official discourse" throughout this paper. Globalisation, the driving force behind this new economy, is explored in terms of a local government's ability to resist the destructive forces and promote the positive aspects particularly as these affect opportunities for youth employment. Two programs representative of successive Manitoba governments[2], Progressive Conservative Party and the New Democratic Party are reviewed to identify characteristics of an "official discourse" that will be useful in determining any degree of difference with the "unofficial discourse" based on interviews with southern Manitoba youth.

Historical Context and Description

The term "globalisation" was first coined in the 1980s, but the concept stretches back centuries. Russian economist, Nikolai Kondratieff (Kondratieff, 1984) hypothesised that the progress of global capitalism is marked by long-term "cycles." Based on the claim globalisation began 100 years ago and this trend continues today with international trade and migration. This theory proposes a certain predictability and inevitability in the way economies unfold.

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[2] In 1999 the NDP were elected after more than a decade of PC government led by Gary Filmon.

Kondratieff's theory provides a compelling historical perspective. He proposes that cycles lasting 50-60 years mark economic activity through development and boom to recession. The first cycle was based on steam power (1787-1842), the second on railways (1842-1897), the third on electricity and the motor car (1897-1939), and the fourth on the cold war, electronics, and synthetic materials (1939-1989). We are, by this theory, currently in the fifth new economy characterised by PCs, ICT, and entertainment. Kondratieff argues that one of the forces which initiates a cycle is a large number of important discoveries and inventions that occur during a depression at the end of a cycle and are usually applied on a large scale at the beginning of the next upswing. (Norton, 1999).

In summary, successive Kondratieff cycles illustrate an upward curve characterised by rapid development of a new technology (e.g. information communication technology), followed by a flattening of activity, then a decrease in productivity while the next generation of technology is still in its experimental stage. This cycle is typically followed by a prolonged deflationary period. (Bello, 2001)

By way of example, the Great Depression and World War II (1930s and 40s) marked the dip in the last cycle. Economists speculate that the ascent of the current wave began in the 1950s and the crest was reached in the 1980s and 1990s. The profitable exploitation of the post-war advances in the energy, automotive industry, petrochemical, and manufacturing ended while information and communication technology was still at a relatively early stage. Information and communications technologies began to integrate in the mid seventies with innovations such as the modem and the fax machine.

Innovations resulting from the integration of these two industries are far more significant than any invention attributed to one or the other.

Economists continue to debate whether the economic rally in the late 1990s was a transcendence of Kondratieff's cycle theory, or the last phase of the current cycle before reaching the predictable dip in that cycle. The official response of government varies depending on whether the economy is viewed as a "re-born economy", fitting with the Kondratieff cycles or as a "new" and transcendent economy with unprecedented characteristics.

The rapid development of knowledge in all fields, the proliferation of communications technology, and the globalisation of markets for goods, services, and ideas drive the speed and scale of this change. Despite convincing theories, where we are in this evolutionary process is uncertain. What we do know is the effects of globalisation are numerous and extensive.

Fabric of a New Economy Discourse

This section attempts to ascertain differences and commonalties in approach to labour force development between Manitoba's two provincial governments from 1988. Two initiatives designed to respond to labour market demands associated with the 'new' economy are compared in order to a) determine if there is a recognisable difference between the two governments in their approach to labour force development and b) assumptions held in common by both initiatives that characterise a 'new' economy as understood by the party politic.

Firstly, *Taking Charge!* was promoted by the Progressive Conservative government as a program model designed to change a "culture of poverty" (HRDC Formative Evaluation, 2000, p.14). The first phase of this initiative focused on "connecting single parents with employment under the threat of removing social support benefits" (p.14) with the intent of applying this same model to other at-risk groups.

The second initiative to be reviewed is the *"Manitoba Training Strategy"* introduced under the New Democratic Party in 2001. In March, 2000 the Manitoba Century Summit brought together leaders from Manitoba business, labor, aboriginal, education, community leaders, and government, to discuss expanding economic opportunity and building future prosperity in the province. Summit participants concluded that the development of a workforce in sufficient numbers and with the necessary skills is critical to provincial economic success. The inclusion of greater numbers of Aboriginal Manitobans into the workforce, the attraction of immigrants, and encouraging youth to remain in Manitoba were identified as important in building workforce capacity, and the need for a workforce with globally competitive skills was emphasized. (Government of Manitoba, Manitoba Training Strategy, p.2).

"Taking Charge!" (TC!) was developed by the Manitoba Progressive Conservative Government (Department of Family Services and Department of Education and Training) in partnership with Human Resources Development Canada and implemented between 1994 and 1999. TC! was designed to enhance employability of single parents on income assistance through training and/or work experience. TC! was promoted as a highly

innovative program because of its endeavour to forge partnerships with the community broadly defined to include business, social services, educational institutions and the non-profit sector. With a budget of $26 million over a five-year period it was the intent of the TC! program to test this integrated model's ability to deliver services at a reduced cost (HRDC Formative Evaluation, 2000, p.1). Two simultaneous developments associated with the "new" economy encouraged the creation of *"Taking Charge!"*. An economic recovery predicted by the Conference Board of Canada, was expected to result in increased numbers of job opportunities in Manitoba and Manitoba's "Making Welfare Work" initiative had identified income assistance recipients who were seen to have few barriers to re-employment to fill many of these jobs.

The Progressive Conservative government of Premier Gary Filmon (1988) advanced two arguments that distinguished their economic strategy and created a context for the welfare-to-work transition program to be examined. Firstly, the provincial deficit had to be cut and eventually eliminated, and tax increases had to be halted and reversed. Secondly, the importance of export markets to Manitoba's economy given the new opportunities created by the Canada-US Free trade Agreement. The strategy to reduce taxes by cutting public spending was a markedly different strategy than that used by the previous NDP government. Rather than using government spending as the primary means of driving economic growth, the Conservative government opted to promote economic growth by creating a more competitive environment for private investment by increasing exports to the US (Black and Silver, p.4). Government actions, associated with this ideology, had both direct and indirect consequences on social services, health,

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and education. Funding support was drastically reduced in a bid by government to pay down the deficit (Black and Silver, 1999, p.23).

Taking Charge!

Taking Charge! (TC!) formally came into existence in 1994 as a joint federal-provincial project under the Strategic Initiatives outlined in the federal budget of 1994. The federal government (HRDC) committed funds between fiscal years 1994/95 and 1998/99 to support a number of provincial government programs (Department of Family Services and Department of Education and Training). This project encompassed both social security and labour market interventions in response to a changing labour market landscape.

An important objective of TC! was to test a model for combining services within government and to forge partnerships with the business community. (HRDC Formative Evaluation, 2000, p.29).

TC! operated within the Employment and Income Assistance delivery system for Manitoba. With some exceptions, the "Making Welfare Work" initiative of the PC government required everyone on income assistance to enter an employability enhancement program (HRDC Formative Evaluation, 2000, p.2). Clients had a work expectation attached to their eligibility for income assistance and faced sanctions in the form of reductions in payments if they did not respond. The enhancement measures range from job search instruction and brief skills refreshers for those judged to be employment ready, to more substantial academic and life skills training for those that face greater

barriers to economic independence. TC! was described by the Taking Charge! program

evaluators, as the most innovative employment enhancement measures. The model was

further praised by this group applicability for assisting other groups including youth

facing job entry barriers (HRDC Formative Evaluation, 2000, p.7).

TC! program objectives fell into three general categories, service, employment, and

social security reforms, as part of an integrated strategy. The service related objectives

included; cost reduction for support services offered by governments by reducing

duplication and increasing the participation of the private and voluntary sectors;

increasing the access to and responsiveness of services through the delivery of federal,

provincial, municipal, community and business partnerships, providing programming and

support services to participants to become more job ready, secure/maintain employment,

and to increase earnings and express increased satisfaction over service levels.

Employment related objectives included reducing income assistance costs by increasing

the employment activity and earning potential of participants, increase duration of labour

force attachment by project participants, and meeting employers' needs for job-ready

employees. Finally, social security reform related objectives included improving the

long-term prospects for income assistance recipients by breaking the cycle of poverty,

and identifying further considerations for social security reform (HRDC Summative

Evaluation 2000, pp.2-3).

Employment facilitators within TC! completed assessments, prepared job plans, and

matched the client with an appropriate intervention. One basic feature of this

employment training system in Manitoba was the assessment of income assistance clients

in terms of their "employability level". In theory, Level 1 clients are "employment ready", Level 2 clients are "training ready", and Level 3 clients lack education, work experience, and have personal problems that prevent them from gaining a job in the short term. Once a client's level has been determined, an independence plan was constructed to assist them to find and retain work as fast as possible (HRDC Formative Evaluation, 2000, pp.25-26). A key feature of the TC! model was the creation of an individualised plan (Personal Job Plan) that was to lead to training or employment, with ongoing support throughout this process (e.g. in-house day care, financial support for transportation, an executive closet available for clients to obtain appropriate clothing for job interviews) (HRDC Formative Evaluation, 2000, p.27).

As designed, *Taking Charge!* proposed ongoing contact between the youth client and an adult over an extended period of time to increase the overall effectiveness of this program. The extended social contact was intended to provide participants with a structure as well as motivation to do well and to persist.

It must be noted that the three objectives for this program are aimed at reducing dependency on the welfare system through attachment with the labour force (HRDC Formative Evaluation, 2000, p.39). Increasing the productivity cycle of the labour force as a means of boosting economic growth was included as a consequence of the former. In other words, this program would benefit industries that in turn would contribute to provincial economic growth and eventually lead to the improved conditions for labourers. This program continues to exist today providing some services to single parents. It operates on a reduced budget provided by the provincial government alone.

Manitoba Training Strategy

The *Manitoba Training Strategy* identifies three goals in responding to Manitoba's labor context to support economic growth and social well being (Gov. of Manitoba, Manitoba Training Strategy, 2001, p.2). The first, to build a skilled workforce aligned with labour market needs and emerging opportunities. Secondly, to enhance access to relevant learning opportunities for all Manitobans, and finally, to create an integrated and high quality education and training system.

Manitoba Training Strategy (MTS) identified Manitoba trends, consistent with trends nationally and globally over the past ten years, as a point of departure. In Manitoba, there is a continued long-term shift toward a service economy including health and education. The manufacturing sector has become more export oriented, increasing by 22% while decreasing 11% in non-durable goods (Gov. of Manitoba, Manitoba Training Strategy, 2001, p.5).

The *Manitoba Training Strategy* emphasises that "educational attainment is correlated with labour market success"(Gov. of Manitoba, Manitoba Training Strategy, 2001, p.5). Statistics indicate that over the past 15 years, high-school dropouts are increasingly worse off while those who have higher degrees are increasingly better off. *Manitoba Training Strategy* concludes that skills learned in school are vocationally relevant and because the possession of higher degrees are seen by employers as implying the possession of other qualities – intelligence, motivation, persistence, and the capacity for hard work – they are also useful in the labour market. Further, "once a student has dropped out of school, the

evidence indicates that the earlier an intervention occurs, the better". Once a young person has left school, government supports are limited to job search assistance, work experience (job creation) projects, wage subsidy programs, and training programs. Given the importance of education to employability and lifetime earnings, an obvious strategy, according to this initiative, for helping high school dropouts is to help them go back to school. While evidence suggests that high school academic upgrading on its own produces little in the way of employment and earnings gains, a high school diploma can . provide additional options since so many other programs require a diploma as a prerequisite. It enables entry to post-secondary education that does increase subsequent employment opportunity (Gov. of Manitoba, Manitoba Training Strategy, 2001, p.5).

Employment rates in Manitoba's labour market have improved significantly over the last few years, to the point where the unemployment rate is the lowest since mid 1970s. As the province approaches full employment, shortages of skilled workers are being reported more frequently. The shift from high unemployment to very low unemployment is changing the direction of labour market policy from job creation to dealing with skill shortages (Gov. of Manitoba, Manitoba Training Strategy, 2001, p.7). There are increasing demands for workers in both high and low skill areas. Occupations in high demand of workers who have high skill levels include information system project managers and technical sales specialists. Workers with low skills in high demand include construction labourers. This study indicates that in 1999, 80% of Manitoba's employed workers had full time jobs, of those employed in part-time work, 78% did so by choice.

The average duration of unemployment in Manitoba has declined from 19 to 15 weeks between 1989 and 1999 (Gov. of Manitoba, Manitoba Training Strategy, 2001, p.6).

The *Manitoba Training Strategy* charges Manitoba Education and Youth with a great deal of the responsibility in facilitating individuals, workers and employers in achieving their learning and performance goals. One of the mandates of the *Manitoba Training Strategy* is to build a skilled workforce aligned with labour market needs and emerging opportunities (Gov. of Manitoba, Manitoba Training Strategy, 2001, p.8).

The *Manitoba Training Strategy* proposes to make adult upgrading more responsive to learners and employers (Gov. of Manitoba, Manitoba Training Strategy, 2001, p.8). Strategies for accomplishing this include; strengthening connections between Adult Learning Centres (ALCs), literacy and post secondary programs, and employment. The Manitoba Training Strategy promises support to ALCs that provide quality programming relevant to community needs and to support programs that offer flexibility in course schedules evening and weekend offerings. Adult learners pursuing a Mature Student Diploma are encouraged to include Senior Years Apprenticeship Option credits in their programs.

Finally the Manitoba Training Strategy promotes investigation into the development of a province wide common framework for "essential skills" and "employment preparation programs" (Gov. of Manitoba, Manitoba Training Strategy, 2001, p.11).

Framework of a "New" Economy Discourse

This section sets out to establish characteristics of an official 'new' economy discourse.

Reference to the 'new' economy, includes a widely shared perceptions and generally

uncontested notions of a working environment in which valued labour is increasingly

urban, intellectual, automated, computer controlled and requiring less physical

involvement than ever before. Workers, according to this discourse, need to be personally

committed to investing in the development of their 'employability skills' through a formal

process of lifelong learning. This discourse suggests that globalisation is so pervasive

and irresistible a force that local governments are powerless to alter its course

(Government of Canada, Initiative on the New Economy, 2000, p.1).

The following section identifies a number of characteristics upon which a common

perception of the 'new' economy rests. These characteristics are founded in some

interesting assumptions. First of all, in the 'new' economy, some workers will be in

higher demand and more valued than others (Government of Manitoba, 2002, High

Demand Occupations of Manitoba). Workers are expected to adjust their training and

location to fluctuations in this demand. With the adoption of freer trade policies and

reduced geographic trade barriers, the work often occurs far from where the product or

services are required. Production occurs where the cheapest resources and least

competition are available. Traditional roles and responsibilities of government, private

enterprise, and labour have been blurred. Strategic partnerships are formed that often

result in an improved economic bottom line but disadvantage the worker through lower

wages and benefits. The use of Information Communication Technology contributes to the increasing pace of production, marketing and distribution of goods and services.

Occupational Change: High Skill and Low Skill Jobs are Increasing

A world of the new economy is one in which Information Communications Technology (ICT) promotes global competition - not just for clothing and entertainment electronics, but also for insurance, banking, and other non-material supports (Chinien, Moratis, Boutin, and van Baalen, 2002, p.7). Investment, particularly in ICT, buys new ideas not new machines, the machines themselves because of an ever-shortening life cycle to obsolescence, are a less secure investment. Consequently, innovation is more highly valued than mass production. Production systems in this economy are computer controlled and designed to be flexible enough to respond to the unique demands of individual consumers rather than relying on traditional marketing strategies that create massive demands for an identical product. This economy supports "knowledge-based employment, employment characterised by "flexible responsive production, dedicated to excellence and customer satisfaction, decentralised control, increased co-operation between labour and management" (Chinien, Moratis, Boutin, and van Baalen, 2002, p.37). While the number of high skilled jobs has increased, so have the number of jobs requiring few skills (Gov. of Man., Manitoba Training Strategy, 2001, p.6). In some situations the two trends are related, for example, numerically controlled machines (automation) removes control over decision making on the shop floor and gives maximum control to management. Trade workers (e.g. printers, machinists) once enjoyed considerable autonomy based on the expertise they required for completing tasks

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(Ritzer,1977, pp.252-255), automation and computer controls has replaced the tasks and reduced the autonomy. Hence some de-skilling is occurring.

While technological advancement has played a significant role in the de-skilling of traditional trade processes, it is not the only force at work here. Governments are under constant pressure to maintain employment levels and employ political strategies that also have an impact on the nature of the work that is available to citizens within their jurisdictions.

Black and Chernomas (2000, p.2), suggest that "Balanced budget" legislation introduced by the Filmon Progressive Conservative government in 1995 constrained economic activity at that time so as to focus economic development on "getting big" and "adding more jobs" even if the jobs were low paid and poor quality jobs. Black and Chernomas argue that getting more jobs does little to help residents earn higher incomes and enjoy a better quality of life. Black and Chernomas offer critique of the former government, there is little evidence to indicate that economic development priorities of the current New Democratic Party government is shifting its focus from getting "more jobs" to boosting minimum incomes and creating better paid jobs and working conditions for Manitoba labourers. In 2000, the Doer government chose not to increase the minimum wage to $6.25 as recommended by the Minimum Wage Board (Scarth, 2000, p.1). While it is true that young people have always faced the formidable challenge of discovering their capabilities and skills, they must now also try and guess which skills will still be in demand in the future. Lifelong learning, self-paced learning, on-site education, just-in-

time education, any place any time, ability to innovate and learn, learning how to learn are all terms used to describe "Essential Skills for the New Economy" (Chinien, Moratis, Boutin, and van Baalen, p.36). As defined, neither on-site training nor formal courses work alone can develop the generic "essential/employability" skills required of workers in the new economy.

Human Resource Development Canada identified a list of "enabling skills" required of workers to compete successfully for employment in the global economy. These essential skills include ability to read, write, calculate and execute computer applications, the ability to think, analyse and solve problems, learn independently, exercise responsibility, adapt to a range of situations, communicate effectively, and work in a team environment (HRDC, Essential Skills, 2000, pp.1-4).

Finally, supply-side measures (preparing youth), on their own, cannot solve youth labour market problems. Parallel strategies on the demand-side (employment), to ensure the availability of and access to employment opportunities, must be part of any coherent set of labour market policies. In this respect, government partners with the private sector in the provision of job opportunities for youth. With better preparation, youth will obtain and retain employment – but only if jobs exist.

Increased Mobility of Labour and Dislocation

The expansion of the free market systems is central to the new "global" economy. The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 ended, at least temporarily, the debate between market economies and planned ones. The new economy, claim its advocates, is about the unprecedented power of global markets to innovate, to create new wealth, and to distribute it more equitably.

The production and the distribution of goods and services are, in this ideal, unrestricted by political or geographic boundaries. Correspondingly, a mobile labour force with the right skills and at the right price is required. *"To succeed in the global, knowledge based economy, where highly skilled people are more mobile than ever before, a country must produce, attract and retain a critical mass of well-educated and well-trained people"* (Government of Canada, 2000, Achieving Excellence..., p.8).

Rapid pace, dynamism, and fierce levels of competition are all distinguishing characteristics of new economy businesses. In Manitoba's new economy, the organisations that prosper and grow are able to respond to increasingly shorter product life cycles, greater consumer choice, while maintaining or reducing prices. The fast growing entrepreneurial companies ("gazelles"[3]) attribute their successes to several factors, networking/co-operation (strategic partnerships and networking), manage information to maintain a constantly innovative state through ICT, and constantly innovate to meet individual consumer needs (Chinien, Moratis, Boutin, and van Baalen, 2002, p.9).

On the human side, employees experience high stress levels from working conditions that include insecurity, instability, as well as economic risks. Bruce Alexander describes the dislocation in human terms... "In order for free markets to be free, the exchange of labour, land, currency, and consumer goods must not be encumbered by elements of psychosocial integration such as clan loyalties, village responsibilities, guild or union rights, charity, family obligations, social roles or religious values" (Alexander, 2001, p.2).

Technological Literacy: Lifelong Learning and Essential Employability Skills

An illustration of the federal government's perspective on work and learning is represented in "Initiative on the New Economy 2000". This document identifies education, and lifelong learning as one of the four research priorities. Educational institutions are expected *"to fulfil major economic and social goals, to educate citizens to respond to the needs of a knowledge intensive and technology based labour market, and to prepare individuals for learning and acquiring new skills throughout their lifetimes"* (Gov. of Can., Initiative on the New Economy, 2000, p.10). This discourse of work supports the view that the future of jobs and the economic health of our country depend on producing highly skilled workers. The Standards, Planning and Analysis Division of Human resources Development Canada has developed 'Essential Skills Profiles' claiming that "workers who have these 'essential skills' at the levels required for their desired occupations will have "enhanced employability" opportunity (HRDC, 2000, p.2).

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[3] companies with a sales growth of at least 20% per year for consecutive years

'Technological literacy' is promoted as an academic standard in today's free market society. "Free" market society, ironically, require the on going presence of powerful control systems including carefully engineered management, advertising, taxation, and mass media techniques that keep people buying, selling, working, borrowing, lending, and consuming at optimal rates, suppressing any new social structures that spontaneously arise in modern families, offices, or factories (Beniger, 1986). Government documents reviewed suggest that school curriculum factor rather heavily in this process.

Corporate Alliances: Private Sector, Government, and Labour Partnerships
Participation in production, where information is the raw material, requires a skill set that conventional education alone cannot guarantee to provide. The mandate of education is increasingly defined in terms of vocationally oriented outcomes including "higher order thinking skills" and looks to partnerships between education, government, and industry to deliver. Information is increasingly easy to produce and to access, but more difficult to control than the material goods of previous economies. ICT can process and transport 'ideas' anywhere, cheaply and almost instantly. The basis of industrial power, production and distribution, are increasingly taken for granted while innovation and marketing are increasingly valued.

There is evidence that rather than co-operating, industry and government/education continue to find ways to blame each other for not doing enough to solve the "skilled labour" problem. Governments continue to measure there successes in terms "employment rates" and "enrolments" in formal education/training programs

(Government of Manitoba, Throne Speech, 2002). Industry emphasises the shortage highly skilled labour and is critical of an education system inability to respond to rapid technological change (Taylor, 2000, p.40). Meanwhile, the vulnerability of those who labour for minimum wage remains high, regardless of how much education they have or how "essential" the work that they perform is.

Information Communication Technology

Information, the raw material of the Age of Information, is more widely accessible to all. With globalisation and the new economy comes the promise of increasing information exchange resulting in greater understanding, acceptance, and inclusion of other cultures, allowing democracy to triumph over autocracy and acceptance to replace racism. Economically, information technology provides an alternative pathway to affluence to one followed by founders of previous industries in steel and glass. Production plants manufacturing 'concepts' are prolific, as they do not have the prohibitive production line costs associated with traditional manufacturing. Microsoft owner Bill Gates, reputedly the world's richest man, provides an example of this fundamental shift in the values of capitalism. The rules of competition are changing to favour companies like Microsoft over paragons of the industrial age (e.g. IBM or General Motors). Microsoft's rise to economic power is attributed to Bill Gate's ingenuity surrounding the 'commodification' of information in the new economy.

Three trends that contribute to the "information technology revolution" are the world-wide proliferation of computing devises, dramatically decreasing costs of computing, and

decreasing data costs (Chinien, Moratis, Boutin, and van Baalen, p.10). Information communication technology (ICT) is seen to be one of the major driving forces of the new economy.

New information and communication technologies (ICT) is having a dramatic effect on how youth are being prepared for work as well as in defining the meaning and purpose of work. The "human capital" discourse is tied to economic change, and it calls on individuals to invest in themselves, or for governments to share in the costs of education and training with private sector partners. In times of low unemployment, school attainment levels affirm official assertions about the societal return on investment from education. Where once a strong back and a will to work guaranteed steady employment for the less-educated, youth now find themselves in low-paid, high-turnover service sector jobs. Human capital development is promoted as a critical element in maintaining an economic competitive edge requiring workers to not only compete their routine tasks, but to participate in improving the processes, products, and services in which they are involved. Human capital, effective and efficient "performance" based on knowledge, is said to be the "driver of the new economy" but who determines what "performance" is valued and which not? There has been rapid growth in both high skill (jobs requiring post secondary) and low skill jobs. This trend has resulted in a disproportionate number of youth, women and older workers, regardless of their education, in low skill part-time and minimum wage jobs. In comparison with adults, youth continue to have lower labour force participation rates and higher unemployment rates and the gap in unemployment rates grow between these two groups continues to grow (Foot, 1998, p.89).

World Wide Markets and Competition

Advocates of the new economy suggest that manufacturers who remain successful contend with fierce competition from a much broader geographic area and a much shorter innovation cycle. Companies continuously shrink (downsize, right size, re-structure) in terms of numbers of employees in order to show healthy economic growth. Dominance in the marketplace is increasingly based on a company's ability to remain innovative in responding to constantly changing consumer demands rather than relying on the scarcity of their product. The workers of western industrialised countries have come to accept rapid change as a constant. The stress and anxiety that accompanies this level of uncertainty is rapidly coming one of its hallmarks of the new economy.

Where once a university degree virtually guaranteed a steady, middle-class income, we can now point to a large number of unemployed or underemployed graduates. Yet, the principle source of labour market preparation of youth remains with the school system. As it is known that people with more formal education do better than those with less, current strategies are built around keeping youth in school. In addition, a commitment to "economic" efficiency promotes the use of the current education system as much as possible rather than building an alternate program delivery infrastructures to deal with youth after they drop out. School-based programs claim to focus on prevention rather than remediation. There is a very overt and apparent trend to adopt formal academic education as a means to develop the core work skills (employability skills, essential skills, and technical literacy) as defined by Human Resource Development Canada or the Conference Board of Canada, a combined government/industry sector groups

(Conference Board of Canada, 1992, p.2). Officially, there appears to be only two legitimate options, one is "full time employment", the other in formal education. While the "quality" of the employment tends not to be a concern from an official perspective, the education and training supports available focus potential candidates on the "hot occupations".

The Conference Board of Canada's "employability skills", and Human Resource Development Canada's "essential skills" or more recently "enabling skills" point toward a trend that would see the standardisation of a skill set required for employment, in any of the "new' economy industry sectors (HRDC, 1998, pp.6-12). Rationale for the "generic skills' movement includes: helping people perform specific tasks required by their occupation, providing workers with the foundations to learn skills that are more occupation specific, and enhancing the worker's ability to adapt to workplace change. These generic skill sets include the ability to read, write, calculate and execute basic computer applications. They also refer to one's ability to think, analyse and solve problems; learn independently (and continuously), exercise responsibly, adapt to a range of situations; communicate effectively; co-operate with others; and work in a team environment. "Essential skills" are coupled with attitudes such as drive, determination, enthusiasm, and commitment, and claiming that these are also broadly recognised as building blocks for productive participation in the work force (Chinien, Moratis, Boutin, and van Baalen, 2002, p.22).

Research establishes a link between "functional literacy" and productivity, according to one study, illiteracy costs Canadian society and Canadian Business billions of dollars

annually (Chinien, Boutin, and Letteri, 1997). The International Labour Organization (2002) identifies three roles for increasing "functional literacy" through basic education (grade school). The ILO proposes that beyond literacy and numeracy, basic education be intended to develop learners capacity to improvise and to be creative and in general equip learners to deal with the complexities of a rapidly changing world. Secondly, to develop children's social skills as well as an understanding of citizenship as well as the culture of work. Finally, to focus on "foundation" skills including problem solving, learning new skills, computer literacy, and gaining a fundamental grasp of simple scientific knowledge and technology.

Summary

There is significant alignment within the discourses of governments (provincial and federal), business and industry, as well as government/ industry consortiums (e.g. Conference Board of Canada) as these relate to the labour market in the new economy. The five elements common to the discourse of both transition-to-work programs were identified. Official discourses were characterised by predictions of increasing: numbers of high skill and low skill jobs, mobility of labour and corresponding dislocation, frequency of partnerships between business/ government and education, use of information technology, and world wide competition as trade barriers are removed. Although less overtly stated, but none the less common, these discourses are essentially urban and secular .

The difference in response between the two consecutive Manitoba governments is sufficient to warrant speculation that the image of "globalisation" as monolithic and inevitable is contestable. The examination of two separate transition-to-work initiatives, in terms of the conditions that precipitated them, makes it apparent that differences in response to the labour market of the "new" economy may be mediated by ideology.

The Progressive Conservative government's response to the labour market of the new economy was challenged in several areas. The PCs dramatically increased exports to the US, increasing the risk of trade deficit as the exchange rates rose. (Black and Silver, 1999, p.31). Over this period, in fact imports grew faster than exports despite efforts of the government. This had an impact on the number and quality of jobs available to Manitobans. Employment opportunities did increase during this period but this did not curb the pattern of out-migration from the province as was intended. Also, average weekly and hourly earnings during this period declined. These are indicators of the limited success of the low wage strategy adopted by the Conservative government (Black and Silver, 1999, p.31)

The PCs claim that the deficit had been eliminated in economic terms was only a partial reckoning. Manitoba's poverty rate continued to be among the highest in Canada during this period. Public expenditure on education, health, and social services experienced massive cuts, creating socio-economic deficits that are still evident (Black and Silver, 1999, p.32). The increase in investor confidence and resulting capital investment in Manitoba did not occur. Capital investment in Canada remained lower than during the

previous NDP government regime despite strenuous efforts and claims of success by the Conservative government in this area. (Black and Silver, 1999, p.32).

The TC! initiative, endeavoured to change a "culture of poverty" (HRDC Formative Evaluation, 2000, p.14) by connecting single parents with employment under the threat of removing social support benefits. The subsequent government did not continue this initiative.

The *Manitoba Training Strategy* outlines an alternative economic growth strategy developed at the 2000 Century Summit by business, labour, aboriginal, education and community leaders from across Manitoba. There are some familiar themes in the Strategy but also some departures from the previous Progressive Conservative approach.

Familiar aspects of the discourse include a commitment to lifelong learning described in terms of formal education like doubling college enrolment and supporting a quality public education system even though Canada already ranks number one in the world for enrolment at universities and colleges as a proportion of the population (Schwab, K., Porter, M., Sachs, J., 2002, pp.28-52). Computer literacy programs for Manitoba schools and the promotion of knowledge-based industries as the future of economic growth in Manitoba continues. These industries would include leading edge growth industries such as biotechnology and be established in rural and northern Manitoba.

There is significant agreement in certain areas of emphasis by both governments.

Higher employment rates over the past decade shift the focus from "creating more jobs" to "remediating skill shortages." The two governments concur on the use of formal educational institutions, colleges and universities to respond. MTS places more emphasis on Adult Education Centres (AEC), and apprenticeships. Both governments encourage local 'big business' to provide minimum wage jobs that provide fewer opportunities for employee advancement or job enrichment.

A number of characteristics identified in the November 27, 2002 Speech from the Throne differentiate the economic landscape under the NDP government from the previous regime. Annual job creation in Manitoba since 1999 is double the annual job creation during the previous decade. College and university enrolment is up 19% over the same period, and Manitoba is one of just three provinces in Canada to have recorded investment growth in each of the past three years. Manitoba's unemployment rate is one of the lowest in Canada and income assistance rolls have fallen to their lowest level in two decades. Manitoba achieved the lowest rate of youth unemployment in the country.

The current government's metric of success is slowly shifting from "job creation" to "skill development". There is no direct mention in the Manitoba Training Strategy of monitoring overall per capita "income growth" as a measure of a government's success.

There are two notable differences in policy between the former Progressive Conservative (PC) government and the New Democratic Party (NDP). The NDP appear to use government investment as a central means of stimulating economic growth, while the PC

government cut public expenditure stimulating a more competitive climate for private investment. For the PC government, exports to the south were to be the engine to drive economic growth. This policy combined with opportunity created by the Canada-US free Trade Agreement facilitated the degree to which globalisation and "continentalization" was promoted. Jobs were created and Taking Charge! was designed to see these vacancies filled.

The proliferation of market forces, freer trade, widespread deregulation combined with what appears to be the reduction of protectionist barriers has stimulated the movement of capital and facilitated local companies in establishing markets globally. Friesen's Corporation (Altona), Walinga Inc.(Carman), Loewen Windows (Stienbach), Ceridian Canada (Winnipeg), and Buhler Manufacturing (Morden) are a few southern Manitoba businesses representative of organisations viewed as competitive on an international and global scale. Globalisation has created new opportunities for Manitoba industries. For consumers and avowed capitalists promoting the location and development of trans-national corporations in one's community is viewed as a positive development. This is consistent with an understanding of economic growth, vigorous trade, individual choice, cheaper consumer goods, and promoting higher living standards, as a means of building human capabilities. The new economy narrative is very much apparent in the provincial party politic.

Chapter III: METHODOLOGY

<u>Method Description and Rationale</u>

This study involves a comparison of the perceptions of 'work' held by 'youth' who have

dropped out of high school with an 'official discourse' determined from a critical review

of selected Government of Manitoba documents.

Explorations of research methodology most suited for approaching the research topic

suggested that a qualitative research method might be most appropriate. This research

involved individual's stories about their working lives and experiences compared with an

accounting of work as viewed by government organisations and described in official

documents. The qualitative research originally envisioned would consist of three

components: (1) analysis of government documents (2) interviews with research

participants, (3) field notes and transcriptions, rich in detail, describing each research

participant's experience, and (4) interpretative analysis (Taylor & Bogdan, pp.7-10)

I required a method of data collection and an approach, which would allow me to

research the question. The reconstruction of a narrative based on five interviews in order

to provide data for analysis and comparison with characteristics of an official discourse.

The selection of a qualitative/ phenomenological approach coincides with my

understanding of how knowledge is constructed and created. This approach provided the

potential to research a complex phenomenon, a truly human response to a lived

experience of work. From the outset, my deepest concerns are that the outcomes of this

study be credible, transferable, dependable, and confirmable within the narrowly defined

limitations previously identified.

METHODS SUMMARY

My approach to the literature survey for this qualitative study does not follow a conventional research model. The literature selected for review was essentially guided by topics emerging from a combination of dialogue with the research participants and the critique of government documents. I sought theoretical foundations in the literature that coincided with emerging directions that became apparent as the interviews and document analysis proceeded. The survey of literature undertaken in this study progressed in response to my endeavour to understand differing discourse, where the dominant discourse was contested and inadequate and where it was affirmed.

A qualitative/ phenomenological approach to the research was adopted. I believe a phenomenological perspective to be best suited to provide insight into how youth construct their realities of learning and work and how this reality aligns with an "official discourse" of work promoted within schools and within other public institutions. Individuals develop their own definitions of objects and of other people with whom they interact. These definitions serve as a framework for understanding the world and as a basis for action (Berger and Luckman, 1967, p.177). In exploring the question, a dilemma in selecting an approach arose based on whether interests to be explored were philosophical or phenomenological. My interests are clearly focused on "the essence of lived experience" of research participants hence a phenomenological approach was adopted. This study endeavours to identify an "official" discourse from a critique of provincial government transition-to-work programs. Elements and characteristics of an "unofficial" discourse are pursued through collaboration with select youth.

The approach reflects my belief that examining what these youth believe; how they think things got to be this way; and how they feel about the way things are, will lead to a more comprehensive understanding of the impacts of "new economy" rhetoric as it is played out among certain at risk Southern Manitoba youth.

Research Design

The methodology selected and research design is intended to provide an opportunity to observe a common phenomena "work" from two distinct perspectives then to stand back from these and make some observations that may assist in deepening the understanding of both perspectives. This approach will facilitate the process of making more explicit the discourse implicit in both perspectives. The framework of topics selected as an initial guide to dialogue with participant informants is based on themes originally identified by Jeremy Rifkin in <u>The End of Work</u> (1995). They are:

- The extent to which employment is a measure of self worth and conversely the effect of self-esteem on the type of employment selected and pursued.

- Perceptions around decreased opportunities for full time employment and long-time job security compared to an increase in part-time work and contracting out services.

- Understanding of "new skills" for automation & information/ communication technology and subsequent impact.

- Acknowledgement of stress induced by the hurried pace of computer culture (e.g. the loss of autonomy, increasing impatience of employers and employees on the work site)

Government Document Review and Analysis

A review of select provincial government documents describing transition-to-work initiatives is undertaken in the literature review to establish elements and parameters of an "official discourse" on work in Manitoba's new economy. The discourse of the current economy is placed in an historical context of previous economies. The image evolving from this "official' discourse analysis will be compared and contrasted with what this study refers to as an "unofficial" discourse evolving from interviews with drop out youth.

Specific documents selected for analysis are "*Taking Charge!*" and the "*Manitoba Training Strategy*". These specific provincial initiatives were selected for analysis for several reasons:

1. Multiple levels of government (e.g. Federal and Provincial) directly supported both programs.

2. At the Provincial program development level, both programs included Manitoba Education as well as other government departments.

3. Both programs involved external partnerships with business and industry in a significant way.

4. Both of these programs were recommended to me as possibilities for review by provincial civil servants and members of HRDC that were involved in the design and implementation of both programs.

It is anticipated that, through analysis, common characteristics of an official discourse will emerge with sufficient clarity as to allow comparison with an "unofficial" discourse emanating from dialogue with research participants.

Taking Charge! is a joint federal-provincial program introduced by the Progressive Conservative Government (Department of Family Services and Department of Education and Training) in partnership with Human Resources Development Canada. TC! was designed to enhance employability of youth on income assistance through training and/or work experience. An important objective of TC! was to forge partnerships with the community broadly defined to include business, social services, educational institutions and the non-profit sector. With a budget of $26 million over a five-year period (from 1994 to 1999), TC! was intended to test an innovative model for delivering these services.

The *Manitoba Training Strategy, Consultation Draft (2001)* supported by the New Democratic Party, identifies three objectives in support of economic growth and social well being (Government of Manitoba, 2001, p.2). These include building a skilled workforce aligned with labour market needs and emerging opportunities, enhancing access to relevant learning opportunities for all Manitobans, and creating an integrated and high quality education and training system (Government of Manitoba, p.8). This document proposes that increasing mobility and access for learners by enhancing articulation and credit recognition, improving co-ordination and integration of federal and provincial employment programs, and labour market services, programming equality and continuous improvement of the training delivery system is essential and inevitable (Government of Manitoba, 2001, p.15).

The documents representing these government initiatives on labour force development maintained a predominately "instrumental" perspective on employment. These

documents represented a perspective based on the strategies proposed in order to successfully engage Manitoba youth in an economy that was seen to be rapidly changing. The approach to labour force preparation is indicative of each respective government's view of what the labour market of the new economy actually is. This official representation, in many ways, fell short of including the perspectives, concerns, and experiences of disenfranchised drop-out youth that I had experience in working with. It is this alternative reality that I term an "unofficial discourse" and that I desire to understand more fully in terms its commonalties, overlap and difference with an "official" discourse as represented in the language of transition-to-work programs.

Protocol for Involving the Research Participants

Five research participants from Southern Manitoba were identified and interviewed twice over a 12-week period that began in May and was completed in September, 2002. Each participant's story was collected through a series of interviews and follow up contacts. The recruitment protocol followed a sequence in keeping with guidelines established by the University of Manitoba, Education/Nursing Ethics Board (see Appendix II). Initially, three superintendents in Southern Manitoba were contacted by telephone and subsequently by letter, where I explained the research and requested permission to make contact with instructors at Adult Education Centres in their respective School Divisions. In the initial telephone contact I explored the purpose and design of my research in general terms. I made it clear that neither the participants nor anyone associated with the study would be placed at any risk and that there would be no form of deception used in

this study. I also agreed to forward a summary of my finding to the office of each superintendent upon completion. Each of the superintendents granted me permission to proceed with the study in their Division and provided me with the names of instructors at Adult Education whom I would be able to contact.

I relied heavily on the assistance of the teachers at the Adult Education centres to introduce me to potential informants who might be interested in meeting with me to talk about participating in this study. I explained the purpose and methods of my study to the educator as well as the criteria for selecting candidates. I explained that when these youth had been identified and briefed about the study, I would like to meet briefly (10-15 min.) with each potential informant to explain this study as well as leave them with a consent form to complete if they decided to participate. Timing became an issue because by now it was nearing the end of the school year (mid June, 2002) and many of the Adult Education students had finished their studies and were no longer in direct contact with the Adult Education Centres. None the less the instructors were very helpful in providing me with the names of potential candidates. In some cases the instructor had made contact with the students ahead of time to verify their interest and in other cases not. I noted that on the list of names of potential participants that I was developing, women generally out numbered men.

I found that the prospective participants were often difficult to reach (non-functioning telephone numbers, answering machines but no call-backs, or simply no answer). On several occasions meetings that I had scheduled with prospective research participants

were no-shows. In these cases, I waited for up to an hour beyond our appointment time for participants to arrive. I did not follow up on no-shows, however I did leave my phone number with them on initial contact in case they wished to contact me. None of the no-shows made subsequent contact. I also observed that all of the no-shows were male. I had only one occasion where I met with and explained the study to a prospective research participant who met all of the criteria then subsequently decided not to participate. The "lack of time" was cited as a reason.

In the initial meeting, I explained my motives and intentions surrounding my study and I probed for a sense of their interests, experience, and understanding in this area. I would explain the criteria for participation and in order to get a sense of eligibility. The pre-screening by Adult Education instructors (based my criteria) resulted in my meeting with candidates who did fit. The criteria required that the research participants be

- Southern Manitoba[4] resident
- range in age from 18 and 30 years old (HRDC definition of Youth)
- in the process of completing high school through an "Adult Education Program".
- either unemployed or under employed
- willing to participate in at least two interviews.

None of the subjects who were identified for participation in the research by the Adult education instructors presented any apparent disabling characteristics (e.g. physical, emotional, cognitive) that might make them especially vulnerable or require extra measures. My initial conversation with the Adult Educator included a request to remain inclusive, however after interviewing all of the participants for the first time I worried

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[4] Ficticious names of towns have been used to protect the anonymity of the participants (e.g. Hachy, Bodden, Franklin, Caldwell, Greyton, and Garset)

that the candidates who agreed to meet with me may have represented the "most dedicated" students rather than a full cross-section. As the interviews progressed this became less of a concern.

I would also wanted to get a sense of their time schedule and calendar to determine when and if we could actually meet. I would leave potential informants a "Consent Form" and set up a subsequent meeting time. I explained that in addition to a theme or topic for discussion I would try to explain the purpose of each topic to be explored. Each participant was interviewed twice. All the first interview transcriptions were complete before initiating the second round of interviews so that emerging themes could be recognised and more deeply probed. In the second interview, the participant was given opportunity to review the transcription of the first interview, make any changes, elaborate on any aspects, as well as to comment on any new emerging themes. Sources of new themes included aspects that individuals had thought about since the first interview or themes that arose with other participants I had interviewed.

Opportunity for feedback and debriefing occurred at the outset of the second interview as well as at the end of both interviews. Transcriptions of the first interview dialogue provided the first opportunity for serious reflection by the research participant (Piquemal, 2001, pp.65-79). Eventually both transcriptions were made available to the research participants; the second transcript was mailed along with an invitation to meet again if there were any additions of subsequent reflections.

Southern Manitoba Demographic Context

According to the June 1999 Canadian Business Count, there were 24,685 businesses in

Southern Manitoba. Agricultural & Related Services are the top employers for all areas

at 46% or 11,267. The second leading industry is Retail Trade - 2,335 (9%) followed by

the Construction 1,873 (8%), Other Services 1,613 (7%) and Transportation & Storage

1,213 (5%). The industries that were one percentage or less are Fishing & Trapping,

Logging & Forestry, Mining, Quarrying & Oil Wells and Communication & Other

Utility, Government Service and Educational Service. The March 2000, Labour Force

Survey estimates released by Statistics Canada reflected an unadjusted unemployment

rate of 5.2% for Manitoba. The unemployment rate in Southern Manitoba, currently

5.7%. Typically unemployment rates in Southern Manitoba are lower than the rest of the

province.

Initially, this region was a mix of German, Jewish and Anglo-Saxon merchants.

Agriculturally based Mennonites flocked to the area from old-Imperial Russia at the turn

of the last century and soon, their numbers outgrew all the others combined. The

traditional values and deep religious convictions (apparent from comments made by

research participants) continue to prevail in this region (often referred to as the "bible

belt" of Manitoba). The highest concentration of Mennonites in Canada is found in

Manitoba. Mennonites in Manitoba are made up of a plurality of groups, united by a

common name. Canada's Mennonites represent different ethnic origins, geographic

locations, cultural traditions and customs, varying theological positions, and most

noticeably, differing degrees of accommodation to the surrounding society. Mennonites

trace their origins to the Protestant Reformation of 16th century Europe. At the heart of their faith is a belief in the authority of the Bible, discipleship, adult baptism and a commitment to peace and non-resistance.

Towns in southern Manitoba serve as agricultural service centres for hundreds of area farmers. The different soils in the area produce some very different crops. The clay loam soils of the Red River Valley produce some of the best grain and oilseed crops on the Canadian Prairies. The coarser, sandy soils are well suited to crops requiring irrigation (e.g. potatoes, beans). These are valuable crops and have greatly contributed to the wealth and subsequent rapid growth of communities in southern Manitoba.

Introduction to the Research Participants:
Allison, Beth, Anne, Marie, Doug

Five youth agreed to participate in this research study. They met all of the criteria established for participation. These youth agreed to share their insights surrounding their experience of work in two interviews. Participants were given copies of their interview transcriptions following their interviews and invited to add to their comments, make changes, or edit where they felt that this was necessary. Participants made occasional changes to the transcript text (e.g. the recollection of tasks at a particular place of employment, marks achieved during high school). All of the participants were appreciative of the opportunity to review their transcripts and to keep a copy for their own records.

Allison

Allison lives just outside of Hachy. She is 25 years old and is a single parent with two children. She is the eldest in a combined family and recalls the hardships of having to take responsibility for her younger siblings. Allison laughs easily, talks quickly, and presents a very practical perspective. She sits far back from the microphone, listens to my prompts carefully and responds with an economy of words. She claims that her motivation comes from the desire to be a good mom, to provide her kids with a home, cloths, presents. *"I grew up in a poor home. And I would rather my kids not have to do the same thing"(p.5)*

Allison dropped out of high school in Grade 12 when she became pregnant. When her oldest son turned 4, Allison registered at the Adult Education Centre to complete her high school. She plans become an "early-years" teacher on the inspiration of an empathetic junior high teacher who "cared" about her during high school. She is in the process of registering for courses at the local Distance Education Campus. She is the first person from her family to endeavour university level education.

Allison claims a strong sense of independence. Although the father of her children still lives in the area she has little to do with him and is raising her family alone. She has no family in the area but has a few close friends who share baby-sitting responsibilities. Her closest friends are not employed. Allison claims that she admires their strength of character and their positive outlook on life. Allison is currently employed part time, "about one shift per week' at a local restaurant. She recalls how difficult she found moving about as a child. She has painful memories of being very shy.

<u>Beth</u>

Beth, at age 25, is married with 3 children. She presents herself as outgoing, friendly, energetic, and humorous. She lives with her husband, the father of their children, in a small village between Garset, a small French speaking community, and Greytown. Beth claims that her primary motivation to work is her family, putting money away for a college fund for her kids, balancing other life stresses in favour of family commitments. Beth dropped out of high school at the 9th grade, at age 16 with low self-esteem. She had her first child by age 17. She is employed, part time as a short order cook at a restaurant in Garset. Beth relies on part time work because *"I have three kids, and its hard to manage a fulltime job, a husband, a house plus three children and find time to teach them right from wrong and just the basics."* (p.3, 1st Interview). She claims to lack confidence in the workplace.

Beth had just completed her high school through the Adult Ed Centre and claims that the connection between learning and her self-esteem is very strong regardless of whether it is formal or informal, through volunteering or paid employment. She aspires to a career in nursing where she can be of service to others.

Beth empathises strongly with the role of Erin Brokovich played by Julia Roberts in the Stephen Soderbergh film by the same name. She believes that current technology reduces employment opportunities. Beth has observed some discrimination against her own children around language causing her to change their school from Garset to Greytown, at one point. She further observes that society does not provide a "level

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playing field" even today. She recalls being made fun of because the cloths that her parents could afford for her were not fashionable.

She is optimistic and hopeful, emphasising the importance of finding some way to balance her priorities, family, work, modest material gains, and her faith.

Anne

Anne is 23, single female and lives with her parents in Bodden. She is an easy conversationalist, thoughtful and somewhat critically reflective. She currently works part-time for the family owned and operated manufacturing business. Her immediate and extended family are self-employed entrepreneurs. Outside of being employed at a fabric store for a brief period, the family plant has been her primary experience with work. She takes some pride in being the first person in her family to work for non-family (p.14). She has health-related problems with her legs that prevent her from working full eight hour days. She would like to find alternative work that might be less physically demanding. One of her primary motivations is *"Boredom. Desperation to do something else. Uh... yeah. I want to get out."* (p. 9, 2nd interview). Anne says that she would like to travel the world.

Anne attended public school to the completion of elementary but did not attend high school. She took some high school courses by correspondence but found these unsatisfying. She claims to have wanted to attend high school but that that was never an option because her parents would not allow it. They did not support her (or her siblings)

in attending high school or post secondary. Anne is enrolled in a TESL (Teaching English as a Second Language) program. Anne aspires to become a para-legal or a lawyer; she has a friend who practices family law. She sees her training in TESL as part of her career path into law. As a means of putting herself through university and as a way of developing the communication skills that would enhance her ability in that profession.

Marie

Marie is single female in her early 20s. She is living at home with her parents near Caldwell. She is self confident, thoughtful, positive, well spoken and laughs easily. She is deeply religious. Commenting on her experience living with the poor in Bolivia she states "*They were...well the way I saw them I knew they needed a saviour and there wasn't enough people to go tell them about Jesus.*" (p. 9, 1st interview).

She was withdrawn from public school in grade 4, was home schooled to Grade 8. At age 14 she was given the option to go to work at the family owned and operated metal manufacturing business or to return to school. She quit school, happily. From that time to the present Marie has been is employed in the family home and the family business. Marie claims that she has been helping out with the family business from the time she was 4 years old, stamping envelopes, pulling the levers to bend metal, and other odd jobs. She is self-taught on the computer and currently works in the office at book keeping and office management. She claims to value "the family" ahead of a personal "professional career".

Marie connected with the Adult Education Centre in Franklin a year ago after travelling to Bolivia for volunteer work at a mission school. She describes the curriculum at this school as Christian Light Education, similar to the home school program that she participated in between grade 4 and grade 8. Becoming a teacher in this program requires that she complete her grade 12 as well as a locally delivered "teaching program[5]". Marie completed 4 of the eight credits that she requires for the Mature student program. On completion of high school Marie plans to begin the teacher-training program that would enable her to teach in the mission schools. She is currently learning the Spanish language from a Computer Based Learning package that she purchased.

Doug.

Doug, aged 29, and has been married for approximately four years. He speaks slowly and chooses his words carefully. Doug was born and raised in the Bodden area and claims to be quite comfortable to remain here. He wears a worn leather baseball cap, jeans and jean jacket, very pleasant, positive, confident, he has a great laugh. Doug describes the circumstances surrounding his leaving high school with two stories…

> …When I started grade nine that was going from the junior high moving across town into the high school. And uh…initiation day, some guys thought that they would wrap my legs around a pole and uh…beat my family parts…and I was just a victim. I hadn't brought this upon myself but I ran and they caught me. And some bigger guys saw what was happening and these guys grabbed me. And I realised what they were going to do to me. And I let them think they were going to get away with it. And when they…I didn't fight…they uh…loosened off for a second. And I kicked two of them and I punched and I fought like a cornered tomcat. And then those big guys came and saved my sorry butt. And those big guys smoked dope. And those big guys…these guys were two years older than I was and they took me under their wing. So from day one, my choice of friends

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[5] This program is designed to prepare candidates to teach in Mennonite Christian schools in third world countries. The curriculum included Bible studies as well as some pedagogical studies related to literacy and numeracy.

went off the map, so to say. And uh...I started partying the day I hit grade nine not knowing anything about it till then. (Laughs). (P.3)

So...uh partying...you don't do well in school. And then uh I quit school finding drugs and alcohol more enjoyable. And uh...that came to a crashing end after a friend committed suicide because he was whacked out on drugs. And uh...I saw what was coming and then uh...didn't do anything about it and over dosed on cocaine one night. And (deep breath)...uh...uh...I won't get...I won't get completely religious on you here... but I uh...I saw how my parents raised me and that had nothing to do with the way I was living my life. So...I turned my life around completely. And...and it's at that point that I decided that now I could get married. Cause till then I didn't want to have anything to do a female that was into what I was into (laughs). So I married a nice girl and uh...Who it turns out also went through some of what I did. So we have an understanding. And that's four years ago and we don't have any kids. (P.4)

Doug describes himself as naive and arrogant at the time he quit school. He claims to have regretted it within two years of quitting. His back was not able to take the physically demanding construction concrete work that he was involved in.

Doug left heavy construction work for work in a series of factories, to operating heavy equipment. Doug is currently employed as a drag line operator in a gravel pit.

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Bogdan and Biklen describe qualitative data analysis as "working with data, organising it breaking it into manageable units, synthesising it, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned and deciding what you will tell others" (1982, p.145). The analysis of data in this study is primarily inductive with the critical themes arising from the data. This methodology and the approach selected were intended to facilitate analysis of two categories of discourse of work.

The initial data collected was from five rural youth through semi-structured interviews.

An interview schedule (see Appendix I) was used as a means of insuring that basically

each informant was prompted for the information in the same areas but there are no predetermined responses and informants were probed for further insights within the prescribed areas of inquiry. A preliminary survey of the literature produced topics of discussion included on the interview guide.

The analysis process began with approximately 240 pages of interview transcripts, field notes, and government documents. The mechanics of handling this quantity of data involved physically sorting and storing the many slips of paper. Analysis involved identification of themes emerging from the raw data, through a process of "open-coding" (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). During this phase I identified and tentatively named the conceptual categories into which the responses could be grouped. My goal was to create descriptive multi-dimensional categories that would form a preliminary framework for analysis for the interviews as well as analysis of the government documents. These categories were modified during subsequent stages of the analysis.

Research participants received the transcripts of our dialogue following each interview. They were encouraged to reflect on, change and/or elaborate on any aspect of the interview they felt required changing. While this added to the work and the time required completing the interviews I believe that it added substantially to the credibility of data produced. I used a colour coding system in order to connect the information with the source as I approached breaking down the raw data from the interviews into manageable chunks.

The next stage of the analysis, called "axial coding" (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) involved the re-examination of the categories identified to determine how they were inter connected. The discrete categories identified in "open coding" are compared and combined in new way so as to assemble the big picture. This process was roughly repeated as I analysed the government documents for discourse characteristics.

The final stage involves translating this assemblage of information from both broad sources, under the various categories, into a story line that would be comprehensible by others. Ideally, this thesis would be a rich tightly woven account that closely "approximates the reality it represents" (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, p.57).

Although the stages of analysis are described here in a linear fashion, in practice some occurred simultaneously and repeatedly. During axial coding, the initial categories were revised leading to re-examination of the raw data. New data was collected (from historical government documents) as the literature review evolved and as gaps appeared as a result of informal analysis.

The methodology selected for this qualitative study is based on its most fundamental premise that "no claims will be made." I have confidence that this approach provides an opportunity to observe common phenomena from at least two distinct perspectives. The différance in discourses will be seen to represent the degree to which the discourse of the research participant's intimate consent to participate in a new economy on the terms prescribed by government representative of the larger society.

CHAPTER IV: ANALYSIS OF THE MAIN STUDY
Re-Construction of a "Need-To-Work

Introduction

The discourse(s) within any given culture not only serves to facilitate communication among citizens in their ongoing work but it also serves to keep everyone doing their work and valuing their contributions (for better or worse) in the same way. A unified, fully inclusive political community resulting from the initiatives of a dominant discourse can never be fully realised since each discourse requires a permanently a 'constitutive outside' an exterior to the community that makes its existence possible"(Mouffe, 1991, p.78). Hence competing discourses evolve. The narrative of research participants Doug, Beth, Anne, Marie, and Allison provides a unique glimpse into one such subordinate discourse. The extent to which participants see him/her self excluded or dominated is determined by their own particular view of society. Every discourse that constitutes a people always at the same time excludes a people, the 'excluded' are in fact necessary to the construction of the dominant culture.

This section probes the working lives of five Southern Manitoba youth. One begins to appreciate the power of narrative to transform (and to be transformed by) a particular view of reality. In some instances the discourse appeared parallel while in others, there seemed to be a wide gulf between the two. The research questions surrounding work prompted dialogue that touched on a broad range of personal, family, cultural, and societal issues. It became evident that "work" and the "need to work" was not an activity isolated from other activities in their own personal lives, it is indeed a part of a much larger discourse. In some way, narrative of these research participants stands in stark contrast to the dominant discourse described in a previous chapter, partially because of the rural context but more dramatically as a result of the local, cultural, and religious beliefs.

As the dialogue with each of the research participants developed, certain tendencies or trends emerged. These emerging trends tended to be less definable in terms of common elements than characteristics of the "official" discourse in the preceding chapter. Research participants tended to combine work life with home life, religious life, community life, and/or recreation. The work/life themes emanating from dialogue were: work as a determinant of self worth, the need for growth, development, and self-actualisation through work, the importance of personal integration at work, the need for autonomy at work, the social and economic challenge of part time & minimum wage work, new skills and technological literacy, and concern about dislocation.

When compared with themes from the analysis of the official discourse, overlap between the private and the public discourse became more apparent. Comparing discourses demonstrated the importance of applying différance, "both/and" logic instead of "either/or" logic when used to challenge the orthodoxy of the dominant belief. Discourse of youth demonstrated a tendency toward post materialist values (e.g. belonging, freedom, self-esteem and quality of life), well paid labour and work as a noble cause, personal growth: formal education and development at work community at work and global competition collaboration and bureaucratic hierarchy

The initial phase of each interview prompted narrative surrounding the connection between one's self-esteem as a motivation to work. Responses evolved along four thematic lines; attitudes toward one's self; growth, development, & self-actualisation through work; personality integration at work; and autonomy in the work place.

Work as Determinant of Self Worth

Dialogue with the research participants initially revolved around their aspirations expressed in terms of 'wants'. Participant's 'want' established a baseline to understanding his or her discourse surrounding their own "need to work". Sociologists Warr and Wall, suggest that psychological wellbeing arises from our wants and is evidenced in our self-esteem (Warr and Wall, 1975, pp17-18). They further suggest that the development of self-esteem requires that to some reasonable extent that 'wants' are being satisfied.

Doug claims to gain self-esteem in doing the job well, perfection from a personal perspective as well as recognition from others is important to him. He has an independent and entrepreneurial sense that he is working for himself and on his own time. His own personal aspirations (wants) are more connected with his outside interest in bench rest competition (target shooting) than his job. He has a need to be "true to himself" and uses this time to find and develop his interests unrelated to the regular job. Doug has deep religious convictions and claims that it is these values that enabled him to stop his heavy drug and alcohol use and maintain his relationship with his wife. It is through these means that he maintains his sense of self worth. Doug is characteristically modest, as are his wants. He does not express his wants in terms of material wealth or consumer goods.

> Doug: I...I actually enjoyed my job. I hated the shift work. I...I ran a... a...a loader. And I enjoyed my job. I was not tied to the punch clock like every body else at that plant was. Cause my job was to take a flat deck semi to the field and them load it full of round bales and then come back. So you couldn't be tied to a punch clock doing that because half the time I wasn't even on the yard. (Interview 1, P.5)

> Doug: So I enjoyed that. But uh...my bosses were miserable and there too it was a...I still feel it was bad luck. This was in Greytown I knew no one there and the shift leader

of out crew wanted one of his friends to do the job that I got. So that guy didn't want me there from the first day. And that really showed itself right through the whole time that I worked there. And then I had never done shift work. So we went from days to evenings to nights. And I tried to do something about that and I found out then and there that uh...they didn't need to tell me that but you are uneducated. You are doing dirty work. You are a number. You are not worth much to us. And don't even bother asking for a raise because there's many other people that would fill your position. And uh...huh...That was how it went the whole time that I worked there. To the extent that I went to the head of uh...the Manitoba Mill Operations who lived in the same town that I did and told him what was going on. And he was a spineless man waiting to retire who as long as production was moving; it didn't matter that uh...a foreman had said to me what he had said to me. He acknowledged that. That that was wrong to swear and cuss and say how they don't want you there but uh...gotta keep production going and that guy does his job so that's how it went. (Interview 1, P.5)

Doug: Even uh...something like self esteem which I think often I took for granted and for I don't know why I thought this way. But I started working at this gravel pit running these large machines when I was quite uh...still involved in the drugs and alcohol. And uh...it was uh...shortly after I started working there that uh...it was just a bit of fluke that the mechanic taught me how to run the drag line which nobody else knew how to do there. And he quit the next year and that was seven years ago. And to this day I am the only one that knows how to operate that machine. And that does wonders for a guy's self-esteem because you feel like you're worth something then. To have this hundred thousand dollar machine sitting there which nobody knows how to operate and after uh...six years of operating it with nobody else there knowing how to do it and the boss himself doesn't know how and he has no interest in teaching. He doesn't want me to teach anybody else. It's my responsibility. (Interview 1, P.5)

Doug: When I worked in Greytown at that straw mill most of the people that worked at that plant were from uh... Garsett and the surrounding region which I think are...are uh...French. And nothing against those people but the guys that were doing this job...it was seasonal labour...so those guys, they couldn't care about ...not that seasonal labour makes you not care...
Doug: French or no French the guys that were also running the machines that I was running couldn't have given one iota about those machines. They were supposed to grease them. Nobody greased them because there's so many people operating one machine. Nobody has to take responsibility for things that break or burn out over a period of time. And that made me so angry that if the mill would shut down because the equipment was broke in half, great we could go to the bar and drink instead. And even I liked to go to the bar it just made me mad. And I think I complained about that when I started working at this gravel pit. I want responsibility. I want...I want to make money and I want to have a responsibility so that if nothing else I can make a little more money than just some slack job labourer who doesn't care. (Laughs) (Interview 1, P.6)

Doug expresses his 'wants' in terms of responsibility. He wanted to be recognised as responsible even when his "trustworthiness" may be low because of his drug and alcohol use. Periods of high drug and alcohol use and low self-esteem coincided with employment where he had little or no responsibility at work, at secondary school, or in

relationship. Doug expresses a strong "need to work" as a means of gaining and maintaining his self-esteem. His hobbies, bench rest target shooting (Interview 1, p.11) and wilderness camping (Interview 1, p.10) both suggest the need for a great deal of self-reliance and independence. These also provide a window on the sub-culture in which he is a member. I would describe this group as "survivalist", individuals who take pride in their ability to survive on the natural basics. Doug describes himself in term of his productivity at work and his acumen as a wilderness camper and marksman.

In the dominant discourse, there is an implied dependence on infrastructure services provided by the government (e.g. social services like education and employment services). In exchange for these common services one pays taxes. While not completely independent, Doug resists reliance on these services or at least claims not to take them for granted.

Beth is motivated by her desire to help others. She has come to believe that hard work however, is not enough. She believes that being educated and having credentials does not necessarily level the playing field either, that one must also be privileged with "connections" in order to have an opportunity to know about a job, let alone compete for it. Toward these ends she claims that completing her high school through the ALC contributed more to her self- esteem than her experience at high school and subsequent minimum wage jobs she has held. Her self esteem has improved and she has met others who might assist her to achieve her goal of "helping others"

> ... what was it grade 6 or 7. I watched a little boy get hit by a car and I felt so helpless cause I didn't know what to do or couldn't help him in anyway. So, I guess that's kind of

what urged me to get the schooling. And then when something does happen then I will know how to help them (Interview 1, p. 9)

For me anyway uh, cause I know I've seen my sisters and some of them didn't finish high school either and they just, they pat me on the back and they say, "Way to go, you did it. Like I mean you made a mistake when you dropped out but look at yourself now. You're there." Now I just want to go to college. I want to go to university. I don't want to stop learning now (Interview 1, p.11)

Before I would have looked at college and university and I would have said, " No way, no way. Not at all. Not even... not even a thought. But after finishing the diploma and feeling just that feeling you get after you've accomplished something you've put your mind too. And like it took me three years to finish high school. But I did it and now I just want to keep going. (Interview 1, p.12)

Yeah they are. I know I said that to myself in grade 9 too. "I'm never going to need this. What the heck do I want that for?" and then I dropped out. And now whenever you look at an application form, you can't put high school diploma on there unless you got it. And it's the ones that have that diploma that will jump ahead of you so really you're the one that gets knocked down to the bottom of the pile if you don't have that. So... you really do need that. A lot of them say psst you don't need it and like I mean its useless stuff. You're going to learn about it now but you'll forget about it later. But, no, you don't. (Interview 1, p.13)

... I know we were always made fun of because we couldn't afford new clothes so we made due with second hand and the teasing was endless. Like I mean, it's to the point where a child says to themselves, "Its not worth it. Forget It", you know. Back up and just let the ones that can pay their way, let them first crack and whatever's left is what we'll get. (Interview 1, p.21)

Beth: Yeah when I seen that my kids were taking their first steps and knowing I had something to do with it. It shows that yeah you are actually worth something. You're doing something right anyway and then going back to school, now I'm just...I'm ready for anything now. (Interview 2, p.4)

Beth: Well, for a while there, knowing that other women are out there making a career and you see them doing what you want to be doing and where are you? You're stuck at home, changing diapers and doing the laundry and your basic house cleaning and you think to yourself that you'll never get out of that rut. And some days your self-esteem is very low. Like all you want to do is just close the doors and stay inside. Cause you don't think there's nothing out there but now that they grow, they're going to school. You see that there is a light at the end of the tunnel. Its getting to the point where they're very independent and you got to find other things to do with your time, so yeah it goes both ways. (Telephone interruption) Yeah, I know often I would look at other people going out and the women are doing stuff and their kids are old enough to take care of themselves. And you think to yourself are you ever going to get there and what's the point of even going back to school. You're always going to be nothing but a housewife anyway. And then when I found out that the...I could actually do it at home it made me think well yeah maybe there is a way for me to do it. And now I know my brother, he quit a year before I did. He dropped out of high school at grade eight and he says he envies me because he wishes he could do it. And well I guess he's working all the time now and he doesn't uh...have the time to do it or he says he doesn't but he always tells me

how proud he is of me for pulling myself out of there and actually finishing. Even my dad say yep, Ok now you forget about all those waitressing and you go to college. Go for what ever it is you want to do so. (Interview 2, p.4)

Beth's comments, however positive and up beat are critical of a bureaucratic system where the appearance of equal opportunity is often superficial. She observes that those (like herself) who are not privileged by wealth or connections experience a harsh form of discrimination. She believes that it is important to be a self-starter, but this only takes one so far. She describes the "need to work" as one of the indicators of one's self-esteem. She observes that when one is engaged in meaningful learning, one is a producer (not a consumer) of knowledge and this leads to growth of self-esteem. So learning, according to Beth, is a form of productive labour when it results in knowledge that is useful to her. It is not necessarily "curriculum content" nor does this type of learning necessarily occur in school. She claims her experiences as a homemaker and a volunteer has contributed to her self-esteem and confidence to continue to learn. Beth's challenge of the "official discourse" is an ambiguous one. She accepts the need for formal education as the means of becoming a fully participating member of a "networked" economy. Beth looks forward to a time when she might extend her role to include contributing to her small community as a professional nurse.

Anne is the youngest in a family of home schooled children. Her family owns their own manufacturing plant and she has worked for the family business for all but a short period of time when she was employed at a fabric store. For Anne, self-esteem is linked with an instrumental notion of work… work for monetary return. She expresses feelings that working for little is ok as long as it is fun, however unless she is doing something worthwhile, monetarily, it is hardly worth her effort. This exposes something of a

dilemma for Anne as she questions her own ability to complete the studies required for law, a profession where the salary is potentially great. Her experiences with education and work have left her with low self-confidence and self esteem in these areas.

> Anne: Well, my dream job is actually unlikely to happen because I would like to be a lawyer. I don't know how many years this would take me because I would probably do it part time, training in the evenings, that kind of thing until I was ready. But, like I say that could be years if ever. (Laughs)
>
> ... I'm going to be working for my parents again in the summer, but only part time because my legs can't handle it working full time. So I'll be working mornings through the summer. And other than that I'll have the summer to myself and in the fall I'm hoping to go into the TESL training. So, as for my parents being supportive, well, they finally are (laughs). But I think it took them a while to realise that physically I can't really handle 8 hours a day on my feet. It's too much. So... they've kind of come around but they didn't want me to go to high school. So...
>
> Teaching English as a second language. That's more like a way of killing time. (Laughs) Yeah, until I... until I decide what to do to make money. I mean who knows? Maybe I'll wind up working in a restaurant because there you can get whatever shifts you need and work around your college? It seems to be one of the only places you can do that. So...
>
> I was thinking that I can travel. And, that's not really a career I know but (laughs) something to do in the mean time, something interesting. And could make a living at it (teaching ESL) at least if not a very good living. And, now you were talking about a lot of people getting part-time work. Well, that's about all I'm qualified for right now. And quite frankly that's not... you can barely pay your rent on that. There's really very little point in going into that. And I've heard of more people my age who have to get 2 part-time jobs. They have to commute twice a day. It's twice the amount of stress and you're worried about being fired from minimum wage jobs. What's the point? So...

Anne regrets not having had the option to attend public school and complete her high school sequentially (her parents objected on religious grounds). She is currently involved in a TESL training program and hopes to travel, with her work, on completion. Although she does acknowledge the security that comes with working at her family's successful business, she finds that it does not provide her with the opportunities for personal growth that she is seeking. Her dilemma is complicated. On the one hand, she has a very healthy work ethic with little patience for those (including herself) who do not work. On

the other hand, her health prevents her from working full shifts at the family plant. By way of resolution, she is in search of education and eventually work that is less physically demanding. The instrumental notion of work and sequential notion of education promoted by "official discourse" deepens this dilemma for Anne.

Allison's self esteem is tied to being "a good parent", providing for her kids in a way that her "parents were unable to". While she recognises that being at home with her children is important for her, she experiences discrimination when people find out that she is on social assistance in order to do this. She would like to provide a good home for her children and defines "a good home" as a place that creates opportunities for her own children.

In a perfect world I'd be making enough to buy my home and have everything for my kids that I need without having to struggle for it and just doing whatever I enjoy doing so I don't really have a specific thing . (Interview 1, p. 4)

Well it would be nice if I could buy them clothing whenever they wanted it, not just when I absolutely had to get it, so. That kind of thing. And Christmas presents would be a lot easier to buy that way, so. (Interview 1, p. 5)

Well yeah. I grew up in a poor home. And I would rather my kids not have to do the same thing, so. (Interview 1, p. 5)

I'm not living in town but that's not very hard cause I mean if I don't have a ride or my truck doesn't decide to work, I can always walk, so. .(Interview 1, p. 5)
Yeah I'm planning on being a teacher, elementary school teacher. (Interview1. p. 5)

I've got to give my kids a good example. (Interview 1, p. 8)

Yeah. My kids are between kindergarten and grade one this year, so that's the age I like cause they, you can talk to then about stuff, and they're just so curious. I love that. I love that about kids. (Interview 1. p. 12)

...self-esteem wise if you don't have to rely on the government to live for me being a single mom. You know like you still have to be on assistance but not as bad. Not as totally reliant on them to support yourself and your children. For the...like the formal training or school like for a teacher or something, that would be better because then you have the choice of what you want to do. Not just taking what you can get for employment. (Interview 2. p.2)

Allison: In the schools. I like teaching the elementary school kids. I would volunteer for that. I would probable volunteer in the hospitals, the maternity wards and stuff like that cause I really enjoy being around moms and babies and that kind of stuff I would enjoy. And maybe homeless shelters, that kind of thing.
I love helping people you know. Um...the reason I'm going to school is because it's a way I can help kids. But I'd still get paid for it you know cause I have to support my family so.
Just the satisfaction that I'm helping somebody. Like helping a kid learn how to do it you know. (Interview2, p.4)

Allison: Um...Well being a single parent and being on assistance...um...a lot of people look down on you because you're on that assistance. You know like they...(Pause)...if they don't know that I'm on assistance and that I'm just being a stay at home mom they think that's great. But as soon as they find out that I'm on assistance and being at home well then that's a whole other story.
I probably wouldn't have very much relationship with my kids if I had gone to work all the whole time. (Interview 2, p.7)

I don't think my kids and I would know each other. You know like being a stay at home mom for the first few years of their life I think it was the most crucial think in the whole world for them, or for me to be able to be home with them. You know because we get to learn about each other that way. I mean now that they're old enough they're going to be going to school now too. So I think now that they're at that age to be going to school that we can all branch out to what we want to do kind of thing. (Interview 2, p.8)

Allison would typify the type of client that the "Take Charge" program targeted. The objectives of this "welfare-to-work" program included reducing income assistance costs by increasing the employment activity and earning potential of participants, increasing duration of labour force attachment by project participants, and meeting employers' needs for job-ready employees. In addition, social security reform objectives that included improving the long-term prospects for income assistance recipients by breaking the cycle of poverty. Allison's personal narrative challenges each of these objectives, not so much in terms of content but rather in intent. Responding to the personal plight of individuals who wish to become more meaningfully engaged in their community and society through increasing the number of minimum wage jobs to select from does not provide the long term response that Allison seeks for herself or her family.

Self-esteem for Marie comes from doing something that she feels will make a difference in the lives of others. She connects her "need to work" with a sense of purpose, a mission. She expresses deep religious convictions that guide her "discourse" around the "need to work" as a religious mission, particularly when volunteering.

> Marie: Well, when my dad started his business when I was 4 years old we already started working in the shop then. And of course as a young child you don't enjoy it a whole lot but we did get wages. So, yeah. And as I grew up, got more into work. Um... For me if there wasn't work I think I would go crazy. (Laughs) (Interview 1, p.6)

> Marie: Well, actually I was in the shop already before I went to school. It would be as simple as stamping envelopes. When Dad would be bending sheet metal I'd be pulling the lever. You know just something basic, very easy. Um, as I grew older it would be more into wiping the feeders for preparation for painting. Um, in the office I didn't really get involved much further than till when I quit school then. I plunged right in there. Um... I guess for me if you would compare work to school I always enjoy going to Adult Ed but I would rather be the teacher than student. I like to do stuff, not always learn, you know. I find learning isn't that hard but I prefer the hands on. (Interview 1, p.6)

> Marie: Because my biggest goal in life is that I would leave behind something that would make a difference. And to me "money all burns" but people have a soul. And that is important too. I want to leave an impression behind so that when I die there will be people who...who will want to either live differently because of what I've done or it will change them in some way. (Interview 1, p.14)

> Marie: I think for a lot of kids, at least for me when I grew up in school I was like ...ok this is something you have to go through childhood just to grow up. I didn't realise that all the stuff we were learning for when we were out of school. And I think a lot of kids would have that view point, you know. This is just something I have to do and once I'm through with it then I can go and do more fun stuff. I guess for me, it was important when I was helping the kids in Bolivia, to teach them that, that some day you're going to need this, you know. And show them where they're going to need it. Not just tell them someday you're going to need this. . (Interview 1, p.15)

> Marie: Um...to be able to work and to learn and have it not connected with your self-esteem I really can't understand that at all. Cause what's the point in doing it if it doesn't fulfil you in any way? (Laughs). Well for some people it would be the money. Um...they usually don't do their job well then. Because they just do it for the money, they really don't care what results come out of their work. For me it would definitely, the work would be the self-esteem part of it (Laughs). Um...for people who are just working just so that they can have the money so that they can get further, I would say they're barely surviving. (Interview 2, p.2)

Marie relates strongly to her role as a productive member of her family's business. She does not work out side of her home although she has travelled and volunteered at a religious mission school. Her identity is very much tied to being a family member first,

her role as an employee in the family business is not one that she identifies as separate. Marie has a clear notion of her own wants and needs, and the contributions that she would like to make in this regard.

Growth, Development, and Self-Actualisation through Work.

Self esteem arises from an active set of wants which are reasonably well satisfied (Warr and Wall, pp17-18). Realistic wants and self-esteem are stifled through an inappropriate arrangement at work (Warr and Wall, p.21). Development of self-esteem requires that individuals have active wants. People who passively accept their lot, and want neither to work nor to achieve other satisfactions cannot hope to improve self-esteem through employment (Warr and Wall, p. 178). Setting goals that are too easily attained suggests an "inactive wants-system", just as consistently setting goals that are too difficult tends to reduce the intensity of the wants themselves.

Doug describes his work, for the most part as, a "boring and tedious job" (Interview 2, p.18), however he accepts that it does provide him with opportunities for growth, socially and intellectually and this has a positive impact on his own self-esteem.

> Because...well ok for uh...an example a few days ago the digging became difficult because we're kind of at the end of our digging ability with that machine. We're over a hundred feet below water level and uh...the digging is getting really tough down there. And it has to do with the height of our tower which was hard for me to understand at first but if we had a higher tower we could dig deeper. That aside I ripped a 1 3/8 cable and that stopped our digging process right there. Now we have to move anchors and...which is a great big process of putting large piers sideways in the ground with great big slings around then for anchors cause there's...there's well over a hundred thousand pounds of pull on these anchors and you really have to think of where do you want these anchors? They...you have to get people with uh...high hoes, with large machinery in to dig these things and my boss has given me some of this responsibility too. Also he wants my input cause I'm the one that's running the machine. And now with...I feel that with uh...the thinking that I have to do at school, it helps me in the thinking that I have to do at work,

which isn't very often. But that...that uh...tower has to come down now because we have to move one of the shims at the top. Well that's a seventy foot tower that weighs thousands of pounds and there's all sorts of cables and guy lines and what not and it is a real thought process to bring that thing down safely so that you don't wreck something. (Interview 2, p.12)

Doug: I don't know why? But that worries me that if you don't use your brain it uh...it also becomes idle and it doesn't work. (Interview 1, p.10)

Work that grants Doug responsibility is more satisfying than work that presumes that he does not care. He finds that his work, while providing him with responsibility, provides him with no mental stimulation and he looks to school for this.

For Beth, personal development at work is a combination of knowing what you are doing, being competent, and having your co-workers appreciating what you can do. One's self-esteem is raised when your business is seen to provide a good service. Beth's first experience with work was at their family's business. This provided an opportunity for her to regain some self-esteem lost when she left high school. Self-esteem she was unable to regain socialising with a sub culture of peers who were also high school drop out youth. Beth tends to devalue on-the-job learning compared to school learning although most of her knowledge is the result of life experience.

Well I, well I was going to school. Um, I didn't like the way the school was, like they, I don't know, its just I guess prejudice and, um, stuff like that and it just got to me and I wanted out, so I dropped out. And, um, Dad says, "Well, then come work for me. So... Yeah. Oh, yeah. (Laughs). (Interrupted by son) Well, when I dropped out of high school, then uh, Dad had two businesses at the time, his uh, second hand store and then his retail store. And he made me pretty much business manager of the retail, uh, the variety store there, the second-hand store. Ok. So I learned quite a bit about dealing with customers and your basic business running. (Interview 1, p.06)

Well banking, when I talked to the lady, she said, like just starting off, a high school diploma is a must. But, like I mean, you could work from there and then slowly educate yourself more to becoming loans officer and stuff. But, it's not, like its not a required thing to be able to work in a bank. (Interview 1, p.5)

Whereas with nursing you have to have your degree or your diploma of some sort in nursing. You've got to have the proper education, which is understandable. You don't want to go in there blindfolded not knowing... is this person knowing what he's doing or not? Like I mean you're playing with human lives there. So, yeah, there's a big difference in education wise in those two fields.

I know the people at my work experience at the Greytown Co-op there, the people were very nice. I enjoyed working with them tremendously. They joked around, they didn't take nothing seriously, and that's the kind of thing I like. I like it when you can crack jokes at one another and you don't take then to heart. Like I mean you're not going to go around saying oh yeah, you know he's saying such and such about me but the work itself is fine but its not what my what my career choice is related too. Like I mean its kind of going off the path a little bit. But, as far as working with the people, yeah, cause they call me now and ask me. "Do you want a job". Like they've offered me a full time job a couple of times. They keep calling and asking me, "Did you find a baby sitter yet?" But like I mean, I was part time. Until I can enter university I would definitely not mind going back and working with them. But, for me I would rather do a job that is satisfying to me even if the co-workers aren't quite what you expected. But, yeah, for me it's the job that I enjoy more than...than the people. You can always get along with people. Because If you got problems like I mean If you don't get along with your co-workers and you got a problem then they're going to tell you well tough luck, you know. Figure it out yourself. Whereas if you can get along with them they'll say Ok this is how we do it. They'll take the time. They'll show you haw to do it the right way and... Yeah, so for sure it's very important to get along with your co-workers. Like I mean, that's one of the stresses of jobs. You stress yourself out because, ok, they don't like me, am I doing this wrong? Are they going to say something? Yeah, so for sure it's important to get along with them. Compromise. (Interview 1, p.23)

Beth: I think that's very important in a work place. Like I mean if you're constantly being put down and stuff sooner or later you're going to just...you're not going to care at all what you're doing or how you're doing your job. And then others are going to see it and they're going to say well, no, we're getting treated like crap. Like I mean what's the point. So no for sure you have to be able to just I guess just build your own humanity and be able to help others and do that too. No. respect is very important in a work place, cause I mean if you have no respect for your workers or they have none for you its going to be miserable. It's going to be horrible. They're not even going to want to go to work. (Interview 2, p.10)

Beth acknowledges the importance of 'work' in developing one's sense of self worth and likewise her 'need to work' as a means of becoming a fully contributing member of society. Although she values her role as a mother highly, she feels that she must go to work outside the home to be recognised as a contributing member of society (Interview 2, p.5).

Anne observes the self-taught with a great deal of respect. Her family's business is essentially founded in the tradition of "figuring it out for yourself". Anne's self esteem is

not high by any means and she worries about "making a fool of herself" on new tasks. She is concerned about the impact on employee's self-esteem when they have insensitive bosses. She has observed employees who continue to do the same task over and over for many years and wonders how they maintain their mental health. Anne appears to have a highly developed set of wants but cannot seem to connect where she is now, in her work, with where she claims she would like to be, a lawyer. She is willing to accept the "communication" connection between teaching and law but makes no such concession regarding her work and law.

Anne: Ok. Um... Well, we use both, standard and metric, actually usually standard. And well we all had to learn how to use the new forklift, great big forklift. Actually I think that its a really good idea to be familiar with pretty much every task in the entire shop. Not just one particular...I mean you don't usually have a change that affects the entire shop like that but you learn specific jobs that are new to you it may be difficult. It's a good idea because, it's a good idea because like I say it you don't progress you regress and anyway a lot of people have very repetitive jobs in factories and its nice if you're not required to do repetitive ... if you can have variety then have variety. Yeah. Cause those repetitive jobs... that is often, like you were saying about the full time work, that is often what full time work means. In factories anyway. And again I think that's one of those jobs that just drives you nuts. Cause you can sit there and learn all the tricks of the trade before your first coffee break and then do same thing for 20 years and where are you going with it? (Interview 1, p.17)

... if most of the people believe that you are pretty much worthless, you'll start to believe it yourself. And, well if you have no one in your life who cares what you make of yourself then you won't care either. You'll just let yourself be beaten down. Forever, if that's the way it goes.(Interview 1, p.21)

... that's ok as long as employers recognise that people have feelings and ...and uh...I don't know there's some thing of an education barrier sometimes too. Because I've met people who have barely any education at all and they're adults and the thing that gets me is how some people who are educated automatically treat them as though they have no brain. (Interview 2, p. 6)

Anne expresses her anxiety about participating in society outside of the confines of her own community, church, and employment, but she is determined to do just that

(Interview 2, p.16). She sees more formal training as inevitable if she is to get beyond minimum wage jobs or find meaningful work outside of the family business.

Allison has not found paid employment locally that she would describe as satisfactory. The jobs available to her have been limited to factory and restaurant work. She identified limitations as her education and a schedule that allowed her to parent her young children. She finds that social interaction at work encourages her self-esteem. Raising her children on her own has provided opportunities for personal growth, development in areas where employment could not.

> Allison: My mom works at a window manufacturing plant right now, which is the glass thing. She's worked at a couple of different ones. I don't remember so...
> I can't do that stuff. I've tried it and I hate it so I quit after a month so it's not for me.
> Making electrical components and stuff. (Interview 1, p.13)

> Allison: You know um... a couple of years ago I realised that I have to for myself and for my kids, do something with my life. Cause other wise I'd just be sitting in the same house for years and years, and years. Not a very good situation. Um... I wanted to make a good example for my kids' cause their dad is not in their life, so. I figured I had to do something to show them that you have to work hard for what you need to get, so. That's basically what changed it for me. Just doing it for my kids. (Interview 1, p.20)

Allison is a consumer of social supports as she endeavours to raise her family on her own, she prescribes to elements of the "official discourse" desiring to be a productive and contributing citizen in her community, as an early years teacher. She is critical of a society that views her endeavours to raise her children as less-worthy than participating in some minimum wage job. Despite all, she remains optimistic and sees opportunity in the future.

Marie's desire to "make a difference" is supported by her interest in teaching children. She does not question her own perspective or understanding of the world, hence appears

to have some confidence and self-esteem in this regard. Marie takes a practical

perspective to defining what is valuable in "understanding the world" as is illustrated by

the second story.

> Marie: If I can't feel that this is my thing in life, then I will be looking for something else. Um, when I worked in the office I enjoyed it. I was... you know, always wanted to see how I could do stuff better, um, perfectionist I guess you'd call it. Um, I really enjoyed it being together with my family. Um, it was sort of; I felt that was sort of our family pride was the business. Being involved in that. Seeing how much I could stun my dad with all the new stuff I can find you know. Um, those kind of challenges, but I didn't think I would want to be there for the rest of my life. And then when the opportunity came up to go to Bolivia, I found out I would be helping in the school. And I said, "No way. I am no teacher." I did not want to be there. But I figured well, ok, if that's what its going to be, then I'll go. And I went there and I really enjoyed it, so... And the reason why I enjoyed it was not the part of the teaching exactly but the part of seeing the kids. They were so confused. They couldn't understand it and then you would go up to them and you would explain it to them. And they were like,"Oh, that's how it is"! You know? So, that part to me was why I liked teaching. Not just telling kids you know what to do and all that kind of stuff. Um, for me I would see teaching as helping children grow up and understand the world they're in. And that to me would be important.

> Marie: Well, I'll use an example of Lhassa, one girl in Bolivia. They use different money than we do but they do have...they do, they either have bolivianos or dollars. Dollars is US money. In Lhassa's books it was all printed in the States. And she was supposed to learn her coins on a piece of paper. you know, no real coins. I had wished I had just coins to teach her. She didn't know one from the next. She was supposed to know the difference between a dime and a nickel and a quarter, you know, and she just couldn't get it. It was on her test. I knew that. Huh... she couldn't get it and so frustrated already she was like, "Forget it. I'm not going to learn it". Um...I realised that she was giving up. I was that way in school too, actually. I would, if I didn't see reason in life for it then why was I going to bother learning it? So I... and those kids they all learn or they all dream of some day going to Canada. So, I said if you want to go to Canada some day, you're going to have to learn this, cause we use this money. Ours is basically the same as the States. Then she was interested. Ok, now I'm ready to learn because I'm going to find this is important in life yet some day, so I'm going to learn it. And Lhassa was pretty good by the time she was done.

Personal Integration

Existentialists emphasise the aloneness of each individual and that one of a person's most

basic needs is to bridge the distance between oneself and other people by some form of

relationship that breaks the boundaries constraining one as a person (Warr and Wall,

1975, p.74).   This aspect explores the extent to which individual wants regarding social

contact are satisfied through social contact at work.

Doug: To wear earmuffs (on the drag line) multiplies the echo. Feels like your ear drums are going to break so uh…we have found ear plugs where I put them uh…(laughs)…You know this probably isn't right but…uh if I stick them into my ears far enough for some reason that takes the vibration out and then its just noise which is left. There's a large uh…a truck motor right behind me. It's a 30 - 406 Cat motor. (Interview 1, p.7)

Beth: … I know when I watched 'Erin Brockovich" the first time, I agreed with her so much. She was going in for an interview and it's true, for a woman that's been at home for years raising kids its hard to find a job that pays worth anything because you lack the experience of being with people and you are just at home. And what people don't see is they (moms) are working 24/7. It might not be what the people in the stores or the businesses need to know but it's there, like I mean, it's all there.
Yeah. I think if I would have waited, finished high school, at least held down a job for a few years and then married and started family and things like that, I think I would have been stronger in the self esteem area. (Interview 1, p. 14)

Anne: Well, it has a lot to do with how they work and some of their attitudes. I mean sometimes you never make friends with a co-worker and you 're just, you're acquaintances and that's where it stays. Sometimes that's better. But, it is important because if you can't stand the people you work with, you will quit. One of you has got to go and that's… it happens. (Interview 1, p.8)

Anne: You might love your job but if it drives you nuts, somebody's got to go, I mean. Yeah. (Interview 1, p.8)

Anne: Uh, one of my bosses, she did something that just made me so mad I…I quit. I wasn't going to put up with her anymore. She asked me later if I had liked the job. Well, what can you say? I mean, I did like the job. (Laughs) I liked the work and all that and I liked the customers too. It was great except for her. So… move on. It was petty. It really was. It should have been petty to both of us but it wasn't unfortunately. And, uh… the thing that got me was… I don't think she realised how thoughtless she was being. And uh… it struck me that she would go no higher in life either as long as she kept on being like that. It was ridiculous, I know other staff were unhappy about it too. She did the same thing to everyone. (Interview 1, p.8)

Anne: I did feel as thought she had beaten me. She'd won. She got me to leave. Which I'm sure was not her intention but it worked. So, yeah what can you do? (Interview 1, p.9)
Allison: I just have to do things by myself. I don't…I don't know maybe its because of my past, um…like the way I grew up or something… I'm not sure. But I feel that I have to do things by myself in order to feel like its been done properly by myself and to have kind of more self worth for myself. You know like the higher self-esteem knowing that I did it. I think about myself as so much better in my own personal mind, so. (Interview 1, p.10)

Marie: I could say that I don't really understand it but that person whose done basically the same thing for so many years is very much a person that keeps to himself. Um…For a while there you couldn't even make eye contact him. You 'd look at him and he would look away. you know. He, he was very much what I would call a hermit, you know. Just

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let me be in my world and you be in yours. He's changing a little bit but I think people that are very shy and don't want other people to touch them, and you know, like not necessarily physically, but you know, just... They don't want their lives touched by anybody. They just want to be themselves. I'll get through life already. Um, I think those would be more the people that would stick to something for that. (Interview 1,p.13)

The dominant discourse refers to partnerships, on a grand scale where business, industry and education co-operate to achieve goals that independently they would not be able to accomplish. This co-operation enables organisations to compete more successfully on a global scale. On a personal level, research participants emphasise the importance of family, religion, community and geography as cohesive tendency and not profit or high-powered service. There is a certain amount of ambiguity around the notion of co-operation and competition because being a member of a community provides them with the resources necessary to resist the external environment. The narrative presented a more pragmatic than romantic notion of the need for 'co-operation'.

Autonomy at Work

Autonomy, within the course of one's job, suggests the freedom to choose whether or not to follow course of action and to adjust one's actions as one proceeds (Warr and Wall, 1975, p.181). The most influential attribute of a job is the opportunity that it offers (or fails to offer) for "use of the workers abilities" and for "associated feelings of interest, sense of accomplishment, personal growth, and self-respect"(Warr and Wall, 1975, p. 121). Repetitive routine jobs offer few such opportunities.

The Canadian Institute for Advanced Research examined the connection between health care and unemployment and came to the startling conclusion that what most influenced

health is a work situation where people feel in control of their lives (Ostry, A. et al., 2000, pp. 179-192).

Doug describes what it is like to operate a "drag line" all day. He balances the benefits of job security against the boredom and health hazards associated with his work. He knows that he is the only person on the crew who can operate this machine and is aware of the physical health risks, particularly to his hearing. Doug's sense of autonomy is associated with his ability to operate a variety of machines used on site. He looks to completing his high school as a means of getting more interesting work where he can "use his brain". There is little chance of advancement in this small business to move into a position with more responsibility and higher pay. It is clear from Doug's description that his work and self esteem are connected.

Doug: Yes. For one reason that uh…I know how to operate all the machines in that pit. The boss himself runs the crusher which I …I uh don't know much about cause that's his baby. And then there are all the loaders, which I enjoy. But loaders are also quite rough on a person whereas sitting in this drag line, it's a…a Medill yarder, by the way. But uh…(laughs)…To think back now I think one of the reasons he taught me how to run that machine is so he wouldn't have to sit in there all day long. Cause you probably have more room behind the steering wheel of your car than I do in that uh…in the cab of that machine.
Oh there are…directly under me are uh four foot open gears so its extremely loud. To wear earmuffs multiplies the echo. Feels like your ear drums are going to break so uh…we have found ear plugs where I put them uh…(laughs)…You know this probably isn't right but…uh if I stick them into my ears far enough for some reason that takes the vibration out and then its just noise which is left. There's a large uh…a truck motor right behind me. It's a 30 - 406 Cat motor.
It's a 425 hp motor that is right behind the cab and uh…I also get to read a lot of hunting magazines and (laughs) gun magazines. (Interview 1, p.7)

Doug: There's nothing to see because uh…maybe eighty yards from the machine the bucket goes into water. And if there's a large pile in front of the machine I don't even see that. So that machine is run by feel. Whether the bucket is digging there isn't…when the bucket is a hundred feet below water level there isn't really much to see out there. And so doing that day after day becomes quite repetitious. And that leads to…not to change the subject here but that leads to why I went back to grade twelve or to finish my grade twelve. Some day I would like to do something more with my brain because I just think that I can. (Interview 1, p.8)

Beth claims that her ability to make someone smile contributes to a sense of self worth. She wants to satisfy her clients, not necessarily in the way they choose, but in the way that is best for them given her training and expertise as a nurse. It is in this kind of work that she would find autonomy.

> To me its not so much the amount of money I make, but that I'm comfortable and happy where I'm working. Cause, like I mean, you're going to start off, well for me I haven't worked, in like, seven years because of the kids, but I'm going to start off at the bottom of the pile anyway. So, as long as I'm happy and I enjoy my work, I don't care what the pay is.
>
> ... I like working with people. I like seeing them smile when you've done something for them. So, I guess nursing is a pretty good area for that.
>
> ... I've seen people there complaining they've been at a job for 5 years and more and they complain because they're so unhappy but yet they're scared to make a new start because they'd be taking a wage cut. Well. To me that wouldn't bother me. If I were unhappy I wouldn't stick around
>
> And, like I mean you are satisfying your customers if you're doing what they want you to do in the way they want you to do it. But I think that if I were to go into the health area I would get more satisfaction out of it because they (persons) would come in broken and hurt and they'd walk out smiling and being able to keep on going with their life. Like, I mean it wouldn't always be that way but to the majority of the point. Yeah. (Interview 1, p.5)

Allison addresses the notion of autonomy under the heading of "self-sufficiency" and she addresses this most directly when describing her work in raising a family. To Allison, "self-sufficiency" is an illusion but a degree of autonomy is important.

> Allison: Um... I just have to do things by myself. I don't...I don't know maybe its because of my past, um...like the way I grew up or something... I'm not sure. But I feel that I have to do things by myself in order to feel like its been done properly by myself and to have kind of more self worth for myself. You know like higher self-esteem knowing that I did it.
>
> Allison: Oh... in my personal life maybe, yeah. But employment wise I uh, obviously, you have to rely on somebody for something eventually, so...
>
> Allison: Um...to be able to do what I want to do in a job, well not what I necessarily want to do but to do it my way is better for me. Sometimes I find the way they have set out how you should do this doesn't work as well as something that maybe I can think of

some days. It depends on the situation really, but the flexibility to have that choice there is great.

Allison: It would be good for me for any employment. Cause I like sometimes thinking of things myself works out better for me, so. (Interview 1, p. 25)

Marie claims that autonomy and self-esteem are connected with doing the kind of work where you feel that you make a difference. People may be willing to work for less, she claims, as long as they are doing what they like to do because it makes them feel good about themselves. She uses a "money talks" metaphor to make her point, she is clear on her need for sufficient money to live in safety and with integrity.

Marie: I don't think I would last very long in an assembly line job. Cause, what's the big deal about parts. This helps nothing in my future. I would want to...I would want to ... touch somebody's life... we have found in our business, a wage increase usually keeps them (workers) there at the most for a year longer. And then they're gone because they don't enjoy it. They don't want to be there and you can only stand it for so long and then · money doesn't talk any more.

Part Time & Minimum Wage Work

In Manitoba, the decline in purchasing power of the minimum wage over the period of 1988-1997 was 12%, representing a loss of in purchasing power of $30/week for those working full time at the minimum wage (Black ad Silver, 1999, p.22). During that period, the average weekly and hourly earnings declined in real terms more rapidly in Manitoba than in Canada as a whole (Black and Silver, 1999, p.1). Many Manitobans who are living in poverty are employed at low wages and are among the working poor (Black and Silver, 1999, P.34). Much of the type of work that the research participants are involved in appears to be beyond the reach of labour standards, Workplace Health and Safety, and even minimum wage controls. Anne and Marie work in home-based

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businesses while living at home, Doug works for a small firm and is laid-off from freeze-up to spring thaw. He moonlights for extra cash as a sub-contracted welder for a local manufacturer while collecting employment insurance or social assistance just to make ends meet.

Doug: ...I make fairly good money during the season. Work longer hours and then uh...the boss gives me a vehicle. He pays the fuel and I have a fairly good wage. But uh...when it uh...gets cold outside my job ends right there. And so usually from the end of November till April I collect unemployment. Cause its hard to find a job around here. I was quite honest with the employers. I go in and I ask to speak to the person that does the hiring and firing because I want to work for you for three months. I have a really good job. Maybe you have a project that needs a guy for a short period of time and I'm going back to a job that I love. And uh...they thank me for telling them that but uh...no...that they don't have anything like that. (Interview 1, p.8)

Doug: You play...you play catch up because during the winter, the most expensive time of the year you have higher bills than you do at any other time of the year. And you're not working. Uh...it usually cleans out my savings account.

Doug: I have great visions of uh...I always look forward to the end of the year and I don't know why because I think that I'll hunt rabbits and carve wood and shoot targets throughout the winter. But it never works that way. I am off work for a week or two and I ...and I am quite unhappy doing nothing. So I go and find something to do.

For the last few years I went and helped at a...at a local carpenter shop that uh...they...they're almost a placement agency for ...for people that aren't doing well in society. (Interview 1, p.9)

I do feel discriminated against and it came from the unemployment office. We don't want you to collect unemployment. We'd just rather you get a full time job. And I barked at that lady. "Lady if it wasn't for what I do you'd be sitting in a wood shed because you wouldn't have any base gravel to put this building on. You don't care that your roads are in good shape. All of the roads that you drive on are from us low life suckers who make that gravel, who crush that gravel, who make a very specialised product and yet it means absolutely nothing to you. Its people like you that cause us problems. I don't want to be in this unemployment office because usually I end up with people like you." And that's what I told her. And you know what? From day on she gave me full respect and uh...I've never had problems with them since then. They used to make me go to these...these stupid meetings which I think degrade your self-esteem about how to re enter the work force. And then they would have these easels with great big papers with single sentences on them. Do not feel bad that you are not working. And them they'd flip the paper. Do not be scared of an interview. And you were made out to seem like an idiot. And I don't know why that made me mad. It just did. (Interview 1, p. 13)

Doug: I went from heavy labour to heavy machinery. I realised a long time ago already that I wasn't physically fit enough to just do heavy physical labour for my living days. So even in my down and out years I knew then already I had to do something different. And when my life happily turned around then I realised that uh...if I ever wanted to make money on top of what I was doing I would have to change certain things. And...so from, from the concrete work I went to...well I worked in factories for a few years. And uh...smoking cigarettes and smoking welding smoke and smoking...and smoking and smoking. That just about killed me too. So I quit factories and cigarettes and...and uh (laughs)...(Interview 1, p.4)

Doug appreciates the opportunity to work. The fact that the boss provides him with a vehicle to get to and from work is an additional source of self-esteem. He feels valued for the work he does and demonstrates some loyalty to his seasonal job. He is satisfied with his salary. Although he claims to look forward to the end of the season to take some time to do what he loves to do but finds that his "need-to-work" prevails and he finds some job to keep him occupied.

Doug's comments affirm his role as a consumer of Employment Insurance when he is not at work. He is unapologetic and resents the suggestion that he is receiving benefits that he is not entitled to. He is proud of his role in the production of gravel; an essential product that, through no fault of his own is seasonally mined. He is highly critical of a bureaucracy that forces him to participate in a degrading process of "re-entry" into a work force that he feels he already contributes to, substantially.

There is tension with an "official discourse" here. Doug is not interested in getting "more jobs"; he suggests that changing the official perception of his current seasonal work would do more to contribute to his self-esteem. He acknowledges that his wants are modest and having opportunity to pursue these also contributes to his self-esteem.

Doug works for a small firm and is laid-off from freeze-up to spring thaw. He moonlights for extra cash as a sub-contracted welder for a local manufacturer while collecting employment insurance or social assistance just to make ends meet.

Anne: That depends what you want to do? I mean if you really think about, people who work in restaurants, they always have split shifts. It's like having two jobs. An no matter what you don't want to commute twice a day it doesn't matter how good you get at it, you can be there 20 years, you'll still have split shifts. The better a chef you are the more evenings and weekends you'll have. It's a matter of opinion. It depends what kind of a job you like. And it's kind of like if you like working in a store. Well, if you know how chintzy some of the major stores are...

Anne: Not just salary. But I mean really, really chintzy. They'll hire you for like 3 hour shifts only because 3 hours you don't have to have a break. And then they'll call you in twice in one day. And both times 3 hours and not have to pay you for those lousy 15 minutes. Yeah, and it really gets me because. I've heard more businessmen say this but, they did this to their staff just out of high school and then they donate money to public projects that will make the name of the store popular and things.... And they treat their staff like that. It's really upsetting for those businessmen who treat their employees properly. And I don't think it is likely that everyone can have full time work. Not everyone wants it either, or needs it but, it isn't really... its less an option.

Anne: I tend to think of a person like that as being nuts. It's impossible to maintain a relationship with that kind of person. You can never find them. You can't get them on the phone and you can't talk to then at work, they might get fired. And it's just an impossible life style. I mean, I know one girl who has three part time jobs and I know another girl who has two part time jobs and you try to get a hold of them and its almost impossible. And I think they have very few friends. Not that I really look down on them. They work very hard. But when do you play? And who do you know? Then it comes back to; your only friends are at work so then it becomes terribly important to your relationships at work.

Anne is distressed by the lifestyle required of anyone working split shifts. In fact, she claims that one has no time for any social life or home life and on a minimum wage its just not worth it. She challenges the motives of business organisations that donate large sums to charitable organisations but under pay their staff.

Allison: Yeah. Without the education it's all that you can get around here. I mean even to work in the Co-op or something like that you have to be done your grade 12 before they'll even look at you. But I mean just working in a restaurant part time around here. That's real easy. So I don't know. Um...when you look for jobs around here its basically you have to have some kind of an education or experience like say in the farm stuff, where if you're not experienced with that you won't get hired to, so... For anyone who's not really very well educated all you can get is your part time work, so. (Interview 1, p.14)

Allison: For self-esteem wise if then you don't have to rely on the government to live for me being a single mom. You know like you still have to be on assistance but not as bad. Not as totally reliant on them to support yourself and your children. For the...like the formal training or school like for a teacher or something, that would be better because then you have the choice of what you want to do. Not just taking what you can get for employment. (Interview 2, p.2)

Allison sees full time and well paid work as an ideal to strive toward. Completing her

Grade 12 at the ALC provides Allison with a sense that she is moving toward this goal.

A time when she feels she can make some decisions for her self. She maintains a strong

commitment to her own children and faced with the choice of pursuing a career or caring

for her family she chooses her family. This dilemma decreases as her children grow

older and begin attending school.

New Survival Skills and Workplace Literacy

> "The young suffer the pangs of uselessness in a particularly
> cruel way, since an ever expanding educational system trains
> them ever more elaborately for jobs that do not exist"
> (Richard Sennett, 1997, p. 63)

This section probes research participants for their discourse on the high tech utopian

vision promoted as the "information age". There appears to be scepticism, perhaps even

a deepening cynicism with technology as the means to improving society. Forces of the

marketplace emphasise endless production and consumption for profit with little attention

to the working people whose labour is being displaced. (Rifkin, 1995, p.56)

Allison: Well yeah, at a restaurant you don't need a computer, so. You just need a piece of paper and a pen, so. You don't have to use a computer at work, well at my work anyway. Um...for being a teacher I can see that being a great help, cause there's a lot of things you can find on line to help to teach kids. But for right now for me it pretty useless other than for school, so. (Interview 1, p.18)

Beth: Oh yeah, for sure. Cause I know when you look at jobs... secretaries... nowadays, even just dental assistant, it doesn't matter what kind of office. The more computer knowledge you have the better your chances of getting a job. Without it you are pretty much going to be knock back down to the end of the pile again.
Beth: No, no. But at the work experience I did learn how to use a computerised cash register. I wasn't the regular cash register but it was a computer, so. That was something new. I'd never used one of those before. So yeah, it was a whole new different way of bringing in the money. (Interview 1, p.18)

Marie: At first I was just doing the basics like, mailing stuff and writing prices on price sheets and stuff. But towards the end I was doing bookkeeping on computer. We had

just got the computer and figured that all out. I was doing pay cheques and sending the bills and paying bills. (Interview 1, p.02)

Anne: I think people rely on it too much for they're own good. Because there is no such thing as privacy with computer use. I'm mean we can even open other peoples files accidentally, and see whatever confidential stuff you want to, so. You can rely on it or not as you want to. In the work place though I can see that more and more people will be relying on computers around the world. Um. I'm... I'm still not entirely sure why? I mean in some ways it makes sense like for people who do drafting and architecture and that kind of thing, does make sense, but for a lot of people its extra paper work. I mean you create your own job. You sit there and turn out papers. And what for? (Interview 1, p.16)
Anne: Yeah, that is true. Often it seems as though you have to do more than your share · if you're going to be part of a team. Because there is always someone there who will complain because you're doing less than your share and theirs together. So I guess an uncomplaining attitude is the most important thing. Other than that, well, without teamwork a lot of things just wouldn't work. So yeah, it true you do need that. (Interview 1, p.16)

Doug: Uh... I don't believe that everybody needs to know a computer. That...that the world is tied by the Internet is fine for people that want to use it and some that need it for...It must make research real easy. But uh...I also find that...ok first of all I'm operating very large machinery and there is...the only electrical on that machinery are the gauges to monitor what's going on around me. And for...I would imagine that for my lifetime there will never be computers in those machines. And I am still of the type of person...Our car was demolished in a car accident so we had to go and by another vehicle. I bought a late 80's Caprice because it has nothing computerised about it. I uh...we also had an old Dodge truck at the time. We had to replace the transmission in that truck which I and my friends did. It cost me 200 bucks. I did it myself with...with some help. I'm driving a company vehicle. I blew that transmission yesterday. It just stopped. I was driving down the road at highway speed and I let off the gas to pass a tractor or just to move over on a gravel road and I put the gas back down again. There · was nothing there. It was like I was in neutral. It just revved (Interview 1, p.16)
Doug: No. They are not essential. And I feel that people should get back to some basics instead of being so stuck on computers. I'm ...I'm sure they serve a purpose. I think another example is one of my best friends at the time. He was running his dad's business and uh, we enjoyed partying together. And we would call him up "Hey let's go out". None of us had any girlfriends right at the time so we all...we just us three guys would go drinking and driving around the country side. And uh...oh he was still in the office. Well we went to the office to pick him up. He's on the Internet again. Look what this girl is saying to me. And he showed us smut and just filth and porn and that, that just about destroyed that guy. Eventually I said to him "If that's all your life is about I'm not going to call you. I'm not going to talk to you anymore. You decide that now. And we were really good friends at the time. And even though my life had nothing to speak of as much it was just a ...it was such, such garbage what he was using that computer for. (Interview 1, p.16)

The research participants agreed that computers had their place, a tool that was useful in

completing some tasks (e.g. book keeping, drafting) but that what the computer was able

to do for them did not warrant the emphasis that it was getting. All of the research

participants had used the computer in their Adult Education course work and agreed that it was useful here, only Beth speculated that the computer had broader applications. Doug was sceptical about the use of computer because of its capability in accessing "filth and porn" that "just destroyed this guy". He saw no use for the computer in his work nor did he sense any threat that he might one day be replaced by a "microchip.

Information Communication Technology was accepted and embraced to the extent that it remained a work tool in control of the user. Doug and Anne both viewed ICT as a threat when it was used as either a means of direct control over work or as providing information that might challenge their beliefs.

Anne referred to the emphasis on "teamwork" as a new skill. She was sceptical about emphasis on this because of the difficulty in managing some manufacturing projects so that everyone does their fair share but she concedes that without teamwork a lot of things just would not work.

With the seemingly endless addition of new and essential skills and increasing technological literacy requirements, the spectre of uselessness seems to shadow the lives of even the educated middle-class. There is an undeniable sense of vulnerability and also defensiveness among the research participants on this topic. Faced with the rhetoric of uselessness, youth participants fluctuate between viewing themselves as dispensable in the face of an "official" discourse or relate to elements of an alternate or "unofficial" discourse like religion, in which they find value in themselves or are valued by others.

Dislocation and Job Insecurity

Research participants expressed reluctance about becoming a part of a work culture that involved forms of work de-skilling, an accelerating pace of production, increasing workloads, and the loss of control by the worker over the production process to a machine. It is important to have the choice to stay in one's community if one chooses. Generally, to have industry or government impose the need to move outside of southern Manitoba would be unacceptable compared to one choosing to do this on their own. Their choice to stay where they were appeared deliberate but only because the alternative does not seem that attractive and this, as in Anne's case (below), introduces a new kind if tension.

Marie: For me if I'm doing a job that I don't like but I feel I should do it, then I think about it. Well I'm a Christian. Why am I doing it? I'm doing it for God. So I think of it as I'm doing it for Him. Then I am much more excited about doing it. (Interview 2, p.3)

Marie: For me I would say if I can't glorify God in serving Him that way in that work then that would also be not a good thing. (Interview 2, p.5)

Marie: ... then the focus would be more on the people that I'm doing it (volunteering) for because its sort of like 'they' are my boss... whereas...whereas if its uh just a job then I would be looking at the boss and trying to please him or her. It would be the people that I work...that I'm doing for... So for me if I go somewhere and I help these people and it seems like they don't appreciate it then its as if I came back with a zero paycheque. (Interview 2, P.12)

Doug: ... I like it here because there are certain aspects here that I would have a hard time getting in other places. I like my boss because he is a man of morals. I feel that he's got far more money than uh...I'll ever make uh...because of what he inherited. And yet he is still a down to earth guy and so I...

I respect him, yes definitely. So, I see how he lives his life even though he is wealthy and uh...that helps. I have a good job. I have a good boss. He is uh...he understands some of my needs financially. One year I went to him and I said, "I need more money. I...I'm not making it. I uh...operate half a million dollars worth of machinery for you and I'm not getting much more than any Joe Blow in a...in a factory setting would get and yet you want me to...to respect and treat with uh...care and protect you machinery and yet you don't want to pay." And he said, "Well we can change that. And I have never been in a financial situation of any kind." And he told me that himself. And he kind of came down to my level. Tried to look at it from my perspective and that kind of surprised me.

So that's one of the reason's why I'd like to stay here. On the other hand, how long do I want to stay in my little comfort zone? I would like to go out there and try some different things and see some other places and uh...more try some other things. (Interview 2, p.20)

Allison: Well I haven't been responding to it very well. Um...I'm on antidepressants now because of it, so. It was pretty hard for a while there. Um...I'm doing much better now. But for a while there the stress of working, well I wasn't working at the time, I was just going to school and I had my kids and the financial problems was really hard on me so and personal problems as well. (Interview 1, p. 22)

Allison: Um...yeah, planning. Things' not working out is a big stress factor. And... (Pause) I don't know? Um... Planning on something and actually working is totally different so for me it's been a pretty high stress part of my life you know because you never know what's going to happen so. I don't know. That's all I can say. (Interview 1, p.23)

Anne: Boredom. Desperation to do something else. Uh...yeah. I want to get out. And another thing I talked about yesterday was your motivation for taking that particular type of training and I don't know what everyone else answered but I figured it was one...another way to improve my communication skills. Like you were saying last time. And I think that would be very valuable, should I ever succeed in becoming a lawyer. And yeah, it would be a good thing.

In the face of mounting pressure from a free market society with its own powerful control systems the Mennonite people of Southern Manitoba cling fiercely to their cultural traditions. Perhaps the staunchest of these traditions is their religion. Free market society relies on carefully engineered management, advertising, taxation, and mass media techniques that keep people buying selling working, borrowing, lending and consuming at optimal rates (Alexander, 2001, P.06). While the entrepreneurs of Southern Manitoba rely on these mechanisms for the growth of their own business, their traditional life style is equally under siege. Perhaps the evangelical nature of Marie's religion is a response to the threat of universal dislocation in a free market society.

Doug equates high stress with the threat of having to move away from the community where he grew up and "knows what is going on." For Doug, dislocation and urbanisation are more cause for any anxiety than rapid pace of change resulting from information communication technology (ICT). Doug has interests out side of his seasonal job that include reading wildlife/hunting magazines (Interview 1, p.7), wilderness camping

(Interview 1, p.9), and target shooting (Interview 1, p.11). These interests provide an outlet for the stress Doug experiences (Interview 1, p.10). Doug also claims that his strong Christian values are a source of direction.

Allison claims that her stress is financial but she explores this more deeply. Her discourse of work includes reconciling her family responsibilities, school, and employment with discrimination she experiences as a result of her welfare status (Interview 2, p.7) despite her endeavours to get beyond this through her personal investment in education.

DIFFÉRANCE IN DISCOURSE

"Whatever the needs of the capitalist mode of production, a vast amount of ideological work remains to be done before coherent policy can be formulated, consent won and real change initiated" (Taylor, 1998, p.34)

This subsection examines the différance in discourses to achieve a deeper understanding of both. Determining the extent that the discourse of high school drop out youth from Southern Manitoba intimate consent to participate in a new economy as characterised by government rhetoric has been approached using determinants arising from the deconstruction of official and unofficial discourses in previous sections. Common places in the discourse of government/industry and research participants that point to the forces resulting in change include changing family structures, the economy, society, and technology. Expectations of research participants regarding their participation in the work of the new economy are organised according to the "both/and" logic inherent in deconstructing discourse as modelled by Derrida (1998).

Dominant and the subordinate discourse are explored in terms of the différance represented in the selected government documents and how these are experienced by youth. Each discourse represents and promotes values particularly as these relate to education and employment. The qualitative approach reflects the belief of the researcher that examining what these youth believe; how they think things got to be this way; and how they feel about the way things are, will lead to a deconstruction of "new economy" rhetoric in Southern Manitoba. There are no attempts to generalise these observations beyond the very narrow confines of this study. Observations on the gap between discourses present "tensions" in as much as the subordinate discourse deserves some reconciliation.

The effects of the current mode of economic globalisation on socio-economic groups vary. The outcomes are politically contingent with an overall balance of gains and losses are difficult to assess. Conclusions regarding economic globalisation vary with the perspective from which they are made, and with the time-span taken into account.

The claim that all Manitoba citizens have been experiencing a dramatic shift in the pace, depth and breadth of global economic integration invites further investigation. Evidence points to globalisation of production as phenomena evolving over the last century, rather than a radical break. The rhetoric of "rapid change" is used, at times, to serve a political agenda of "quick fix" solutions rather than to reflect history. Nonetheless globalisation has transformed the work that some people do and where they live in ways that two decades ago would have been unimaginable.

In terms of overall provincial growth, the effects of globalisation on the new economy do not appear to be overwhelming, but to individuals who benefit compared to those who do not, the impact has been considerable. Manitoba's poor regions remain poor, and many of the worst off are even more worse off, while the regions of the advantaged have become better off, emphasising that the gap between the province's rich and poor has widened (Black and Silver, 1999). Given the range of economic and social development successes in the province, a single view of the"new economy" and its impact on all Manitobans can hardly be seen as complete. On the contrary, the contents of this study underscores the responsibility of local politicians and directors of public and private institutions to consider those who's interests might be excluded from any benefits resulting from linkages with broader global markets. The following section underscores both the overlap in discourse and more importantly where the dominant discourse falls short falls short of representing these southern Manitoba youth.

'Official' New Economy Discourse Characteristics	'Unofficial' New Economy Discourse Elements (Areas of Tension)	New Economy Différance (Both/And) Discourse (Areas of Accommodation)
Occupational Change: More Jobs: Increasing numbers of High and Low Skill jobs. Higher Employment Rates	Self Esteem: Work as determinant Growth & Self Actualisation Personal Integration Autonomy at work	Post Materialist Values: Belonging, Freedom, Self-Esteem and Quality of Life
		Collaboration and Relationship in work
		Personal Growth: Formal Education and Development through Work
Increased Mobility of Labour and Urbanisation	Dislocation and Job Insecurity	Life/Work Balance
Lifelong Learning Essential Skills Employability Skills Technological Literacy	New Survival Skills and Workplace Literacy: Drop outs and Sub cultures Adult Education Self education, on-line	Work, including learning, to strengthen community and common purpose
Corporate Alliances: Private Sector, Government and Education, Labour		
Proliferation of Information Communication Technology		
Globalisation and Competition (free trade)	Greater competition for Part Time & Minimum Wage Work Scrambling for the lowest paid jobs.	Well Paid and Value Driven Work.

Figure 1. Summary Comparison of Discourse Characteristics

<u>Discourse Characteristics in Tension</u>

Based on HRDC survey's workers involved in some industry sectors may change

occupations up to seven times in one's career. This notion is in keeping with rhetoric of

rapid technological change and the corresponding programmed life long learning.

Manitoba statistics demonstrate that there are increasing numbers of both high and low

skill jobs available (Government of Manitoba, Speech from the Throne, 2002). Hence the opportunity for this type of labour market fluidity is apparent. The tension in discourse exists around participant's experience with a minimum wage job cycle, so while they may be changing jobs frequently, there is no sense of continuity toward the development of a meaningful career. Rapid technological change does not provide new opportunities for those who do not use the technology in their daily work but it most surely has an impact on the devaluing of one's work, monetarily and in terms of prestige associated with doing this work. Research participants conceded that the search for minimum wage/ part time employment that might provide the opportunity for development of their self-esteem appears futile.

The official discourse promotes the advantages of a mobile work force in terms of numbers and range of job opportunities (typically in urban centres). Among the research participants, there was no apparent consensus on the advantages of moving out of one's community in search of work. While Anne and Allison felt it might be necessary and perhaps even desirable, Doug, Beth, and Marie indicated a strong preference for remaining in their own community even if it meant accepting lesser work and job insecurity. The potential for dislocation was viewed as a great threat for these youth.

In response to the notion of lifelong learning combined with an increasingly hurried work pace, research participants seem to turn increasingly to their sub cultures for ways to deconstruct and make meaning of or critique the dominant discourse. The search for new

'survival' skills as opposed to 'essential' or 'employability' skills might best summarise their responses. For each of the research participants continuing high school at their local ALC was seen as a large "leap in the lack of faith" in a system that they are sceptical of. There is great tension surrounding the promise that at the end of a formal education lies a good job and part of that tension is the youth's own lack of confidence in their ability to be successful in an educational system where they experienced failure.

For research participants, globalisation and increased competition through freer trade is met with a range of responses. Doug does not believe that there are many employment opportunities for him outside of his own local community where every body knows him as a hard working guy. He contests the notion that globalisation has improved his opportunities in any way. Anne and Marie are convinced that globalisation has contributed to greater hardships in third world countries and are interested in doing missionary work to help out. Allison and Beth are more optimistic and believe that they may find their way into a profession where the demands in the service sector (e.g. teaching and nursing) continue to grow.

NEW ECONOMY DIFFÉRANCE (BOTH/AND) DISCOURSE

Non Materialist Values: Belonging, Freedom, Self-Esteem and Quality of Life

The nature of work has shifted away from fixed functions or clear career paths toward

more limited or diverse tasks. Work is thereby ceasing to provide workers with a stable

identity. The narrative of research participants initially revolved around their aspirations

expressed in terms of 'wants'. Their discourse affirmed the strong connection between the

development of self-esteem and the extent that their 'wants' were being satisfied through

membership in a community that included work. Their aspirations were not expressed in

materialistic terms.

> Beth: To me its not so much the amount of money I make, but that I'm comfortable and
> happy where I'm working. Cause, like I mean, you're going to start off, well for me I
> haven't worked, in like, seven years because of the kids, but I'm going to start off at the
> bottom of the pile anyway. So, as long as I'm happy and I enjoy my work, I don't care
> what the pay is.
>
> ... I like working with people. I like seeing them smile when you've done something for
> them. So, I guess nursing is a pretty good area for that (Interview 1, p.05)

The official discourse is instrumental, limiting the notion of work to paid employment as

a means of purchasing status and security in society. Research participants valued

supportive work environments that provided, meaningful work, recognition for

competence, opportunities to learn and to advance on the job, accommodation for non-

work activities (life-work balance), competent supervisors, and social interaction at work.

The unofficial discourse counters 'more jobs' and multiple occupation changes in one's

career with the language of 'more meaningful work - work that leads to the development

of self-esteem. The discourse différance accommodates non materialist values, a less

hierarchical structure in the workplace and work that provides opportunity for educational and social development. Workers desire a more personal relationship with the employer and expect flexibility in accommodating personal schedules.

"Life/Work Balance"

The "world of work" metaphor, central to transition-to-work programs and dominant discourse is largely absent from the discourse of rural southern Manitoba youth. The limitations of this metaphor become apparent as research participants refer to transformation and integration as a means of becoming more fully functioning members of their respective communities. The instrumental view of work, while serving a consumerist agenda of the new economy is largely out of step with a more holistic worldview represented by the narrative of these southern Manitoba youth.

There are apparent differences in the discourse on employment between provincial governments over the past decade suggesting that local governments are able to moderate the impact of globalisation (free market economy) on their citizenry. The degree of intervention appears to be largely a matter of ideology. Where the response of the *Taking Charge!* program , for example, pressured a population supported by social services off of welfare and into entry-level minimum wage jobs, the *Manitoba Training Strategy* appears to support its clients with a combination of both education and employment opportunities. There appears to be some movement toward supporting employers in providing employment opportunities that are more likely to develop into

sustainable careers, apprenticeships, for example (Government of Manitoba, Speech from the Throne, November, 2002). Agencies have a role in encouraging their clients to adopt a more critical stance, in response to suggestions that "globalisation", in all of its forms, is inevitable.

The *Manitoba Training Strategy* promotes a stronger connection between economic growth and improvement of labour standards pointing to labour productivity (employment) and human resources development (education) as a crucial link. The underlying philosophy views the right to organisation and collective bargaining as enabling regulations that may facilitate transformation, in the long term. The government strategy to offset the impact of fierce global competition on labour costs by encouraging the presence of political and social forces (e.g. effective labour unions) with capacity to push for social and institutional reform. By comparison, the previous PC government's low wage strategy drove wages down using policies that increase competition at the bottom end of the labour market and weakened trade unions. To increase competition on the bottom end of labour market, government reduced welfare and restructured programs (e.g. Taking Charge!) to focus on short term training and job placement as a means of getting people off welfare and back into the labour market (Silver, 1999). Bill 26, introduced in 1999, by the Progressive Conservative government, increased opportunities for employers to discourage those considering unionisation. It also imposed constraints on the capacity of trade unions to bargain with employers and engage in political action. Both of these initiatives were indicative of a government's consciously chosen low wage strategy for Manitoba's 'new' economy.

Both 'Taking Charge!' and 'Manitoba Training Strategy' presented youth with the only two "real" ways to be a citizen and fully functioning adult, "full time employment" and/or "formal education". Officially, "new/essential skills", "technological literacy" and "life- · long learning" are accessible through formal education, (preferably a university degree) and generally required for a steady, middle-class income. Research participants conceded that while one might be more valued as a "consumer" because of their economic status, to be valued as a productive member in one's own rural community, learning on the job and volunteering are essential attributes required to develop and maintain social/ cultural and traditional religious values.

Politicians continue to report on the successes of their successive governments in terms of "employment rates". Research participants were generally critical of a bureaucracy that forces them to participate in a degrading process of "re-entry" into a work force when the job one is being groomed for is dead-ended and pays minimum wage. Similarly, working several part time jobs to make ends meet provides little satisfaction, particularly when it severely affects one's social life.

The public/dominant discourse tendency to draw a strict divide between work and home is relatively new in historic terms and still unusual globally. The research participants intimate the need for a strong work/life connection, meaningful work and a sense of community.

> Marie: I think its very important people now a days to get into work, find something that they feel is for them and enjoy it. And also make sure that they don't put too high goals so they don't get so far that they actually lose...like don't get so involved into your work that you lose connection with your family and stuff. Cause I think a lot of people they, they get really high up into that...into their work...then they forget about the people around them. And a lot of unhappy families are because of that. There's so much priority put on work that, that uh...there's no family time and they forget about uh...being a dad.

Most married couples today are dual wage earners and a large contingent of employees are single parents, it is no longer possible to assume that childcare considerations never impinge on work. Today one half of women with young children work, while 77% of all women with children work (Izzo and Withers, 2000, p.17).

Personal Growth: Formal Education and Development at Work

The discourse of the research participants describes "lifelong learning" as an adaptive process to an ever-changing environment (that includes work), the discourse contests the notion of lifelong learning as enrolment in a constant succession of formal courses in pursuit of the newest 'essential skills' required by every one.

Formal education was both embraced and rejected by the research participants, paradoxically, for the same reasons. Accepting predictions of the status quo that the traditional rural way of life would go the way of the dinosaur led participants to hopelessness and despair. The discourse of critique, so important to the identity of each research participant did not come from within formal education. Rather, it was the discourse of the sub culture (e.g. religious affiliation, survivalist) that youth identifies with. The popular culture (subordinate discourse) enabled research participants to deconstruct a dominant narratives and contend with the oppressive practices they experienced in the hopes of achieving status in a more egalitarian inclusive and local community.

Along with technological change, the required skill levels within jobs are also changing. Professional and technical occupations that require post-secondary diplomas and degrees

are expanding their share of total employment. The proportion of middle-level skill jobs has been declining while the number of low-skill jobs is actually increasing. People working in jobs that require middle-level skills will increasingly find it necessary to upgrade themselves in order to join the ranks of the higher-level knowledge workers. However, the predictions from within the official discourse indicate that employers of lower-skilled workers such as retail and food services will probably become more automated in the future leaving fewer and fewer places for those with low skill levels.

> Beth: There is very much decreased opportunity. When you think about it though, all the new technology they come out with, every bit that they bring into the business world takes back one human worker. Look back to the last century. You had more than enough people to work but not enough work. Now its kind of the same but it's more you got to know how to run this machine in order to run the business. So, yeah, with all the technology they sure have. The ability to go out and find a job, it's not as easy anymore because they don't want manual labour they want technical labour now. (Interview 1, p.17)

The prominent notion that all labourers require the same set of "essential skills" is contested. It is more likely, according to Beth that as certain industries are developed and grown regionally, local employees will develop skills to fill that particular need.

Computer and ICT skills are accepted to the extent that these remains a work tool and does not affect or challenge comfortable limits of knowledge in absolutist terms.

> Anne: I think people rely on it too much for they're own good. Because there is no such thing as privacy with computer use. I'm mean we can even open other peoples files accidentally, and see whatever confidential stuff you want to. so. You can rely on it or not as you want to. In the work place though I can see that more and more people will be relying on computers around the world. Um. I'm... I'm still not entirely sure why? I mean in some ways it makes sense like for people who do drafting and

architecture and that kind of thing, does make sense, but for a lot of people its extra paper work. I mean you create your own job. You sit there and turn out papers. And what for? (Interview 1, p.16)

The promise of continuous employment contingent on lifelong learning through formal education is viewed with scepticism.

> Doug: That's one of the reasons why I don't try and further my education past the grade twelve for now because maybe I'm wrong but I still feel that the jobs that I will get are because of the people that I meet and make some sort of influence on. That whether they think I could do the job because of who I am not because of the...

Constant learning and skills upgrading is increasingly expected of all workers, not only in terms of skills on the job (competencies) but also skills required to get a job and to maintain ones position for the duration of the work period. Manitoba's labour market conditions driving the demand for skilled workers include unconventional work patterns, globally competitive markets, and rapid technological change. Changes in the increasingly market driven economy are impacting on educational requirements. Post-secondary education is essential in order to compete in an economy that is increasingly based on knowledge. Educational facilities will be changing the traditional ways of delivering learning from classroom situations to hands-on experience or distance education via high tech systems. Informational technology is expected to change how we educate, bank, shop and entertain ourselves. New technology, while creating new high-skilled and niche opportunities, is expected to adversely affect those with lower education and skills.

The Manitoba Training Strategy alludes to the challenge of adapting the organisation of work to address individual employees learning needs (Government of Manitoba, 2001, pp.12-14). It identifies the importance of creating incentives for investments in lifelong learning from the perspective of both employees and employers. This document alludes to the benefits and outcomes that result from diversity in learning and skills acquisition, in organisational contexts as well as in formal and informal learning environments. Creating equitable lifelong learning opportunities for people in poor socio-economic conditions, particularly aboriginal people are identified in the goals (Government of Manitoba, 2001, p.14).

Well Paid and Value Driven Work

Despite major changes in employment patterns predicted by governments, most Manitobans still work in full-time permanent paid jobs (Government of Manitoba, 2001, p.6). On the contrary, research participants viewed a single steady job as idealistic, their experience of employment is largely part-time; temporary or contract; multiple jobs; and self-employment. The jobs requiring flexibility particularly in the area of work patterns (split shifts) were equated with the lowest paid and least rewarding type of work offering little opportunity for socialising. What official sources present as 'changing employment patterns' are currently being experienced by those in the lowest paid jobs.

> Anne: I mean if you really think about, people who work in restaurants, they always have split shifts. It's like having two jobs. An no matter what you don't want to commute twice a day it doesn't matter how good you get at it, you can be there 20 years, you'll still have split shifts. The better a chef you are the more evenings and weekends you'll have. It's a matter of opinion. It depends what kind of a job you like. And it's kind of like if you like working in a store. Well, if you know how chintzy some of the major stores are...

Anne: Not just salary. But I mean really, really chintzy. They'll hire you for like 3 hour shifts only because 3 hours you don't have to have a break. And then they'll call you in twice in one day. And both times 3 hours and not have to pay you for those lousy 15 minutes. Yeah, and it really gets me because. I've heard more businessmen say this but, they did this to their staff just out of high school and then they donate money to public projects that will make the name of the store popular and things.... And they treat their staff like that. It's really upsetting for those businessmen who treat their employees properly. And I don't think it is likely that everyone can have full time work. Not everyone wants it either, or needs it but, it isn't really... its less an option.

Employees in the 'new' economy are no longer typically subject to the boredom of the assembly line, on the contrary, workers are encouraged to "invest in themselves" by participating in an endless stream of formal studies both on and off the work site. Workers are further expected to demonstrate their usefulness to potential employers on term projects where the workers contract is terminated when the work is done (the "portfolio worker"). Personally failing to be of value has in turn great social implications in a skill-based economy. Society needs ever fewer highly educated people to run it and most labourers appear peripheral to the elite productive core (Sennet, 1997, p. 63). Automation in a company managed from the top down can make even today's highly educated feel useless. In an economy that profits from doing more with less, unemployment, underemployment, de-skilling and welfare dependence are inevitable. The official version of "economic growth" offers no solutions in providing more consumer goods or the further division of labour in as much as these do not nurture the dignity of the worker (Sennet, 1997, p.64).

In 1999, 80% of Manitoba's employed workers had full time jobs, of those employed in part-time work, 78% did so by choice (Government of Manitoba, 2001, p.06). This

statistic does not disclose how many of these workers were forced to take part time and minimum-wage work because they had health, family, and/or transportation issues.

Collaboration and Relationship

Research participants indicated a desire to work on more equal terms with their bosses. A 1999 Watson Wyatt Canada Survey indicated that 61% of senior manages feel that they treat their employees as valued business partners, while only 27% of employees share that same opinion (Izzo, J. & Withers, 2000, p.125).

> Doug: ...an example a few days ago the digging became difficult because we're kind of at the end of our digging ability with that machine. We're over a hundred feet below water level and uh...the digging is getting really tough down there. And it has to do with the height of our tower which was hard for me to understand at first but if we had a higher tower we could dig deeper. That aside I ripped a 1 3/8 cable and that stopped our digging process right there. Now we have to move anchors and...which is a great big process of putting large piers sideways in the ground with great big slings around then for anchors cause there's...there's well over a hundred thousand pounds of pull on these anchors and you really have to think of where do you want these anchors? They...you have to get people with uh...high hoes, with large machinery in to dig these things and my boss has given me some of this responsibility too. Also he wants my input cause I'm the one that's running the machine. And now with...I feel that with uh...the thinking that I have to do at school it helps me in the thinking that I have to do at work, which isn't very often. But that...that uh...tower has to come down now because we have to move one of the shivs at the top. Well that's a seventy foot tower that weighs thousands of pounds and there's all sorts of cables and guy lines and what not and it is a real thought process to bring that thing down safely so that you don't wreck something. And uh...yeah I feel that even though its high school, its not...not a thesis paper on a university level, it helps. (Interview 2. p.11)

Community at Work and Global Competition

Among research participants, high stress in the new global economy is highly associated with the threat of dislocation and urbanisation. There is a deep sense of insecurity about the opportunities to maintain one's membership in a small rural community and a somewhat fatalistic sense that we will all land up in an urban centre.

By 2010, approximately 80% of Canada's population will reside in an urban area (10 000 people or more), and Canada are likely to have six cities of 1 million or more people. Furthermore, Canada's population will be concentrated in a smaller number of cities, approximately 52% of Canadians will be residing in Canada's nine largest cities and 35% will be spread among Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal (Conference Board of Canada, 2002, p.6). A recent study by the Canadian Council on Social Development found that poverty increased throughout Canada in the 1990s but especially so in metropolitan areas (Zussman, 2002, p.A11). The *Manitoba Training Strategy* represents an attempt by government to stem the demographic trend toward urbanisation by decentralising industry, education, and other major support services to temper this.

Despite efforts by government to decentralise industries and services, a steady migration toward the urban centre continues. Concerns expressed by research participants relate to safety, congestion, and quality of life available to low income families in the city.

> Anne: Well I went to the city for a job interview a while ago, and the only thing that bothered me, really bothered me, about that whole day was getting caught in a traffic jam. It drove me batty. I hate traffic jams. And I just figured, if this is rush hour, I'm not sure I want to live here. Especially not with my own car...and there we get into the wealth thing. You don't need a car in the city. (Interview 1, p.20)

Organisations that remain successful contend with competition from a much broader geographic area and a much shorter innovation cycle than previously. Companies continuously reduce numbers of employees in response to the need to demonstrate economic growth. In addition, work claims employees for longer hours with Americans working 163 hours longer per year than they were in 1969 (Izzo, J. and Withers, 2000, p.27).

Not all employees have come to accept the stress and anxiety that accompanies job insecurity and not everyone looks to work as a source of personal fulfilment. Workers who get little satisfaction from their minimum wage/part-time routinised work look to their sub-culture social groups for support.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview

The results of this study add to a growing body of knowledge suggesting a need for paying closer attention to the ideological basis of transition-to-work programming. There is a demonstrated need to move beyond the current orientation toward individualism, control, and efficiency that dominates work and education (particularly vocational) toward a more humane and flexible model. The différance in discourse points to the complexity of developing formal initiatives that are receptive to youth in their endeavours to become fully functioning members of their own communities, not just in gaining employment or a credential to better serve 'new' global economy.

The official and unofficial discourses are in tension some areas and overlap in others that require the application of both/and logic in analysing. One discourse is often described in terms of the other. Research participants espoused non materialistic values and at the same time deeply resented the material poverty they (and their children) faced. The discourse of youth promoted a work/life balance while dreaming of the job that would be more fully engaging. The research participants interpreted lifelong learning as an adaptive process to a remote and largely inhospitable environment. They preferred to participate in the kind of learning that enabled them to participate more effectively in their roles as parent, labourer, and resident/citizen. Each of the youth interviewed sought the dignity associated with well paid labour and recognition for their work as being

important whether it was domestic labour or dredging gravel from a pit for building construction.

Significance /Implications

Discourses of research participants reviewed and deconstructed indicate that consent to participate in education and employment opportunities associated with a new economy are substantive. Having stated this, it must be also made clear that this consent appears to be highly provisional. The enthusiasm and optimism articulated by high school dropouts for assuming their respective roles as active consumers and producers in global society driven by materialism, is weak. Rhetoric surrounding the vast need for "knowledge workers" with certain "essential skills" involved in specialised types of work is viewed with scepticism. This cannot be said about their sense of a need-to-work. Narrative demonstrates a very strong connection between their need to participate in meaningful work as a means of developing self-esteem. Tensions with the official discourse surround perceptions by youth that there is systemic "blaming of the victim". Rather than creating transition-to-work programs that target the deficiencies of marginalised youth, government and industry might collaborate to develop programs and supports for employers who in turn are required to create meaningful work with coinciding opportunities for life long learning both on and off the job.

Research participants concede that being valued as a "consumer" in the new economy is contingent upon one's personal economic status. Being valued, as productive members in

one's own rural community and globally however presented a paradox. The desires for individualism and at the same time a need for connectedness. Rural Southern Manitoba youth experience this paradox sharply because of their economic vulnerability. While committed to maintaining the social/ cultural and traditional religious values of a community that protects them, research participants have all demonstrated the need to pursue education and better paid employment that might, in the long run, undermine their position in that community/culture.

There are apparent differences in the discourse on employment between provincial governments over the past decade suggesting that local governments are able to moderate the impact of globalization (free market economy) on their citizenry. The degree of intervention appears to be largely a matter of ideology (e.g. deficit reduction at the expense of social support programs). Education and social support agencies have a role in encouraging their clients to adopt a more critical stance, in response to suggestions that "globalization, in all of its forms, is inevitable". Research participants were frustrated by the lack of integration of social and economic programs. The combination of competition at the low end of the labor market and a low wage policy (Black and Silver, 1999, p.32) resulted in a demoralizing scramble for minimum wage part-time jobs. Opportunities for dropouts to reconnect with high school courses have increased through the establishment of Adult Education Centers but the resulting education credential is not sufficiently aligned with on-the-job training as to result in adequately paid meaningful employment. There is little opportunity to directly apply what one has learned in the classroom of the ALC, on-the-job. This is problematic for research participant adult learners.

Official discourse presents two acceptable work-related options available to youth, "full time employment" or "formal education". Programs providing support for dropout youth tend to be structured accordingly, separate and not well articulated. Officially, "new/essential skills", "technological literacy" and "life-long learning" are accessible through formal education, (preferably a university degree) and generally, as the myth goes, required for a steady, middle-class income. The consequences of this mismatch do not favour youth that leave school early nor does there appear to be a viable opportunity for a second chance for these youth.

Politicians continue to report the accomplishments of their successive governments in terms of "jobs created" and "post-secondary enrolment rates". Research participants were generally critical of a bureaucracy that forces them to participate in a degrading process of "re-entry" into a work force when the job one is being groomed for is dead-ended and pays minimum wage. Similarly, working several part time jobs to make ends meet, while balancing family and social life, provides little satisfaction. For the research participants, accepting the "status quo" position on education and work leads to self-disparagement when neither of these is accessible. Attending ALC classes is not necessarily implied consent to becoming a competitor for entry level jobs in the new market economy. In Allison's case, it is an attempt to reconstruct one's own self esteem. (P.87 Interview 1, p. 22,23).

The discourses of research participants suggest a need for a broader range of personalised supports in their efforts to become contributing members of their respective communities.

A deeper understanding of the interplay between private and public discourse, demonstrated by increased flexibility and options for credentialing (e.g. PLAR) and paid employment, would facilitate this process. The discourses explored demonstrate différance in the vision of a new economy and consequently the means of participation. The différance exists not so much in the technical "how to", although this aspect is contested, as in the more value laden "why bother".

Recommendations

Institutions:

The Adult Education Centers are well situated to assume the role of advocates for the discourse of drop out youth in southern Manitoba. The ALCs have proven to be a common ground for many youth who have dropped out of school or who were home schooled. Through contact with the faculty and other participants at the ALCs, learners are enabled "to come forward into relationship with the world" (Vygotsky,1986). Demands and expectations of the ALCs far exceed the delivery and accounting of Manitoba Education's high school credits. These sites are positioned to deliver a client-centred curriculum to individuals in search of a fit within an increasingly complex technological society. Research participants from rural southern Manitoba view the rhetoric of the new economy with scepticism. They would benefit from an opportunity to develop the ability and confidence to 'critique' this official discourse as a means of appreciating their own contributions to society. Since a number of the youth interviewed never participated in high school there is also clearly a role for the media, employers, and community organisations in this regard. Ironically, the labour oriented curricula of

unionised workers, a model for the suggested approach to critique, are not well received by many of the ultra conservative employers of southern Manitoba.

Both transition-to-work programs reviewed represented varying degrees of government commitment to combining the services of various government departments in support of responding each client's needs more efficiently. Much more flexibility needs to be demonstrated in this regard. The narrative of research participants too often includes incidents where they were penalised by social services for working part time while collecting welfare, unable to afford to work because of the relatively high costs of transportation and childcare, being denied supports to participate in post secondary training, and forced to cheat on Employment Insurance by moonlighting to make enough money just to get by.

Government Agencies

The Progressive Conservative Government of the 1990s endeavoured to attract private investment by deliberately maintaining a low wage strategy. Increasing competition at the lowest end of the labour market and weakening trade unions were part of a strategy. That strategy resulted in slower employment growth in Manitoba than in the rest of Canada (Black and Silver, 1999, p.22). The current NDP government has not moved rapidly enough to reverse this trend, evidence of its reluctance to increase minimum wage is evidence of this. The privatisation of government services has often resulted in decreases in wages for private sector workers doing the same job and particularly a loss of high-quality jobs for many female and minority workers. The current government might consider alternatively, to support employers that pay a "living wage" (Scarth, 2000,

p.2) through economic development subsidies. A "living wage" amounts to the wage a full time worker would need to earn in order to support a family above the poverty line. More subsidies and allowances for employers that provide training, mentoring, and eventually meaningful employment opportunities for drop out youth to gain a foothold in society is required. Government and industry must find ways to reengage high school drop out youth. The costs of not doing so are too high morally and economically.

For Further Research

Alternatives to an 'instrumental' discourse of work that pervades both education and employment policy are needed. Subsequent research might seek to test the hypothesis that meaningful participation in the learning process leads to increased self-esteem regardless of whether the learning occurs in the workplace or in a classroom, whether it is paid or volunteer. Government support for businesses that hire entry level employees "off the street" and provide work that is understood by employees to provide learning opportunities where they (workers) are active participants in the production of knowledge essential to the health of the organisation, regardless of the product or service provided is what is being proposed. The extent to which the public discourse of government includes an attempt to balance global "new" economy hegemony against political party ideology and local conditions is worth ongoing examination.

Values play an influential role in determining public policy. Toward this end, dialogue with youth provides an opportunity to explore values as these relate to the impact of new economic policy on an individual's sense of belonging, freedom, self-esteem, and quality

of life. Deconstruction and analysis of the narrative of youth can provide an essential

point-of-viewing for a government that claims 'inclusion' as one of its aims. When

programs and policy place the reduction of provincial debt ahead of social programs that

support the poor the voice of those most directly affected needs to be heard.

Public interest is being served when governments strive to accommodate the many varied

discourses of their citizenry rather than promoting one global and hegemonic discourse.

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Interview Schedule

Age/ Marital status/ Children Education/ reconnection with high school through adult education

Themes arising from the Literature Survey	Dialogue with Informants on the 'Unofficial Discourse' (Probes)
The extent to which employment is a measure of self worth.	How realistic is the idea that "every one should be in full time paid employment even when it means changing careers several times in a lifetime?" How important is it to you that you have a job where you earn a lot of money? (What do you consider to be a lot of money?) Do all the people you admire have well paying jobs? How might you describe your notion of "self-sufficiency"? How important are your relationships in determining the type of work that you do? What would be your dream job?
Decreased opportunities for full time employment and long-time job security compared to an increase in part-time work and contracting out services.	How would having to maintain several part time jobs in order to work full time affect your performance on any one of the jobs or your motivation to do any one of them well? Do you know people whom you respect and admire who do not have full-time jobs? What do you admire about them? Would it matter to you that if in five years from now, you didn't have a full time job? Is childcare an issue that effects the amounts of time you can/want to spend on work in a day? How do you feel about that? Do know any one who is self-employed? Are they full time?
Emphasis on new skills for automation & information/ communication technology.	Should people develop skills in areas of high demand regardless of their personal interests or follow their heart? To what extent do you think that learning "personal management" skills (e.g. time management) in a classroom might help you to gain employment? To what extent do you think that learning "communication and literacy" skills in a classroom might help you to gain employment? To what extent do you think that learning "teamwork" skills in a classroom might help you to gain employment? Are computer studies currently a part of you high school courses? Do you feel that high school courses prepare you with these 'new skills' Do you believe that high school prepares you for employment? How? What skills have you developed that you believe are important to work but were not gained as a result of school courses?
Acknowledgement of stress induced by the hurried pace of computer culture (e.g. loss of autonomy, increasing impatience of employers and employees on the work site)	When you hear he phrase "lifelong learning" what kind of activity does that suggest to you? (work related skills acquired in schools through formal training programs, personal interest, keeping current with world events?) How large of an issue is transportation to and from work for you? If you could work from your home on a computer (or telephone) would you consider that as an option? How important is a flexible work schedule to you? What might an ideal schedule look like to you? How important are your relationships with co-workers in determining whether you enjoy and stay with a job or not? How important is having some control over the work that you do (e.g. when and how you do it) ?

Example: Follow-up Questions for Interview II with Allison

Both formal education and paid employment, it would seem lead to increased self-esteem. What about "informal learning" (e.g. learning on-the-job) and "unpaid employment" (volunteering, housework), how do these impact on self-esteem?

Formal education is said to create employment opportunities (especially when it includes the "essential skills") but are these opportunities available to everyone? Are there other factors/ conditions affecting one's opportunities as far as employment goes beyond?

I do not get the sense that you are pursuing higher education for 'economic prosperity', in fact you expect to be taking a pay decrease following your education (at least in the short term). This interests me, can you describe your motivation to pursue this kind of work and how you might benefit (if not monetarily)?

How is work and poverty/prosperity connected? Are there people who you know and admire who work hard, have little money but do not consider themselves to be poor or live in 'poverty'? In what terms is poverty Vs prosperity defined? (consumer goods) What are the factors involved here?

You suggest that you would like to be a person who makes a difference... can you think of someone that you know that has "made a difference" or is in the process of "making a difference" and what some of characteristics of this person's work and approach to work might be?

To what extent do you expect that your work should provide you with opportunities to continue to develop your humanity as well as that of your colleagues and clients (but not excluding productivity) and how might 'work' support you in this?

Considering the youth that you associate with, can you describe their self-discipline, motivation, or work ethic?

You refer to the importance of maintaining a balance between personal life and work. Using work to connect with ones culture (we live in a consumer culture) to develop a sense of belonging (interdependence) and at the same time seeing work as a means of asserting ones independence. Can you elaborate on your experience with this dilemma?

At some point one might make a decision based on the present circumstances regardless of past experiences and traditions (Transformation). Would your decision to return to school have been one of these? Describe ...

How much control do you feel that you have over your own destiny, to what extent do you feel that you are controlled? What are the forces?