Immigrant Serving Organizations and the School-to-Work Transitions of Newcomer Youth in Winnipeg

By

Jasmine T. Thomas

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of University of Manitoba in Partial fulfillment of the requirement of the degree of Master of Arts.

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A Thesis/Practicum submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of The University of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirement of the degree

MASTER OF ARTS

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Abstract

The transition from compulsory schooling into the workforce is an important process for all youth, and for newcomers to Canadian society, it is an indicator of successful integration. There are many challenges facing young people during this stage of life; however, for new immigrants there are often additional barriers to obtaining meaningful employment. To overcome these difficulties, support and assistance from newcomer serving agencies are essential.

This thesis utilizes qualitative interviews with immigrant serving organizations in the city of Winnipeg that are assisting newcomer youth during their job search. The perspectives of youth respondents are included to provide a multi-faceted analysis of the school-to-work transition. A similarly intricate theoretical framework is established to provide the foundation to situate these narratives through the use of structuration and critical race theories.

Findings suggest that although there are a wide range of service agencies specialized to serve various sub-groups of the newcomer youth population in Winnipeg, the contributions of ethno-cultural organizations are marginalized. Furthermore, with the goal of attracting twenty-thousand newcomers annually to the province of Manitoba, it is essential that services are provided with the adequate spatial and financial resources to ensure that agencies are able to maintain and build upon their current level of support. Finally, I argue that discrimination plays a clear role in newcomer labour market outcomes; it is essential that racism and exclusion are exposed and eliminated in order to create a open and welcoming labour market that lives up to "multicultural" Canadian values.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

> "I think everyone should reach out to each other. So, to go to Folklarama once a year, to eat the food once a year, is one thing, but to actually get to know other people?" – **ANAK Inc.**

"Sammy" is a twenty-six year old woman born in Nigeria. While working on an engineering degree in her home country there was a prolonged strike that prevented her from completing her education. When she and her family became frustrated with waiting, she decided to migrate to Canada to complete her degree. Upon arrival, she had to repeat grade 12 before she could enter university despite the fact she had completed a high school diploma in Nigeria. Currently, she is working on completing a bachelor degree in psychology and hopes that through her studies she will be able to obtain a job helping other people.

"Lu Lu" is a thirty year old woman born in China who came to Canada as an international student. After completing a graduate degree she had difficulties finding employment related to her field of study. She turned to a local volunteer placement centre that helped her find an unpaid position in her field that eventually turned into a contract-based position. She hopes to find a more permanent job in the future that will allow her to feel more stable in her career.

"Tony" is a twenty-eight year old man born in Ethiopia who arrived in Canada as a refugee several years ago. He worked as an electrician back home, but hopes to retrain in order to obtain a less strenuous professional job. He often apologizes for his English and although currently unemployed, he is receiving language and other training at a local organization to help prepare him for his new future in Canada. These are the stories of

newcomers, and clearly, the assistance of service agencies is fundamentally important during the job search process which is the focus of this thesis.

Canada is a nation of newcomers. Most Canadians, with the exception of First Nations Peoples, can trace their lineage through immigration. Unfortunately, the history of inter-group relations in Canada has been a turbulent story of including aspects of newcomers that mainstream society finds acceptable, while marginalizing groups that are considered too different. For example, until the 1960s immigration policies in Canada were heavily focused upon attracting newcomers of European descent while excluding much of the world (Isajiw 1999: 85; Simich, et al. 2005; 260). Furthermore, the genocidal implications of European settlement for North America's indigenous cultures are also well documented (Indian and Northern Affairs 1996; Woolford 2009). Recently, Canada has embarked upon a road of "multiculturalism" as a nation that celebrates diversity (Winnemore and Biles 2006: 24). These observations illustrate the inherent contradictions between historical and contemporary realities and the mainstream ideal of welcoming newcomers.

Despite the increasingly popular discourse that identifies Canada as being inclusive of newcomers, it is clear that difficulties remain for young people who are trying to integrate and obtain stable, meaningful employment. The pattern of employment transitions varies considerably across provinces, but there is evidence that many highly-educated newcomer youth experience a delayed transition (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development 2008). It raises questions about how accepting and multicultural Canada is as a society. Are these meaningful concepts, or are they simply an

ideal that is trumpeted to the world as a badge of honour while all too often newcomers are marginalized into low-status jobs and a precarious existence?

These important questions are difficult to answer in such a broad context, and the focus of this thesis is upon a crucial time in a young person's life; the school to work transition. Additionally, the goal is to incorporate a wide range of perspectives to gain a balanced interpretation as an effective social theory must contain the individual, organizational and societal levels of analysis (Battilana 2006: 655). This recognizes that social life is an interconnected web of relations between people, groups and structural conditions. Therefore, in order to examine the employment transitions of newcomers, this thesis includes the perspectives of youth, service agencies, and governmental immigration strategies.

The transition from compulsory school to the workforce is an important process for all youth, and for newcomers to Canadian society, it a significant measure of successful integration. It is important to include an examination of both structural and individual factors that impact this process. This is essential because from the structuration perspective of Anthony Giddens, "society only has form, and that form only has effects on people, in so far as structure is produced and reproduced in what people do" (Giddens & Pierson, 1998: 77). If this is the case, during the transition between education and the labour force, individuals will recreate, modify, or revolutionize the structure as their cohort progresses through these processes. However, the society might attempt to restrict any extreme changes, and if systemic discrimination is present, it might be difficult for newcomer youth to actively take part in the employment transition process. This research seeks to determine how immigrant communities and related organizations attempt to fill

in the gaps in the transition process that youth must overcome as they move into the workforce. These strategies illustrate how individuals come together as active participants to change the forces of structures, including patterns of discrimination, and combat their exclusion from finding meaningful, stable employment. This can be understood through the structuration perspective to develop a holistic view of how structural constraints limit members of immigrant communities, and subsequently, how such communities develop alternative strategies to deal with structural or institutional racism as newcomer youth enter the labour market.

By conducting research on this topic, my goal is to contribute to the literature on school-to-work transitions of newcomer youth in Canada. Although there has been a considerable amount of research into the education to work pathways of the general population of Canadian youth, there is little examining newcomer youth (Anisef 2000; Wilkinson 2008: 153). This is an important area that warrants further research because immigrants or refugees may face challenges during the transition process that Canadian-born youth would not contend with. These obstacles can include real or perceived linguistic challenges, credential recognition, and the request for "Canadian experience" often made by many employers (Rathzel 2006: 225; Grabke 2008: 3). With a focus upon the organized effort of community and non-profit groups assisting youth in making a successful transition to the labour force, important policy implications can be investigated. The primary goal is to provide information on services available to assist newcomer youth in the transition process in Winnipeg. Additionally, this research contributes to a broader understanding of the school-to-work transition of newcomer youth, and how organizations in the community of Winnipeg are adapting to the

challenges of diversity. The concept of our society as welcoming and inclusive must also be challenged with the assistance of Critical Race Theory, which contends that discrimination is still a very real challenge for minority groups. Finally, applying the detailed and flexible theoretical paradigm of structuration theory to this specific research topic helps contribute to developing and applying conceptual frames to this area of sociological interest. These two theoretical paradigms will assist in situating this research within a meaningful framework; while it is an explanatory perspective, it is also based in a pragmatism that seeks to expose and ameliorate current discriminatory attitudes that linger in our so-called inclusive society.

Research Questions

The main research question that guides this thesis is to examine the strategies are immigrant receiving organizations in Winnipeg utilize to facilitate successful school-to-work transitions for newly arrived youth. Furthermore, I hope to identify if the agencies and youth perceive common challenges and obstacles in reaching a successful employment transition. Specifically, there are two main questions that guide this research:

1. What is the role of newcomer social service agencies during the school to work transition of newcomer youth?
2. Do youth and agencies recognize the same challenges facing newcomers as they integrate into the workforce?

For the purposes of this study, a "newcomer serving agency" includes community based initiatives, non-governmental organizations, and related governmental departments.

The main goal is to ascertain how youth and the community services meant to help them transition to the workforce interact within a structural framework. The hope is

to facilitate both a theoretical and conceptual discussion around the school-to-work transitions of newcomer youth in Canadian society. The purpose is to elicit a more meaningful discussion about racism facing youth in a society that claims to be welcoming and multicultural. If youth are experiencing difficulties obtaining meaningful employment, especially if there are issues regarding racism or discrimination, this challenges the traditional notion of Canada as a positive opportunity for international migrants and their youth seeking a better life in a new country. While the following analysis is intended to be highly critical of this widely held assumption, it also attempts to offer practical solutions to any problems discovered throughout the process.

Through conducting research on this topic, the hope is that the conclusions gathered can help assist newcomer youth gain access to programs that ease the school-to-work transition. Furthermore, by thoroughly examining current initiatives, the most effective practices can be outlined as suggestions for future government policy, and to direct funding to effective strategies. Effective practices are determined by examining how "successful" organizations are in preparing newcomer youth for employment, through assessing the perceptions of the service workers about how successful their programs are. It is also essential to ensure that supports and services are fully utilized by youth and the community. Any improvements in organizational funding or service utilization will surely result in more resources available to newcomer youth in the city of Winnipeg. This can offer assistance to those having difficulties gaining meaningful employment after their formal education has been completed.

In addition to these major objectives, this research is intended to contribute a Canadian perspective to the migration and youth transition literature. It is clear that the

school-to-work transition of newcomers has not been researched as extensively as Canadian-born youth. Therefore, this research allows for important gaps to be filled on topics related to youth transitions and international migration. By utilizing a detailed theoretical framework, the goal is to contribute a broader conceptual approach to the migration literature.

Sociological Significance

This thesis is important for Canada as a destination country for newcomers, and specifically for Manitoba, because of the nature of our active provincial immigration strategy. Previous research on newcomer service agencies have usually, although not exclusively, focused upon larger metropolitan areas such as Vancouver and Toronto (Bauder 2005; Frisken & Wallace 2008; Simich, et al. 2005; Guo 2005). Furthermore, these studies have not specifically looked at employment services, or the needs of newcomer youth during their school-to-work transition process. Therefore, this study provides insight into the role of agencies during newcomer's search for employment rather than on the initial stages of settlement.

The other major contribution of this research is the use of a strong theoretical perspective that allows for the combined analysis of agencies and individuals navigating the broader structural context. Without the assistance of Structuration theory, the multi-level analysis would be difficult to conceptualize. Part of the motivation for utilizing the work of Anthony Giddens in this analysis of the school to work transitions of newcomer youth is to infuse a strong dose of theoretical grounding into an area of research that is heavily reliant upon descriptive discourse. Integrating theory into research is essential because it provides a conceptual and cognitive framework that can help to build common

understanding between disciplines that often examine very different aspects of social phenomenon. Additionally, the inclusion of Critical Race Theory supports this researcher in the dual role of activist and academic. Due to the fact that discrimination remains a present concern in Canada, it is essential that this undercurrent is exposed in a way that allows for open debate informing a wide range of people about the problem. Another major point to consider is that the school-to-work literature lacks a strong theoretical perspective. Therefore, by utilizing a strong theoretical base, there is a bridge for common understanding on these important issues. Although theory may not be rewarding from a policy driven perspective; to develop any effective policy, varied groups must come together to build a common understanding of the social phenomenon being examined, and theory can help facilitate this flexible, yet comprehensible, consensus.

Outline of the Thesis

This research synthesizes several related bodies of literature in order to provide background information and a contextual understanding of how social organizations assist newcomer youth during employment. In Chapter Two, I first outline the theoretical frameworks of structuration and critical race theory and their significance for this thesis. Although critical race theory is a commonly used perspective when analyzing ethnic inequalities in the social world, the theory of structuration has never been utilized to examine the various individual and structural factors that play a role in the newcomer integration experience. Subsequently, a literature review examines three related bodies of research; the role of government in immigration and social services, studies related to newcomer social services, and the challenges of the school-to-work transition faced by immigrant youth.

Chapter Three delineates the methodological process for this thesis both as a component of a larger study focusing primarily upon newcomer employment transitions, and how my research conducted with service providers assists in providing an alternative view of what challenges are faced by young immigrants as they transition into the labour force. The focus of this thesis is around qualitative interviews conducted with eleven service agencies or community groups as well as the discussions with newcomer youth as a part of the larger project. This broad approach allows for multiple points of insight into the process of employment integration, and clearly emphasizes the importance of research that challenges inequality based upon ethnic identity and newcomer status.

Chapter Four of this thesis includes the research findings of interviews conducted with youth, agencies and the provincial government. The majority of findings are centered on the perceptions and experiences of agencies as they assist newcomers and if these viewpoints are congruent with the concerns raised by the youth respondents.

The final chapter summarizes and discusses the broad range of themes that were uncovered throughout the research process. The theoretical contributions are outlined for their significance to the literature. I also suggest avenues for future research that would be useful to develop a better understanding of newcomer employment transitions. Furthermore, I suggest that there are implications for policy by re-emphasizing the need to support ethno-cultural community groups as a part of the broader funding structure in the province of Manitoba. I then conclude by examining how researchers can help to influence meaningful social change insofar as research should be conducted with the intention of uncovering social injustices and giving a voice to groups who may face greater challenges in finding employment.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Foundations

It is important to synthesize these research questions with a strong theoretical perspective that will contextualize the social phenomenon under investigation. Anthony Giddens postulates the theory of structuration in *The Constitution of Society* (1984), and provides a flexible analytical lens through which the transition process of newcomer youth in Winnipeg can be examined. In order to account for racism, if any, critical race theory examines the differential power inequalities that influence newcomer youth as they search for meaningful career paths in the Canadian labour market. After establishing a firm theoretical position using structuration integrated with critical race theory, the existing literature dealing with the school-to-work transition is integrated into this framework.

Anthony Giddens: The Theory of Structuration

Social theory situates a research problem in a set of conceptual themes, within a situational context, in order to provide a generalization or an understanding about social phenomenon (Giddens 1984: xviii-xix). Historically, sociologists have tended to support structuralist or functionalist assumptions about social life; however, during the 1960s and 1970s, a plethora of theoretical perspectives developed that offered an alternative view to these notions (Giddens 1984: xv). These theoretical perspectives such as phenomenology and other interpretive frameworks disrupted the "orthodox consensus" that had been dominant in earlier sociological thought. Most of these new paradigms placed a greater emphasis on the active and reflexive character of human activity rather than seeing society as a conglomerate of external forces that act upon the individual who is more or less unconscious of these forces (Giddens 1984: xvi). As a result of the previously hegemonic functionalist paradigm focused with such an emphasis upon structural forces,

the influence of human agency was largely absent for the process of sociological analysis. Therefore, the individual agents and their influence upon the structures and norms of society were largely ignored by mainstream social theory. The development of supplementary perspectives was inevitable due to the fact that major aspects of social forces were being ignored when utilizing a primarily structural view of action.

For Giddens (1984), in order to supplement the limitations of structuralism, it is necessary to focus on how individual agents are consciously aware of the actions they perform and why they do so. The goal is to bridge the gap between objectivism and subjectivism through a structuration theory that recognizes the dualism or the "duality of structure" (Giddens 1984: xx-xxi). This view is not contradictory to structuralism, but rather, it is meant to synthesize that framework with the interpretive threads of social thought in order to gain a more cohesive understanding of social phenomenon. This is a complementary interpretation of how human agency produces structures while these institutional constraints restrict and limit the range of actions that the individual is able to express (Giddens 1984: xxi). Significantly, it is correct to postulate that social systems only exist with any degree of regularity because the actions of individual agents are reproducing that system. The essential components of structuration theory focus upon the situated character of time and space, the concept of routinization, and the examination of the motivation behind actions (Giddens 1984: xxiv). The addition of routine and motivation situated into the time-space constraints of the structural view of social research provides a much richer view of social action. This illuminates the various intricacies of individual actions and how this reproduces social structures. How individuals are placed within time, space, lifespan, and geography are important

contextual factors that must be examined with micro and macro aspects of sociology being considered together in a complementary fashion (Giddens 1984: xxvi). These specific features of structuration theory must be further analyzed in greater detail.

Several concepts must be examined in order to apply the structuration perspective of Anthony Giddens' to the school-to-work transition of newcomer youth. Giddens' (1984) theory of structuration attempts to deconstruct and reapply historical materialism in order to grasp how history and social structure influence individuals, and how individuals reproduce these structures or impact change. From the perspective of structuration theory, structure is characterized as both the rules and resources involved in the process of social reproduction; these are the institutionalized forces of social systems that result in a pattern of structural properties that become permanent or stable over time and space (Giddens 1984: xxxi). Furthermore, rules are identified as the normative element or codes that signify expected or normative behavior. Finally, resources are either authoritative insofar as they are related to the coordination of human activity, or they are allocated material resources. It is also crucial to establish that these are not rigid categories, and they must remain flexible and fluid to work well with the equally adaptable theoretical framework.

The basis for structuration theory is the examination of social action not from the perspective of individuals or any sort of societal whole, but rather, social practices as they are situated in their time-space context (Giddens 1984: 2). This is a reflexive process where human social interaction can reproduce the structural conditions required to make such activity possible. Norms stand as the basic boundaries for social action that can be manipulated through individuals or collective movements (Giddens 1984: 4). Moreover,

actors will continuously self-monitor their actions, the actions of others, and the social environment that they find themselves within (Giddens 1984: 5). Although much of the motivation for action is based in the subconscious process of routinization, it is important to avoid the reductionism of Freudian psychoanalysis (Giddens 1984: 5). This view is problematic because it misses the multitude of external social forces that are independent from the actor, and also that individuals consciously choose their own actions that are not simply manifestations of the unconscious mind (Giddens 1984: 5). Motivation is difficult to ascertain in social research; however, as humans actively participate in this process, they have reasons and motivations behind their activities (Giddens 1984: 3). This is more than simply self-conscious monitoring, but it is a reflexive process that is only grounded in the continuous monitoring of their activities. This process depends first upon the motivation for action, and this is followed by the rationalization of that action, and finally, by the reflexive monitoring of the whole process (Giddens 1984: 5). However, much of our activity is not dependent upon only motivation, rather it is a routine that people become accustomed to that gives the individual a measure of psychological and ontological security (Giddens 1984: xxiii). In order to fully understand what lies behind motivation for activity that falls outside the general day-to-day routine requires the establishment of what human agency means for this discussion.

Human agency is an important component of structuration theory, and this is integrated within a specific context of time and space. Human action has often been reduced to the notion of deliberate intention; however, this must include not just intention but also the capability of doing those things in the first place (Giddens 1984: 8-9). An intentional act can be illustrated as when the actor knows, or perceives, that there will be

a particular outcome as a direct result of the action (Giddens 1984: 10). This also implies a connection between action and power, and although this is a complex relationship it is important to examine further.

The connection between human agency and power requires that behind an action there is a capability to have an influence on the sphere where the agent focuses their efforts (Giddens 1984: 14). Structuralism contests that institutional constraints operate like forces of nature, with individuals given no choice but to comply, and they have no conscious comprehension of these forces acting upon them (Giddens 1984: 15). However, the development of the structuration theory allows for acknowledging structure, and by including the motivation of individual actors there is more flexibility in accounting for the varied activities of human agents. Giddens contends that power itself is not a resource; rather, resources are the mode through which power is exercised, and this must be put into perspective with the structural factors that play a role in this process (Giddens 1984: 16). Incorporating this understanding of the relationship between agency and power into the previously dominant structural perspective allows for a more balanced interpretation of social action.

Structure is as primary as individual agency in the theory of structuration. Both parts are integrated into a broader paradigm with social actors reflexively creating the structure through their actions. Examining how human agency and structure are related to the school-to-work transitions of newcomer youth allows for a broad view of how organizations actively participate in the reproduction or change of the structural components by which these agencies are constrained. It is crucial to examine what Giddens terms the "duality of structure" in order to fully comprehend this process. First,

the concept of structure indicates that there is some degree of patterning, or routinization, that orders social phenomenon and relations (Giddens 1984: 17). This is the result of structuring properties that allow for the "binding" of time-space in social systems, and these properties make it possible for similar social processes to exist across varied spans of time and space resulting in a systemic form (Giddens 1984: 17). An important distinction is that the social system does not have structures that are stable throughout a period of time; structure only exists during episodic periods of time as they are reproduced by conscious human action, and these properties are fluid and can change as actors themselves change their behavior (Giddens 1984: 17). However, institutions are practices that have a much stronger time-space existence (Giddens 1984: 18). Therefore, social systems are comprised of structural properties and institutional characteristics that are all constrained by sets of rules. These rules have two aspects; they relate to how meaning is associated to actions, and to how social conduct is sanctioned (Giddens 1984: 18). Finally, these rules and resources are drawn upon during the production and reproduction of social action, and this is termed the "duality of structure" because it is the very action that reproduces the system, institutions, and structures (Giddens 1984: 19). Understanding the interaction between actions and the reproduction of social systems is essential. Disconnecting either aspect without acknowledging how they are interdependent provides a limited analysis of social phenomenon.

Another crucial point made by Giddens acknowledges that the demarcation between the researcher and the subject is too difficult to clearly define; social scientists are a part of the objects that they are examining, and it is essential that researchers take into account this fact during the research process (Giddens 1984: xxxiii). This limitation

is also raised by many other theorists, clearly indicating the difficulties of conducting social research. This is a primary critique of the "objective" social sciences because it often attempts to formulate a detached view of the research subject without acknowledging that this is often impossible or extremely difficult to account for entirely. Researchers must always be aware that they are a part of the research; their very presence may even influence the outcomes of measured data or observations, and therefore, any interpretations will be limited in their scope unless the researcher attempts to limit and account for this influence.

With any theory, there are limitations that should be addressed in order to be aware of potential problems in applying a chosen theory to a research topic. A main limitation of structuration theory is that it requires a detailed analysis of both individual micro-sociological factors while taking into account the structural conditions and time-space contextual factors. Although this allows for a broad range of information on a subject of research, it can become overwhelming when trying to incorporate all these aspects into a single research problem. However, if this can be done in a concise way the analysis is much stronger because it takes into account a lot more information that could be missed by simply focusing upon structural or individual levels. Another limitation of this theory is that it does not adequately deal with issues of inequality, and this is important when conducting research that can be related to racism and other forms of discrimination. Giddens (1984) assumes that although power has continuity over time and space, this is a direct result of human actions, therefore implying that individuals always have a choice during this process. Although this is in fact true, it is important to acknowledge that some people have more of a choice than others, and dismantling

discriminatory structural conditions would be difficult for marginalized members of society. If these limitations are accounted for, this theory can provide an extremely broad range of information that will be valuable when assessing how organizations assist newcomers during the school-to-work process. An excellent way to assess issues of power and racism while using the structuration perspective is to synthesize Giddens' work with critical race theory. This combination of theoretical lenses will help to negate the limitations associated with the structuration framework.

Critical Race Theory

Critical race theory (CRT) is characterized by a theoretical and social movement involving activists and scholars looking to enact meaningful change in the overt and subtle racism often present in all spheres of social activity (Delgado & Stefancic 2001: 2-3; Greenwood & Levin 2005: 43; Ladson-Billing & Donnor 2005: 281). This involves examining a broader context that includes socio-economic, historical, individual or group interactions, feelings, and even the unconsciousness. However, the goal remains to move directly from research to activism by exposing and eliminating institutional discrimination. Clearly, this comprehensive approach helps to develop a better understanding of how ethnicity can play a major role in interpersonal interactions, as well as the larger structural environment. Importantly, critical race theory was developed to better interpret and acknowledge the more 'subtle' nature of racism and inequality that has persisted beyond the civil rights movement of the 1960s (Delgado & Stefancic 2001: 3). CRT can also be utilized in a more specialized examination of a single node of social life such as in the workforce as immigrant youth are attempting to gain access to various career paths.

Critical Race theory becomes significant for employment because it helps to explain how ethnicity continues to play a role in career outcomes. Ethnic or "racial" discrimination creates an "invisible" hierarchy that constrains visible minorities, women, the poor, and other "marginals" (Ladson-Billing & Donnor 2005: 279). There is a power dynamic that exists with the mainstream groups systematically devaluing the experience and credentials of minorities resulting in a system "prescribed by the dominant cultural model" (Ladson-Billing & Donnor 2005: 281). This results in minority groups being forced to play a role that fits the mainstream paradigm in order to achieve success. Furthermore, due to their ethnic or racialized identities they face additional barriers as a result of prejudicial beliefs that are commonly accepted by the dominant group.

The substantial barriers that ethnic identity creates in employment outcomes holds significance for Canada. CRT allows the researcher to challenge the commonly held assumptions that Canada is a welcoming country. Racialized workers are disproportionately represented in a more precarious position than mainstream Canadians because they endure lower incomes and higher unemployment despite having a higher level of education and skills (Wilkinson 2008; Cheung 2005: 1; Li 2000). Therefore, utilizing CRT will assist in uncovering discriminatory challenges that youth face during their employment search, and by examining the perspectives of service providers and government CRT can provider avenues for education leading to meaningful change for this critical problem.

This perspective offers an excellent supplemental view of inequality and "racism" that would be limited if this analysis was performed from a pure structuration framework. The synthesis of these two schools of thought provides an excellent theoretical lens that

examines the school to work transition, while accounting for inequality or discrimination, and offering the opportunity to instigate meaningful social change. The most significant contribution of utilizing critical race theory is that this perspective actively seeks to change inequalities through activism and awareness (Delgado & Stefancic 2001: 3). This is essential because comprehension of unequal power relations is only part of the equation; without directly offering modes of resistance or change, the contributions of social research is not as valuable as it could, or should, be. Social change and activism should be directly linked to sociological research, and utilizing the critical race perspective facilitates this goal throughout the research process. Therefore, by supplementing structuration theory with the CRT perspective, this research analyzes the complex relationship between structure and agency during the school to work transition. These theories combined simultaneously support the development of practical solutions to lessen inequality, expose and reduce racism, and support community organizations with projects that wish to further these goals of a more accessible workforce for all newcomer youth.

The theory of structuration, combined with critical race theory, is appropriate for this examination of organizations assisting newcomer youth during their school-to-work transition. It provides a strong interpretive framework that outlines how individual factors and agency play a role in the reflexive process of reproducing the structure that is a stage for these actions. These perspectives provide an intriguing sociological lens that helps to contextualize how structural conditions are influencing the options of organizations, and how the interactions between newcomer youth and these groups are reproducing or changing structural conditions. The integration of critical race theory allows this analysis

to integrate an examination of ethnic inequality within this framework. Furthermore, CRT can help guide activism that can increase awareness of persisting racism, with the goal of influencing social change leading to a more inclusive workforce in Canada.

Federal and Provincial Immigration Programs and Funding

This review incorporates three different bodies of research; the role of both levels of government in immigration and social services, studies conducted related to newcomer service agencies, and to examine the process and challenges faced by newcomers as they transition out of educational institutions into the labour market. This information is required in order to contextualize the structures existing in Manitoba. I first examine government policy regarding employment transitions of immigrant youth, including the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program. Finally, I frame the role of service providers in the community and how they represent the more reflexive nature of this process. These groups often act as an intermediary between the government and the community. To gain valuable insight for this analysis, structuration theory can be applied to the existing school to work transition literature for the youth population in general, and where it is possible, previous research on the additional challenges faced by immigrant and refugee youth can be included. By collecting this information in a cohesive interpretive lens, the hope is to gain an understanding into how the transition from school to work for newcomer youth can present unique challenges on both the individual and structural levels.

Government Approach to Immigrant-Focused Social Services

The influence of the Canadian government on the lives of newcomers is substantial and would be considered the structural or institutional level of analysis from this theoretical perspective. Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) is the federal department responsible for providing resources for programming. CIC spends 396 million dollars on settlement, adaptation and integration services a year (CIC 2003: 2). Not all newcomers require extensive support upon arrival to Canada; however, settlement and integration services are important because they often provide language and employment training for those who do require extra assistance. This promotes the integration process which can lead to the acquisition of citizenship and full participation in Canadian society (CIC 2003: 2). For the federal government, this is the optimal definition of integration, and it would be crucial to acknowledge that newcomers may have differing expectations for their so-called 'integration' into Canadian society.

The focus of funding from the federal government involves three areas; language instruction, settlement and adaptation programs and the host program. The government also recommends gearing language training for finding employment, and streamline the process of foreign credential or experience recognition (CIC 2003: 10-13; Reitz & Banerjee 2006: 6). Clearly, the federal government plays the role of administrator, and they have specific goals of promoting what they believe will best integrate immigrants and ensure they are participating fully in society. However, with the signing of various immigration agreements in the late 1990s, most provincial governments have more control over their regional immigration policies and services. Manitoba falls into this category, and it is necessary to assess the jurisdictional relationship and how this impacts social services available within Winnipeg.

An essential question that must be asked regarding support for programs developed to assist new immigrants is based around responsibility and jurisdiction. It must be recognized that there is ambiguity regarding program delivery in Canada, and whether it should fall under the authority of the federal or provincial governments (CIC 2003: 5-6). Practices are hardly uniform across the country. Essentially, the federal government plays an administrative role; this entails ensuring adequate funding for refugees, housing and research, while the development and implementation of services are conducted at the provincial level. However, the federal government has concerns about ensuring that funds provided to the provinces go towards immigrant-specific programs so the resources are not diverted to other projects (CIC 2003: 8). Provincial implementation of services is recommended because services might not necessarily be applicable over vast geographical areas or cultural groups (Rich 1979: 83). For example, a program offered in Quebec might not be easily replicated in British Columbia due to various culturally or geographically specific distinctions. This researcher would find it particularly interesting to determine if provincial autonomy over immigration and newcomer services allows for better support for immigrants who are working through the process of social and economic integration. Although these questions are outside of the scope of this research project, it does hold significance for this review because it is the Manitoban government that allocates funding for most local service providers.

The Manitoba government has a very active approach to attracting newcomers to the province. The Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) has been extremely successful with a strategy to support the safe recruitment of temporary and permanent residents to meet the local economic needs; to ensure accessible and relevant services before, during

and after arrival; and to promote welcoming communities that strengthen cultural diversity (Manitoba Labour and Immigration 2009). In 2007, over seventy percent of our 10,955 newcomers arrived through the PNP (MLI 2007: 2). However, within the next ten years the province has set a target of 20,000 new immigrants arriving in Manitoba, and this substantial increase will have a significant impact on social services and the local community.

A final crucial issue is that funding can be unstable, the fact that many social service providers rely mainly upon governmental support can leave them vulnerable to a change in political ideology, economic recession and cutbacks to the welfare state. For example, social services may be reduced during difficult economic conditions, and this has a profound impact on newcomers who are in the earlier stages of settlement and often rely upon service providers to assist them. The costs of services and training may also increase creating a lack of access for newcomers who are more likely to be living in poverty (Reitz & Banerjee 2006: 8-9). These institutional or systemic changes can have a disproportionately negative impact on the economic situation of immigrants as they are integrating into Canadian society. This is essential to emphasize from a structuration perspective because it shows how most aspects of social life will be influenced by the systemic conditions that exist at the time. These are the institutional characteristics of the immigration bureaucracy in Canadian society, and it provides a better picture of the environment surrounding service providers as they act as intermediaries between newcomers and the structural levels of government.

However, newcomer serving organizations do not subsist entirely through government funding, and some community groups may not receive any institutional

support at all. Therefore, there are ways that agencies can provide assistance with resources provided from private sources, or accumulated by the community itself. It is to the role of agencies that I next turn, and subsequently, the results should illustrate just how complex these relationships between the community, agencies and governments can be.

The Role of Newcomer Service Providers

Service providers are essential in providing information and assistance to newcomers as they settle in Manitoba. However, the implementation of programs and how the organizations themselves navigate the local socio-political climate can be complex to examine. There have been considerable social, economic and demographic changes in Canada that have created a challenging environment for the delivery of social services (Anisef, et al. 2000: 208). Of particular significance for this thesis, program funding and the role of poor economic conditions are examined. The need for cooperation between all stake holders, the level of interaction between agencies the community and government, and the broad range of groups involved are also be outlined. I examine common themes from the literature regarding newcomer social services in order to determine what sort of programs that would be expected from the agencies. From there, the process of how new programs may be developed are addressed, and the role of newcomer or community organizations is essential to acknowledge. This brief review addresses how social service providers operate specifically related to newcomers and their communities.

It is clear that difficult economic times will have a negative impact on the social services for newcomers. Agencies do acquire financial support through fundraising

activities and individual donations, however, the main sources of funding for services are government grants and contracts (Cordero-Guzman 2005: 899). Therefore, during a recession, the primary source of funding may become increasingly unstable. This has a profound impact on newcomers who are in the earlier stages of settlement as they often rely upon service providers to assist them. A diverse range of sources for funding may protect agencies against financial cutbacks, but it is likely that this would be a major concern for service providers in Winnipeg. The role of the government may be the authority figure in the social network, but there are many other influential actors on the school to work experiences of newcomer youth.

Although the government takes an administrative role, a successful employment transition requires the cooperation of all stake holders including public bodies, community and religious leaders, the educational system, voluntary organizations, employers and trade unions (Ager & Strang 2008: 175-176). In fact, organizations play a central role during all parts of the immigration process as well as facilitating the social, cultural, political and economic adaptation and incorporation of newcomers (Cordero-Guzman 2005: 889). Ensuring adequate employment for newcomer youth requires that all these varied interest groups work together to provide positive avenues for social and economic integration. Therefore, the coordination of services is one of the most important points of assistance to ensure integration of newcomers, and the school to work transition is a period of time where youth might be in need of assistance from service providers (Ager & Strang 2008: 181). It is also important that individuals who require support know what sort of services are available to them in the community. This research seeks to determine what sorts of agencies are working with newcomers as they move into the

workforce, and the goal is to connect youth with programs in the city of Winnipeg. This is an excellent time to examine such processes with the plan to increase provincial immigration significantly over the next five years. However, before we examine agencies within Winnipeg, it is necessary to outline how immigrant service providers conduct their work with newcomers in a little more detail to provide a context for our discussion.

The interactions between the different levels of jurisdiction are of interest for this research. There may be fundamental disagreements between the federal and provincial governments regarding what the goals of social programs should be. Furthermore, the community level organizations will likely have interests and concerns that diverge from the governmental agendas. These are potential areas for conflict between the levels of the social system, and are an intriguing site of analysis for structuration theory. The agencies often work as political advocates for newcomers and their communities (Cordero-Guzman 2005: 890). A locus of contention between the government and community level is that localized social organizations are focused upon the effectiveness of services provided rather than their economic efficiency (Rich 1979: 83). This breaks down the performance of programming to their economic basis; it must be asserted that the efficacy of services cannot be solely measured by their economic output, and therefore, the direct experiences of providers and immigrants must be analyzed in order to gain true insights into how "effective" or "efficient" any particular group or program really is. Additionally, the government is dependent upon service providers for their knowledge from the field. Organizations play a crucial role during the development of immigration policy or developing programming because they work directly with the population and can provide up to date information about what is needed (Cordero-Guzman 2005: 891).

This high level of interdependence emphasizes the reciprocity between the government, intermediary organizations and their communities. It is essential that organizations for immigrants are examined because these groups provide an avenue for newcomers to interact with the various levels of government in their new host country.

Non-governmental social services encompass a broad range of groups and cooperative organizations that address a multitude of needs. Types of immigrant organizations can be categorized based upon what they do, where they are located and who they serve, but are defined as immigrant serving based upon their mission statement and the services that are provided (Cordero-Guzman 2005: 892). It is important to acknowledge that there are differences between service providers and community agencies, however, the main purpose of these groups is to provide necessary assistance to the populace as well as to act as a forum to facilitate and organization collective action within a particular community (Rich 2000: 83). For the purposes of this thesis, community agencies and service providers are examined together, as this researcher contends that there are not always clear differences between the two categories. Further, service providers must be allied with community agencies; a lack of cooperation between these so-called distinct bodies would be less effective than having them work together directly as a part of their mandate. Organizations might serve all immigrant groups, while others are more localized to assist people of a particular ethnicity or country of origin, and some services might be provided by the larger metropolitan agencies that assist the whole population of citizens who may or may not be immigrants (Cordero-Guzman 2005: 893). These facets all encompass a broad range of services that can assist those in the

community who might be at risk of becoming marginalized when having difficulties finding employment or social support.

Most services are a response to a direct need, and organizations can have a very wide range of programs that assist in the initial stages of settlement, integration, and to assist newcomers in maintaining their distinct cultural practices and traditions (Cordero-Guzman 2005: 904). However, the primary role of the service provider is to assist newcomers during their immigration and settlement process. This may include a diverse range of topics such as general or legal advice, translation and interpretation services, assistance in applying for visas, work permits, and assisting newcomers in finding shelter, child-care and employment (Cordero-Guzman 2005: 901). Another crucial aspect of services is that it helps build the social support of newcomers, connecting them to valuable social networks within their new community. This is essential because social inclusion is a key determinant of access to the process of production, wealth, income, power and participation in the community and civic life (Teelucksingh & Galabuzi 2007: 83-84). Although the focus of this thesis is on employment related services, it is crucial to remember that services such as language development, cultural sensitivity, education, food and nutritional support, and information about the local labour market and worker's rights are all related to a successful employment transition (Cordero-Guzman 2005: 903). Clearly, a more holistic approach to assistance is a common strategy, and this will likely be reflected in the interviews conducted as a part of this thesis.

Changes or the development of new programming can be difficult, and may only progress slowly after the request has been demanded by a large proportion of the community. If the group expressing a need for change is in a marginalized position, it is

very unlikely that the elected political officials are going to attempt to alter or develop a program (Rich 1979: 84). This could impact immigrants significantly because they may or may not be a large enough proportion of the community to exact their influence over the political system. They also may not be eligible to vote, and this could be another limitation for their influence on what social services are provided to them. Finally, newcomers are more vulnerable to becoming both socially and economically marginalized, and this puts them at a greater risk of not being able to organize effectively to influence political representatives that would be able to provide them with the services they need. Therefore, this is why the immigrant service agency becomes a primary actor as a facilitator between newcomer communities and their political representation and rights.

If the official channels are slow to respond to the needs of immigrants arriving in Winnipeg, it is possible that the community residents themselves can organize to meet these needs themselves (Rich 1979: 87). However, this may result in a neighbourhood paying to 'produce' these services, as well as paying taxes that are supposed to provide them with what the community requires (Rich 1979: 87-88). This only offloads the financial costs and social responsibility to the community rather than making the government responsive to the needs of newcomers. This is not an ideal solution to a lack of support, it is essential that the government provides funding for programs that meet the specific needs of the immigrant community, rather than only meeting the goals of departments in Ottawa that might be entirely disconnected from the needs of a particular neighbourhood or city. Therefore, it is essential that newcomers are active participants in the development and utilization of services that they identify as needs within their

community. This allows immigrant groups to have a greater influence on the behavior of service bureaucracies because working with the community increases the efficacy of projects while reducing the financial cost to the agency (Rich 1979: 89). Finally, newcomers may also form ethno-cultural organizations that can be helpful for social networking and addressing any community specific needs. This illustrates how the government, service providers and communities are an interconnected system that reflexively influences the goals and essential needs of each sphere.

The School to Work Research

The school to work literature in Canada has not fully explored the experience of immigrant or refugee newcomers as they navigate the transition process despite this process being a possible aspect for assessing their level of integration into Canadian society. This gap is significant because while there is abundant research on Canadian-born youth as they enter the paid labour force, newcomer youth likely face unique challenges that are not explained by research on the general population. These challenges have been identified as real or perceived linguistic deficits, access to education, receiving inaccurate information, social stability such as adequate housing and family environment, recognition of previously acquired skills, and equal access to employment (Anisef, et al 2000: 210-212). The first step is to review the literature pertaining to the school to work transition in Canada, and then to examine how this framework has been adapted to better fit newcomer youth.

Language and Educational Factors

Despite the fact immigrant youth are often multi-lingual, have shown resiliency in adjusting to a new host country, and are able to navigate comfortably in multiple cultural

settings, they are often seen as 'problematic' to potential employers (Rathzel 2006: 222; Reitz & Banerjee 2006:15). This is likely due to stereotypes and assumptions about "language deficiency" often related to migrant status (Rathzel 2006: 225; Reitz & Banerjee 2006:17). However, it is clear that some youth do require assistance obtaining language skills, and programs that provide job-related language training would be beneficial (Anisef, et al. 2000: 212). For youth whose primary language is not English, learning a new language is an additional stressor that can create social and academic hardships while in school (Anisef et al 2000: 219). It is important to consider that migrant youth who speak English at home are almost twice as likely to be in the labour force when compared to those who did not (Perreira, et al. 2007: 25). The ability to converse in English is a factor, but it is also important to recognize that it is often assumed that immigrants will have communication difficulties without fairly assessing if the applicant has adequate linguistic ability.

A considerable body of literature has examined how Canadian-born youth progress through the transition between compulsory schooling and the paid work force (Anisef 2000; Bradley & Devadason 2008; Bushnik, et al. 2004). It is interesting that during the post-war period the transition process has been characterized as a stage of "emerging adulthood" due the fact that behavior typical of adulthood has been postponed for many youth between the ages of 18-24 (Côté & Bynner 2008: 251). Although the focus of this thesis is based on a study of newcomer youth, it is important to build upon the already compiled knowledge regarding the school to work transition for Canadian-born youth, and then to see how this framework can be expanded to include the factors that influence the occupational outcomes of immigrant and refugee youth. The first factor

that needs to be examined is education, and how different pathways of secondary and post-secondary academic attainment influences employment.

Education has a significant influence on occupational outcomes, and it is identified as playing a major role in reducing employment inequalities between ethnic groups (Brekke 2007: 230). In general, there is a strong link between educational factors and subsequent occupational and life outcomes (Bradley & Taylor 2004: 318). Although there are different options for youth regarding their pathways through the education system; ninety-eight percent of youth move into secondary school, and by 2004-05, only ten percent of youth who moved on to high school dropped out before completion (Council Ministers of Education 2008: 4). Failure to complete secondary school often results in a greater difficulty finding well-paid employment, and during economic downtimes, these youth may be more vulnerable to becoming unemployed (Raymond 2005: 7). Unfortunately, it is apparent that immigrant youth have higher drop-out rates than Canadian born youth (Perreira, et al. 2007: 10). Youth who leave school early may be faced with an increased likelihood of social exclusion and underemployment in addition to their vulnerability to becoming unemployed (Côté & Bynner 2008: 255). There are many factors that can cause youth to drop-out of school such as low academic ability, low expectations, and the availability of work without finishing secondary education (Raymond 2005: 12). As previously indicated, language difficulties may compound any of these problems, and there must be flexibility within the school system to address this diverse range of needs. Increasingly, apprenticeship programs are being integrated with academic studies in high school as an alternative option to the traditional coursework (Lehmann 2004: 381). This is significant because it can provide youth with

practical training and skills that will be useful in the labour market. High schools can also consider providing students with the opportunity to work part-time as a part of their program, and this not only provides work experience but also provides knowledge that allows youth to make informed decisions about their future interactions with employers (Billet 2005: 51). Secondary school is an excellent place to begin occupational training for youth, as this can be beneficial for those who may not be considering post-secondary education. However, this "solution" should be viewed critically; alternative training may simply replicate the already existing economical hierarchies rather than providing youth with better employment outcomes.

Integrating apprenticeship or work experience programs into secondary school can help provide skills that make youth more desirable for employers. However, it is important to ensure that all youth have equal access to these programs and to alleviate ethnic inequality in the labour market. In the United Kingdom for example, white youth are much more likely to participate in school training programs than visible minorities (Bradley & Taylor 2004: 322). Educational systems that utilize apprenticeship programs ease the transition process for those with a low level of skill or education (Crul &Vermeulen 2004: 11). Linguistic training is also important because it has been shown that immigrant youth who speak English at home are almost twice as likely to be in the labour force when compared to those who do not (Perreira, Harris & Lee 2007: 25). Immigrant youth who arrive in their host country at a younger age are able to learn the dominant language, and this can play a positive role in the school to work transition (Crul & Vermeulen 2004: 12). Specifically, national education systems should ensure adequate English language training is made available to newcomer youth because it is so important

for entering the labour force (Crul & Vermeulen 2004: 12). Clearly, the implementation of more diverse training programs is a policy implication that should be established through further research on how work experience, apprenticeship, and language training programs help facilitate the school to work transition for those youth who do not wish to enter post-secondary education.

After secondary school, some youth decide to immediately enter the labour force, while others continue with their education in post-secondary institutions such as university or college. In Canada today, almost half of adults in their early twenties attend post-secondary institutions full time (Côté & Bynner 2008: 261). In general, largely due to a shift towards a "knowledge-based" economy, there has been an increase in university graduates and a decrease in college graduates (Finnie 2004: 54). There is also an indication of "back-tracking" where university graduates, especially females with master's degrees, return to school to obtain a college diploma (Finnie 2004: 55). This raises the question about how well university education is preparing youth for the labour market. Evidence also suggests that visible minority youth are more likely to obtain post-secondary education than white youth (Bradley & Taylor 2004: 336; Kunz 2003: 7). Attending post-secondary is influenced by factors such as parental education levels, high school academic performance, and social class (Bushnik, et al. 2004: 9-10). It is an intriguing argument that structural changes resulting from the shift into "late modernity" results in factors such as gender or class having less of an influence on educational or occupational choices, it is clear that many youth still make class-based educational choices (Lehmann 2004: 382-383). Therefore, structural inequalities from such factors still do have an impact in the choices and opportunities available to youth. Ethnicity also

plays an influential role in this process; non-white youth are far more likely to continue with their education after secondary school, and white youth are more likely to directly enter the labour force (Bradley & Taylor 2004: 343). This may be due to differential value placed upon education, and also could be indicative of the additional challenges that visible minority youth face when entering the labour market.

However, despite the fact that newcomer youth have higher levels of education than those who are born in Canada, research has shown that newcomers are disproportionately forced into more precarious employment that is low status and for little pay (Li 2001; Galabuzi 2008; Slade 2008). This is a clear indication of discrimination in the Canadian labour market, and leads to concern of the implications for newcomers' integration. These young people came to Canada with the goal of working in their fields utilizing their investment in the future through high educational achievements. Inequality between newcomers and Canadian-born groups must be eliminated, and the transition process is a good time to offer supports.

Transitioning into Employment

After university, there are many different paths that youth can take as they transition into adulthood. These can include "extended" careers such as professional and managerial positions, a "short term" career track such as banking and clerical work, and what is termed the "career-less" pathway that includes unskilled or semi-skilled occupations (Bradley & Devadason 2008: 120). Although this may be an oversimplification of the varied experiences of youth as they enter adulthood, it is important to establish that there are different pathways to the labour force that can vary by class, gender, and ethnicity. Furthermore, the process of transition has also increased

in length as a result of the expansion of higher education, and as a result, it takes longer for youth to "settle down" on a specific career path (Bradley & Devadason 2008: 120). It should be noted that even youth with a high level of education may encounter difficulties in obtaining a stable career path (Bradley & Devadason 2008: 125). Therefore, it should not be assumed that obtaining higher education through post-secondary studies is a solution to difficulties in finding stable or meaningful employment.

The school to work transition is an important stage of development for youth, and the first full-time job held by youth is considered a major step in becoming an adult. For immigrant youth, the "structural dimension of social integration" can be exemplified by their success or difficulties in transitioning from school to work (Crul & Vermeulen 2004: 5). Youth in general are more vulnerable to job loss and unemployment; between the ages of 16-19 youth often move between jobs, and this "shifting" process may continue into the early thirties (Bradley & Devadason 2008: 122). This unstable pattern of employment is expected during the secondary school years as work is often a lower priority than educational attainment, and the pattern should only be considered problematic if it is continuing well into adulthood. Youth have internalized a flexible attitude towards their future employment; as a result of widespread job insecurity they accept that they must be ready to adapt, and even obtain additional qualifications or re-training in order to be desirable to employers (Bradley & Devadason 2008: 131-133). The early work experience that youth obtain can have an impact on future occupational opportunities.

Previous Work Experience and Credential Recognition

It is common for youth to obtain paid work experience while they are still in school. Usually youth are employed in positions that consist of retail work, the food service industry, and other low paying jobs (Billet 2005: 56). This experience can have a lasting impact on the transition process; youth who work fewer hours or low intensity during their education have positive outcomes, but some youth work with such a high intensity that it negatively affects their academic attainment (Staff & Mortimer 2008: 65). Although paid work experience during their secondary or post-secondary education provides valuable skills and experience, these two differential outcomes should be considered when developing policy focused toward integrating youth employment experience as a component of secondary education. For immigrant youth, early work experience can be useful to obtain the financial resources required for further education and this also improves their adult labour market outcomes (Perreira et al. 2007: 20). Unfortunately, employers give little consideration to work experience obtained in their country of origin (Omidvar & Richmond 2003: 2). Work experience is especially valuable for immigrant youth who may not have the required "Canadian" experience that will ensure they are able to find employment. Clearly, there is a balance that needs to be maintained between early paid work experience and educational attainment. Finally, there are clear inequalities experienced by newcomer youth as they are entering the labour force due to racism and other unique challenges.

A significant factor that plays a role in school-to-work transition of migrant youth is related to foreign experience and foreign education or credentials. The issue of foreign credential recognition is an important area of study itself, and there has been considerable focus on this issue in Canada (Grabke 2008; Buzdugan 2006;). It is important to note

that foreign credentials are often not recognized, and individuals who were educated outside of the host country are frequently paid less than those with domestic education (Omidvar & Richmond 2003: 4). Despite the fact that immigrants are accepted to enter the country based on an extremely high level of education, skills, and work experience, it is clear that employers to not value any of these attributes if they were obtained outside of Canada (Grabke 2008: 5; Buzdugan 2006). Unfortunately, employers often give little consideration to work experience that was obtained by the applicant in their country of origin (Omidvar & Richmond 2003: 2; Grabke 2008: 3-5). Unless Canadian employers begin to attribute the well deserved value to foreign experience and education, it is likely that newcomers could continue to have difficulties gaining employment as they transition into the labour market.

Newcomers, the professional organizations, government and service agencies have independently or cooperatively developed strategies to cope with this crucial problem. Unfortunately, newcomers face difficulties when employers and regulatory bodies do not accept their credentials (Reitz & Banarjee 2006: 6; Grabke 2008: 4). Often newcomers will volunteer in order to gain experience and develop professional connections within their new community. Unfortunately, in some contexts young newcomer professionals take programs that are not relevant to their profession (Slade 2008: 337). It is very clear that credential recognition is a significant problem, and it is unacceptable that highly skilled newcomers are classified as 'inferior' because they lack 'Canadian experience' (Slade 2008: 333). This perceived lack of experience is perplexing because it seems unreasonable to expect that a newly arrived immigrant would have experience working in Canada. Furthermore, it seems troubling that their skills and

credentials from their country of origin automatically considered less valuable than those of Canadians. It is the epitome of ethnocentrism to assume that these skills do not translate to the Canadian labour market, and these perceptions from employers must be addressed.

Concluding Words: The Transitional Experiences of Newcomers

The importance of social services and governmental support must not overshadow the central theme of this research. It is essential that these highly skilled young people who immigrate to Canada with a wealth of intercultural knowledge, as well as linguistic and ethnic diversity are given the opportunity to contribute to Canadian society through meaningful employment. The voices of newcomers are also important for this process, and where ever necessary I synthesize perspectives of these young people with the discourse provided by respondents from agencies and the provincial government. This hopefully provides information on what range of services are available in the city, while capturing the experience from several angles.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Stages of the Project

Although the data collected for this research is from the social organizations serving immigrant youth, it is important to connect this project as a component of a larger study focusing upon the school-to-work transition of immigrant youth. Dr. Lori Wilkinson is the principal investigator in a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) and Metropolis funded tri-provincial study to assess the labour market transitions of newly arrived immigrant youth. Phase one of this larger study utilizes the Longitudinal Study of Immigrants to Canada (LSIC) to develop statistical models testing the influence of various factors that the literature suggests play a role in the school-to-work transitions of newcomer youth. What is extremely significant about working on this larger project is that the LSIC quantitative analysis will help to augment aspects of this qualitative interview process. This is crucial, because the initial statistical work helped to guide the questions used for the interviews conducted with service providers.

Phase two of the study involves interviews with 100 immigrant youth from Winnipeg, Toronto, Hamilton and Vancouver. The interviews are conducted with the hope of compiling more detailed information about the experiences of immigrant youth as they transition from school into the labour market. These interviews touch on subjects that were not measured by the LSIC, and this could help to provide a more comprehensive picture of the challenges and successes of newcomer youth. The main objective is to understand their experiences by combining the conclusions of the statistical analysis on the LSIC with the in-depth information gathered from the structured interviews conducted with the youth themselves. This combined

methodological approach helps provide a balanced interpretation, accounting for both the general structural and demographic characteristics and the diverse statements of youths' subjective experiences. This also ties in well with structuration theory because of the focus upon both the structural and individual levels, and critical race theory can allow for the critical analysis of the entire process. Finally, my contribution examines the middle ground between the newcomer community in Winnipeg, and the institutional level. This is the role of newcomer service providers, and I hope this creates insight into this very complex process of social interaction.

Phase three of the study is the main objective of this thesis with the goal of examining how social organizations assist youth during their employment search in the city of Winnipeg. The sample of individuals selected either worked with non-governmental agencies or government departments that develop or manage programs assisting newcomer youth during the school-to-work transition. I was fortunate to speak with a varied group of respondents ranging from the provincial government, ethno-cultural groups, and various newcomer serving agencies with various specializations. Most agencies had a central mandate centered on employment, but some had a broader settlement focus. However, because finding and maintaining stable employment is a crucial factor for a successful integration experience, all of these service providers are working towards the same goals.

Research Process

The most substantial section of this thesis revolves around the interviews conducted with various members of the community including the government, agencies, community groups and newcomer youth themselves. Interviews were conducted between

January and June of 2009 with a goal of contacting a fair representation of departments and organizations focused upon ensuring immigrant youth find meaningful career related employment opportunities. In addition to the stories shared by participating social organizations, I include portions of the interviews that have been conducted with newcomer youth as the larger project progressed in order for a more detailed interpretation of newcomer employment. Next, I briefly outline how the interviews were analyzed, how respondents were selected, and also summarize the available employment programs and services in Winnipeg for newcomers who are looking for work. The procedures used to analyze the data that was collected are focused upon first.

Constant Comparison

Qualitative research can be difficult to express in a manner that conveys clarity, and researchers often only briefly or vaguely describe the methodological process used to analyze their results (Boeiji 2002: 392). A major criticism of qualitative data is that it can lack credibility when attempting to make a theoretical argument due to the fact that it is often not easily summarized given the vast amount of information collected (Glaser 1965: 443). The analytical techniques that I use are directed by the grounded theory and constant comparison methods (Glaser 1992; Glaser 1965). This thesis draws from this perspective because it assists in recording the process of drawing out meaning from the interviews. Constant comparison allows for a continuous revision of the data; if questions arise during the analysis from the preliminary respondents, these themes will be addressed in any subsequent interviews (Boeiji 2002: 393). This method is useful insofar as it allows for a very inductive method of interpreting any underlying commonalities within the diverse range of responses (Glaser 1965: 444). The purpose of these interviews

is to share the experiences of newcomer serving agencies and youth as they work together to ensure successful labour market transitions. However, the use of this analytical framework provides the reader with insight into the stages of the analysis, including how themes and patterns were derived as a result.

Constant comparison allows for the generation of theories that are "integrated, consistent, plausible, close to the data, and in a form which is clear enough to, if only partially, operationalize for testing in quantitative research" (Glaser 1965: 437-438). Put simply, this method is useful for exploratory inquiries such as this thesis, and can provide a more stable framework for further examination. Each interview is examined in detail to assess the emerging themes and categories that develop, as well as the core message from each particular respondent, and finally, to search for any contradictions made during the interview that may require clarification (Boeije 2002: 396-397; Glaser 1965: 442; Walter & Myrick 2006: 551). Keeping track of one's ideas while conducting constant comparison is also extremely useful as it provides valuable insights in the future analysis while keeping the researcher very comfortable and close to the data (Glaser 1965: 443). After this initial revision, each interview should be compared to each other ensuring that common or divergent experiences are identified (Boeije 2002; 397; Walter & Myrick 2006: 549). Gradually, themes should be integrated as you note what major threads of common stories can be identified as a result of the preliminary categories that were developed (Glaser 1965: 440). Put in another way, this allows for a constant revision process and a deep analysis of each interview while identifying any common or exceptional stories that come to mind. Additionally, the added insight of the notes taken during the process can assist the researcher in noticing these patterns. Importantly, this

procedure ensures that the theory is drawn from the data, rather than providing characteristic examples for a theory that is previously developed and then forced to fit into categories.

The most significant aspect of constant comparison is that it allows for the researcher to keep a focus on drawing out the "meaning that the participants hold about the problem or issue, not the meaning that the researcher or writers express in the literature" (Creswell 2008: 175; Walter & Myrick 2006: 548). Another major strength of this method is the importance of utilizing several different types of data. This allows the researcher to triangulate results between different data sources, and if you can recognize themes from several sources of data or perspectives this is said to increase the validity (Creswell 2008: 191). In addition to the face-to-face interviews, all respondents provided me with numerous supplementary materials (statistics, tours of workshop rooms, etc) that provided insight into how the organization provided assistance to newcomers. This is useful to capture information that might not have been discussed during the meeting, and were helpful as a reference while analyzing the transcripts (Creswell 2008: 181). Additionally, all of the agencies that were contacted have websites on the internet that provide a basic outline of the programming offered by their organization. As a result, this research has allowed for a broad view of newcomer services in Winnipeg, and it is of extreme significance given the substantial increases in immigration that the provincial government is striving for.

There are different strengths and weaknesses regarding qualitative analyses of social phenomenon, and the combination of the multiple perspectives provides a balanced approach. However, the constant comparison method provides a more systematic

framework for conducting qualitative research, and this assisted me in articulating the complex process of drawing out the narratives provided by my contacts working with newcomer youth. At the very least, it provides a thorough methodology allowing the researcher to check for obvious transcription errors and to ensure that themes are consistently maintained throughout the process (Creswell 2008: 190). It is not the intent of this researcher to imply that a more systematic approach offers more validity to qualitative research. In fact, it is the stories that are embedded in the discourse of participants that offer the most valuable information about how newcomers are coping in the labour market. However, the constant comparison method did provide a framework for proceeding with and recording the research process.

Selection of Respondents

The goal in selecting respondents was to include as many different newcomer service agencies and groups as possible that compose a fair representation of the organizations in Winnipeg. Although small, the group was diverse enough to gain an accurate picture of the agencies that are working with newcomer youth. The recruitment strategy was not a random sample as this is not the goal of qualitative research, nor would it be possible due to the small number of immigrant serving agencies within the city of Winnipeg. Fortunately, the fact that this research is connected to a more extensive project examining the labour market transitions of newly arrived immigrant youth, organizations and potential respondents were contacted as the larger project progressed. Additionally, the principal investigator of the SSHRC funded project is well connected to the immigrant serving agencies in the city of Winnipeg, and was helpful in providing assistance in obtaining participants for this thesis. There were also numerous

opportunities and events within the city during the search process, and I arranged interviews with several respondents as a result of these more spontaneous meetings. Finally, the agencies and individuals who I spoke with throughout the search were helpful in directing me to the appropriate service providers who could best answer questions regarding newcomer youth employment.

As the interviews were conducted, the focus centered on the services provided to newcomer youth during their school-to-work transition. This often would include job search techniques, social networking, language instruction, and other factors that influence the likelihood of obtaining access to the labour market. I also probed to facilitate discussion with the agency workers that were useful in identifying the limitations of the organizations assisting youth to find meaningful employment. It should also be possible to ascertain what needs of youth and organizations are not being met by the government offices meant to assist during the integration or transition process. The participating organizations for this project were International Centre Inc., NEEDS Inc., Manitoba Labour and Immigration, Aksyon Ng Ating Katataan (ANAK Inc.), Success Skills Centre, Employment Projects of Winnipeg, the Entry Program, Youth Employment Network (funded by Service Canada and provided by Alicia Rae Career Centre Inc.), the University of Manitoba Career Centre, African Communities of Manitoba Inc. (ACOMI) and the William Whyte Residents Association. These organizations all agreed to be identified in this thesis through the consent form.

Interview Questions

Although the exact wording of questions varied depending on the individual I was meeting with, there were general patterns that are useful to describe. The introductory

questions focused upon examining how each agency or department provided services to youth as they seek employment. Furthermore, these programs, goals, mandates and mission statements were discussed in detail, and I also asked about how the organization and programs developed. After this initial stage, I continued on to focus upon specific issues that related to challenges and positive stories experience by agencies and newcomer youth.

Some of the questions that were asked during the interviews included what the individual working at the agency perceived as difficulties faced by the organization during the process of helping newcomers find meaningful jobs For example, I asked "what are the major challenges facing your organization in helping youth find work?". Also, it was important to ask what the agency worker perceived as the difficulties facing youth during the job search process by asking "what do you perceive as challenges facing newcomer youth as they are trying to find employment in Winnipeg?".

In contrast, it was also a goal of this study to determine the successful strategies that are being utilized to assist youth in obtaining jobs. These success stories provide guidance in developing programs and policy to assist youth and social organizations in developing effective strategies for ensuring a smoother transition from school into the workforce. These results could then be compared with how youth perceived the difficulties they faced during their employment search. Another way to ask these questions were also addressed by specifically inquiring about the most difficult and most rewarding stories that workers at the agency experienced while assisting newcomer youth find employment including questions such as "what is the biggest success story you have experienced while working with newcomer youth as they find employment?" and "what

other positive experiences have you noted during your work with immigrant youth?". I was interested in uncovering general patterns of success, racism or exclusion, issues around foreign credential recognition and educational transfers. I also wished to examine the micro-sociological level by recording specific stories that these individuals observed.

Other questions inquired about the programs or services offered to youth that are meant to assist their job search. I was also curious to see if these initiatives were developed as a function of the organization or if they are meeting a need of the community. Which includes items such as "has this service been developed to fit the need of the community?". It was also be important to ask how services could be improved, and if the government has a responsibility to offer more resources to efficacious programs that are assisting newcomer youth obtain jobs. I asked "what could be done to improve the services you provide to youth during their job search?". I also wanted to grasp how individuals working with the newcomer community viewed their more general integration process and asked "how do you feel newcomer youth are faring during their general integration process?".

All of these questions should provide valuable information that may assist in the development of policy that would support social organizations providing good programs that assist youth in obtaining meaningful employment. The full interview guide that was developed as a part of my ethics application process can be seen in Appendix C.

The Interview Process

The nature of each interview was different; while the majority took place in an office setting, others were in more public areas, and one interview was done outside during an ethno-cultural event. Additionally, I was able to observe an employment

program workshop as a new cohort of newcomer youth were introduced to the 8 week process they were undertaking. I also attended an ethno-cultural picnic celebration and conducted many interviews with newcomer youth as a part of the larger project. All of these experiences were invaluable for me as I interpreted my discussions held with these respondents, and I greatly enjoyed the insights and perspectives that I came across in every interview. Although my interview guide was very helpful during discussions with the first few contacts, I eventually adopted a pattern of first asking the respondent for their general impressions of newcomer youth employment, and about the services that were provided by their agency. This would often allow them to discuss all the themes and observations that they believed were the most significant, and as their pace slowed down I would then begin to probe for more information on particular issues if they had not previously been discussed. I felt that this adaptation allowed for a more free-flowing format, a more interactive experience, and provided extremely interesting responses.

The goal focused upon contacting key informants in these organizations who can provide first hand knowledge about the current strategies of community groups that are assisting youth during the process of integration, but especially with a focus upon the school-to-work transition because this is a crucial period in a youth's life as they learn to find meaningful employment that allows them to become a contributing member of society. These interviews also provide direct information on the needs of community organizations, and also identify the successful strategies and the current or future challenges that need to be addressed.

Community or government programs were selected for study in combination with responses from youth themselves because it provides a balance between the individual

actor, the intermediaries, and the institutional context that exists in Manitoba. Augmenting agency responses with the insight from the larger study helps to provide a more comprehensive interpretation. The hope is to provide a firm basis for further research that connects the potential challenges of immigration and integration during the employment transition of youth. Community organizations are comprised of individual agents who are acting within the social structure to provide services to newcomer youth, and they reproduce or change the structure through their actions and interactions with the community and other individual actors. By utilizing the structuration perspective, this research examines how the individuals interact with the structure they are reproducing through their actions.

Additional Employment Services in Winnipeg

In addition to these respondents that were selected, it is important to mention that newcomer youth may access other services such as Employment Solutions for Immigrant Youth, and various initiatives set up by the community such as the Spence Neighbourhood Association. Broader youth services directed at the age just before they can enter the employment force are also available. The International Centre partnered with the Citizenship Council of Manitoba Inc. provide a Youth Training and Leadership program, directed at newcomer youth aged 13 to 16, that provides workshops, volunteer, work experience, and field trips that help develop skills and support for these youth that will ease the transition process (Citizenship Council of Manitoba Inc. 2008: 2). This program is rather comprehensive because it is combined with sports, homework help, personal empowerment, and field trips meant to help newcomer youth integrate and become more accustomed to Manitoban culture. This broad focus results in more positive

outcomes related to educational success as well as social and economic integration, and support for newcomer youth while they are still in the compulsory school system is an excellent point of intervention that can better prepare them for entering the labour force. All of these services are essential to acknowledge for the extensive support and assistance they provide to new immigrants in the city of Winnipeg.

Limitations

There are limitations to this research project that must be examined in detail in order to minimize the impact of this lack or gap in critical information. A first limitation is that much of the existing literature does not distinguish between visible minority and immigrant youth. Although this thesis attempts to address this lack of previous research, it does limit the researcher's ability to refer to previous studies that confirm or undermine the themes developed during the thesis. Furthermore, distinction between the challenges faced by immigrant youth in comparison to youth who have the addition complication of being a refugee migrant is also limited in most of the literature. It is important to acknowledge this difficulty when juxtaposing the findings of the general literature to an examination of immigrant or refugee youth. As a result, this research must seek to address these problems, and it will be crucial to ensure that distinctions between the two groups of migrants are recorded. This research will also contribute modestly to the experiences of newcomers in Canada during the school-to-work transition.

Other methodological limitations include a smaller sample size and the fact that all participants were drawn from a single city. Therefore, it would be too early to form general conclusions about the school-to-work transitions of newcomer youth in Winnipeg. This research offers a supplemental view emphasizing the narrative shared by

agencies and newcomer youth. Often, generalizations made with even the best of intentions tend to assume homogeneity within a group that is extremely diverse across all sorts of identifying characteristics. However, all youth face difficulties in making the transition process from school to meaningful employment, and these problems can be exacerbated by additional challenges that may result from being an immigrant, visible minority or refugee. Although these youth are from extremely diverse origins, it is necessary to generalize findings in order to develop the most effective policy implications. As part of the larger SSHRC research project, the larger scale statistical analysis of the LSIC can be utilized to help to guide any necessary generalizations. As long as these limitations are consciously acknowledged throughout the investigation process, fewer distortions will occur within the final findings of the research. Therefore, it is crucial to ensure that the researcher is aware of these limitations during the process in order to come to more reliable conclusions.

Ethical Considerations

Research ethics is a crucial part of this process, and an Ethics Protocol was submitted and approved by the University of Manitoba Psychology/Sociology Research Ethics Board (REB) before the interview stage began. Further, it is important to acknowledge that in a smaller sized city such as Winnipeg there are concerns around the issue of privacy for individuals disclosing potentially sensitive information during the interview process. Although I will identify the organizations that participated, due to the relatively small number of community organizations and business leaders in the city, it was even more necessary to refrain from utilizing any personally identifying characteristics of the individuals interviewed. All the names of youth participants were

changed, and identifying characteristics were not included. Additionally, information that would incriminate specific businesses for racist or discriminatory hiring practices could be equally problematic. As a result, information was omitted to protect individuals who may have had a very specific experience with a certain business or employer in order to avoid any unnecessary stress to the organizations being interviews, or the youth who faced discrimination or racism. Unfortunately, although this researcher would gladly expose any despicable hiring practices of Winnipeg employers, this is necessary to avoid pressure on individuals already facing problems entering the labour force. This possibility was mentioned in the consent form that all participants were asked to sign, and no incentives were offered to respondents. However, participants were offered the opportunity to receive an executive summary of the research project, and any follow-up inquiries will be welcomed.

Storage of the data collected was contained in a secure locked location, and access to the data was limited to those directly connected to the thesis project. Upon completion of this thesis all data will be destroyed in a timely manner. This should help to ensure the integrity of the data, and helps protect the privacy of agency workers and youth respondents.

Concluding Words

This thesis seeks to interpret the nature of employment transitions from the perspectives of youth and local service providers. Within the greater context of Canada as a major destination for immigrants, service providers play a significant role in assisting newcomers during their process of adjustment and economic integration. Although I primarily write this as a contribution to the academic literature, I also seek to fill a dual

role as a social activist. The notion that highly skilled newcomers are being denied full access to the labour market is a blatant example of ethnic inequality, and it must not be tolerated. The goal of sharing a diverse range of experiences as expressed by employment services and young immigrants is to emphasize that there is still substantial work to be done before Canada can be considered inclusive and welcoming of all newcomers.

Chapter 4: Results

> "Yeah, it took me awhile, I guess for the most part was because I had no experience at all. So it did take me - we came in February, so February, March, April, May, so I was just sitting at home doing nothing for about four months, and then I finally got a job. Then, sometime in the summer of the next year, I tried to find another job. It was hard finding one, I'm not sure why, I put in all these applications. I never got any replies or anything." – **"Dgoo"**

"Dgoo" is a twenty-three year old woman who was born in Nigeria. She is currently employed as a customer service representative while she is attending university and hopes to finish a Master's degree in community social sciences as a part of her long-term career plan. Many youth face challenges when they attempt to enter the labour market for the first time and the additional barriers are apparent for newcomers to Canadian society. Clear themes developed as I progressed through a constant comparison of the youth and agency transcripts shared with me by participants. What is particularly interesting about these results is that there were common concerns all raised by the youth, agencies and government. I first analyze the impact of the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program, and the responses from participants from Manitoba Labour and Immigration were crucial in developing a comprehensive understanding of the immigration strategy in place. Then I focus upon the services provided for young immigrants during their employment transition process. Included in this discussion are the perceptions of local employment trends, the importance of volunteering, and the challenges in providing services. At this point, the analysis shifts from focusing on agencies and structural conditions to the perception of the challenges facing newcomer youth as they search for employment. Finally, the general integration experiences of newcomer youth are

assessed, including positive stories that were shared with me by local service providers. Throughout the presentation of agency perspectives, I incorporate the views of youth respondents. All these points are discussed in further detail as the analysis progresses.

Themes of Interview Responses and Analysis

The contrast of responses between agencies was extremely enlightening, but there were also several issues that agencies and government were uniformly concerned about. The use of constant comparison allows for a detailed review of the transcripts, and is helpful for organizing the issues and experiences expressed by the participants. These themes include with a general outline of the services are available for newcomers as they search for employment, employment trends in Winnipeg, challenges faced by agencies, challenges faced by newcomers, gaps in services, the general integration process of youth, and positive stories of successful youth employment transitions. It is first necessary to discuss the Provincial Nominee Program that has been so successful in attracting young immigrant professionals to Manitoba.

Manitoba Government and the Provincial Nominee Program

As a preface for this discussion, it is useful to outline the immigration strategy that has been implemented by the provincial government in Manitoba. This provides a broader context that is essential in situating the responses of agencies and youth. This also helps to crystallize the interactive nature of service provision and governance in relation to immigration and the transitions of youth into the labour market. Manitoba Labour and Immigration (LIM) are extremely active in promoting the province as a destination for immigration after several decades of net losses in migration. As shown in Table 1, Manitoba receives a proportion of economic migrants that is higher than the

Canadian average. Additionally, while the ten thousand immigrants arriving in Manitoba makes up only four percent of the Canadian total, this number includes 6661 individuals who arrived under the PNP, which is 49.9 percent of the total number of nominees arriving in Canada (LIM 2007). Therefore, it is clear that the nominee program is highly successful in attracting young economic migrants to the province, and illustrates the significance of this thesis.

Table 1: Immigrants by Entry Class, 2006

	Canada		Manitoba	
	N	*%*	*N*	*%*
Family Class	70,508	28.0%	1,332	13.3%
Economic Class	138,257	54.9%	7,375	73.4%
Refugees	32,492	12.9%	1,241	12.3%
Other	10,382	4.1%	103	1.0%
Total	**251,639**	**100.0%**	**10,501**	**100.0%**
As Canadian Percent			**4.0%**	

Source: Manitoba Labour and Immigration 2007

The Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program was developed in 1998 and is a mechanism that selects skilled workers and business immigrants who "demonstrate strong Manitoba connections and abilities to make significant economic contributions" (Manitoba Labour and Immigration 2006: 21). The goal of the provincial government is to sustain economic growth through immigration, although it is also stated that strengthening diversity is another interest identified by the government (LIM 2007: 2). Clearly, the primary goal of the PNP program in Manitoba is to support economic growth. There are two streams through which newcomers apply; the priority and general

streams group individuals and families into categories depending on need. The priority stream includes issues of family support, employer needs, international students, community supports and what they call the "strategic initiative stream" (LIM 2006: 21). This plan has been extremely successful for the province with Provincial Nominees making up 66.7 percent of newcomers arriving to the province in 2006, and this proportion increased with 70 percent of immigrants entering as nominees in 2007 (LIM 2006; 2007). As a result, the increase in migration is directly related to the PNP. Additionally, it appears that economic growth as a result of migration is a significant motive for the implementation of this strategy. There are specific criteria that are expected in order for potential immigrants to be eligible for the nominee program.

The requirements for a successful application through the Provincial Nominee program are based upon four categories including education and training, work experience, language ability and adaptability (LIM 2009). They are looking for skilled individuals who have a minimum of high school education, and those who have work experience from their previous country of residence. They also must have sufficient linguistic ability, and demonstrate the intention that they wish to settle and establish their life in Manitoba. This can include connection to an ethno-cultural community or professional organization and financial or social supports in the province. Given the nature of the eligibility requirements, newcomers who arrive as a result of the PNP should be well positioned for a successful transition into the labour market and local Manitoban culture. The success of the nominee program is obvious, the Manitoba government set the goal of 10,000 newcomers was set in 2003 and this goal was quickly realized as a result of the PNP (LIM 2006; 2007). It is currently the wish of the provincial

government to double this proportion by seeking to receive 20,000 newcomers annually to the province within the next ten years.

I discussed the significance of the PNP with representatives from the department of Labour and Immigration, and the importance of successful employment transitions for young newcomers was identified:

> "It's an extremely young population that's coming to Manitoba first of all. So the whole purpose of the PNP program is to bring in people who are of working age and responding to the needs of the labour market. The goal of immigration, for the most part, has to do with our economic growth strategy. It's an economic class of immigrants that's coming to the province in the highest numbers. So it's a huge deal for us that people succeed in their economic integration which is having a job and becoming gainfully employed and being able to support themselves is our main reason for being." – **Manitoba Labour and Immigration**

The role of government in assisting during the employment transitions is clear, and it is crucial to inform all levels of government in terms of the challenges facing youth and agencies in order for an appropriate change in policy and funding. The economic growth provided by immigration is significant for the province, and there must be an equal contribution provided by local services to ensure that newcomers are receiving the support they need during this process. The theory of structuration is helpful because of the acknowledgment that institutions require an open stream of communication with agencies and the community in order to respond to needs. In regards to employment services, the increase of newcomers arriving to the province is clearly having an impact on local service providers:

> "I think the pressures right now tend to be around volume, around capacity, some coordination maybe, sometimes just keeping up with making sure that, well the challenges have been making sure that the services providers are all working together and not across purposes. I think that's our common goal." – **Manitoba Labour and Immigration**

If agencies are currently struggling with the proportion of newcomers requiring assistance, it is essential to recognize that this will continue to be a problem as migration through the PNP increases:

> "We work pretty closely with our agencies we're not a hands-off funder. We take responsibility for devising the models for providing leadership. You know, of course it's not always beautiful, but I think it's pretty good. We have an ok relationship with most of them. I think the challenges we have are some infrastructure challenges. The growth of agencies and the spaces they're habiting and the increasing cost to overheads. I don't know if you care about that, but what happens is when you expand a program it means you need more space, so that takes away from the pot that you can put into services so we're concerned about that trend." – **Manitoba Labour and Immigration**

An increase in newcomers arriving must be partnered with a substantial increase in monetary and spatial resources to service agencies so they can continue to provide adequate support in the community ensuring positive employment opportunities for newcomer youth. Finally, this researcher is curious as to whether the federal government has increased their allocation of funds to the province of Manitoba given the increase in immigration. Although the provincial government maintains autonomy over regional migration policies and services, the federal level has a responsibility to provide funding dollars as well.

In light of this mandate to double immigration to the province over the next decade, the role of newcomer employment services becomes extremely clear. If such a large proportion of newcomers will be arriving in Manitoba, it is crucial that they are given all the correct information at the beginning of the migration process; or at the very least, to ensure that information received once they arrive is accurate, relevant and helpful. Key issues that are identified by government as areas for improvement are the centralization of information for newcomers, orientation, assessments and to ensure that

immigrants receive appropriate services as soon as possible (LIM 2006). This is a part of the broader settlement strategy to ensure that newcomers are receiving adequate services and are being treated fairly in the labour market. The idea is to provide assistance earlier to minimize any problems that might develop from a delayed transition experience. However, it also quickly becomes clear when the results are discussed that one of the most significant "problems" is the ignorance of employers who are less willing to hire newcomers based on the various reasons that will be discussed in further detail as the analysis progresses.

All of these interrelated factors play a role in the institutional and structural conditions that face new Canadians as they arrive in Winnipeg. The governmental strategy provides a strong understanding of the broader structural conditions that agencies and newcomers find themselves in. In order to grasp a more systemic perspective from the discourse analysis, I analyze themes related to the general focus of newcomer service providers. These include themes such as ensuring that programs are client and community driven, assisting during the job search and preparation process, volunteering and the general perception of any employment trends in Winnipeg.

Services Available

Client Centered Services

A feature common to the mandate of the organizations I spoke to was the emphasis on client focused services. This is significant from the standpoint of structuration theory because it illustrates the cooperative nature of newcomer service agencies in the city of Winnipeg and elsewhere. Although most service agencies say that client driven goals are what leads to program development in their organization, for

newcomer services, this is essential because the needs of immigrant youth are likely to be different than those born in Canada. Furthermore, research elsewhere has identified that newcomer youth are almost entirely dependent upon employment agencies to prepare them for the labour market (Kilbride, et al. 2001). An agency that specialized in assisting youth find employment really illustrated how significant this interactive component is:

> "What happened is the students who are coming here from other countries basically said we need some services for ourselves. There was a huge gap that was identified that between going from high school, going into career fields, not going to university. There was nothing that would prepare them for that. They found that very challenging, and that first year after high school they were just saying we need something to be able to connect us with those employers because we've been here for such a short period of time we don't have the networks necessary." – **NEEDS Inc**

The lack of an established social network in the city is a major challenge for newcomers when they search for employment, and this is an area where service providers can assist youth in building relationships with employers in the community. Another crucial point that comes out of this passage is the fact that this programming was developed to fit needs of the newcomer youth who were coming into the agency. This client driven model of services is very important. It is beneficial for agencies to incorporate this goal into their mandate because it allows them to remain responsive and flexible in order to react to needs from the community rather than having their programming entirely determined by the funders and governments. Youth organizations have been seen as shifting to active learning strategies where young people are given the opportunity to make meaningful choices and take on roles that incorporate their creative ability rather than being passive recipients of services (Pittman, et al. 2006: 7). This is significant because it includes newcomers in the process as active participants in service provision, and if their

experiences are more interactive with the agencies listening to their concerns it is likely they will feel more positively about the entire process.

By their very nature, ethno-cultural groups are in tune with community needs because they are directly connected to the people they are working with:

> "What we started doing first was advocacy because we saw that the way to go was actually to get government to find an understanding that there are actual barriers in the way. Barriers that are more what you can classify as not extreme racism, but the fact we are a different colour and the stereotype that comes along with that." – **ACOMI**

Advocacy was identified as a major role of newcomer serving organizations because they can work as an intermediary between immigrant communities and the federal or provincial governments thereby increasing the level of social capital available to youth and newcomer communities (Brekke 2007: 232). This is self-evident in the statement from this ethno-cultural community, but was not clearly identified as a mandate by any of the other agencies that participated. Although it is not explicitly stated, newcomer service providers inherently act as advocates for immigrant youth. It is important that agencies are aware of this role, and further, understand how important this support is for newcomers.

The role of incorporating the needs of clients assists in ensuring that the assistance fits the goals of newcomers:

> "The curriculum is all designed based on the needs of the clients, so when we're doing the initial assessment which is usually just a day, where we sit down and talk to them about everything; previous experience, volunteer, life at home, school, work, what they've done abroad. Some of them come with a vast amount of knowledge and experience, so we do previous work assessment with them. It really opens our eyes to know how to market them, all of these things we use and we keep in a file which we manage what the progress of that student is, and the outcomes we're hoping to get." – **NEEDS Inc.**

This can help to make sure that the agencies and youth are on the same path when it comes to what both expect in terms of outcomes and goals.

It is also important to ensure that youth are involved in community and social service agencies in a meaningful capacity. Previous research has demonstrated that youth who are interacting with these groups are seen to have "fewer problems" than those who are not (Pittman, et al. 2006: 6). Clearly, the support of newcomer serving agencies can have a very positive impact on the employment outcomes of youth. However, it is apparent that services must be interactive in nature and driven by the needs of the community. This really emphasizes the reflexive nature of social relations as postulated by the structuration perspective; it is essential that youth, agencies, community groups and the various levels of government work together within the framework of partnership as this will result in more positive outcomes for everyone involved.

General Settlement Services

There are various types of services available to newcomers as they are adjusting to life in Winnipeg, and even the agencies with a broader focus identify employment as a major component of a successful integration experience:

> "So the Entry program started in 2004, and as a basis for what to present, what kind of information to give to newcomers all the immigrant serving agencies got together and brainstormed on what would be the most essential information that newcomers needed to know… So they brainstormed what would be the most important things newcomers would need and from that list it was grouped into four basic themes. We've called them; Health; Employment; Laws and Places to go (getting around Winnipeg)" – **Entry Program**

It is important to note the cooperative nature of program development, and the communication between agencies is essential to ensure that services are coordinating to

meet the needs of newcomer youth. This can also help to reduce the redundancy of programs offered by service providers. Additionally, there is an active will to bring in members of the community to provide information for newcomers during that initial stage of adjustment:

> "Whenever possible we use guest speakers from the community who are experts in the area, and they come in and do presentations and on those days we hire interpreters for all the low level students so they receive information in their first language." – **Entry Program**

The opportunity for newcomers to receive services with the assistance of an interpreter ensures that the information will be understood clearly. This is especially helpful for those individuals who have lower language skills. Usually a needs assessment is completed with a new arrival to the agency to determine what their needs are, whether related to employment or broader settlement issues:

> "We have a process. People come to the centre for all services through an assessment. They have an assessment at the front, and then depending on what they identify as their needs and what the assessment counselor, basically whatever happens in that interview they'll be referred on to employment… Most people are also doing English classes so figuring out how to, finding something for them that will fit their personal needs. So things can come up in that interview as well, if they have kids they might have to look into childcare, we might refer them to settlement. I guess that's the benefit too of having so many different services here at the international centre because we can do a lot of internal referrals" – **International Centre**

It is useful to have effective referral services, especially within the same organization, because it ensures that all the potential barriers that newcomers face when seeking employment are addressed as interconnected factors:

> "It's such a multi-faceted thing, that's the tough part, it requires so many coordinated supports. So that's my overall view." – **Manitoba Labour and Immigration**

From the perception of service providers and related organizations, it is clear that the perception of youth employment is a complex system of factors that work together. Therefore, it is essential that broad supports are in place to ensure people have access to stable housing, goods and services while they work through the process of transitioning into employment.

However, it is also crucial not to approach services with the mentality that there is a "problem to fix" or a "deficit" of ability as is often the mentality of service providers (Pittman, et al. 2006: 13). Clearly, there is a delicate balance required from agencies to ensure that they do not approach newcomers with preconceived assumptions, and when youth are creatively engaged with services and the community this will help to improve assistance to those who require help. Put simply, this reflexive model will assist both service agencies and newcomers to increase their social resources and ensure better employment and settlement outcomes.

Employment Services

There are various agencies that provide employment services as a component of their broader settlement and integration mandate, and several groups primarily focus upon employment. This was beneficial for this study because I was able to talk with agencies that focused solely on employment, those working on a more general framework of integration, and ethno-cultural communities who all provided a rich and detailed description of what services are available.

Some agencies focus upon newcomer professionals, and this differentiation is understandable given the larger proportion of highly-skilled provincial nominees who are migrating to the province:

> "Most of them are professionals, and newcomers with English benchmark level five and above. So we are trying to assist them in finding a job in a new environment, in doing so we will get them job ready. So different trainings, we offer work shops like job search techniques, resume writing, interview skills and networking in the workshops. We also provide one to one counseling, and in that session a person can have an hour for the first time with a counselor, and they do a needs assessment. If there is a training gap, they will also assist them to break that gap by referring them to the proper channel. We also demonstrate how to look for jobs on the internet, together with the client we make a plan for an effective job search. So these are the areas that we're dealing with, although it seems very general, every individual is very unique, and so we're dealing with those sort of things." - **EPW**

The approach of viewing individuals as having varied needs and may require personalized support is very important. Newcomers are not a homogenous group and it is essential to acknowledge these multi-faceted experiences and various needs. Other services available to newcomer professions are focused upon getting individuals job ready and providing them with information that will assist them in obtaining career related employment:

> "We focus on giving them as much information as possible in a seven day event, 9-4:30, of the four tools. Resume writing, cover letter writing, interview preps, and we really closely monitor all of that, and we can't really market them until after they have those three skills. They definitely have to have the resume and then go from there. So we have a very specific sit down with then, plan what it is, where they're going to go in the short term, then on the long term." – **Success Skills**

Although these agencies focus upon a broader age group of immigrants, these are resources utilized by youth as they are entering the labour market for the first time after arriving in Canada or after completing their educational training. The assistance provided

was often very similar across organizations, but they may have a more specialized or more generalized focus (professionals, youth, low language ability, etc). These are needs and difficulties related to these 'statuses' that the Canadian-born youth population are unlikely to face. Furthermore, programs directed at youth while they are still in high school are beneficial to help keep newcomer youth in high school and to provide them with access to work experience so they are able to build a history of employment early in their educational and occupational training.

For agencies that work primarily with youth, the services provided are based along the same goal of ensuring they are ready for employment. However, there are understandable differences between the needs of younger youth who might still be in high school when compared to young adult professionals. Volunteer or work experience that is gained before youth leave the compulsory education system is an excellent point of intervention that can assist in more positive career outcomes (Billet 2005: 51; Crul & Vermeulen 2004: 11). It provides youth with a lot of valuable information about what is expected in the workplace, and what the rights are for employees. It is crucial for agencies to provide opportunities for newcomer youth to take part in training programs because previous research has shown that these services and opportunities are underutilized by visible minority youth (Bradley & Taylor 2004). One organization recognized the importance of internship for young people in high school:

> "So we developed the career internship program, which then had 12 weeks of employability training, and it moved into an internship piece. Where they would, it's all on a volunteer basis, but they would get high school credit for that internship and all the hours that they put into the classroom and employability portion. Then what they did, it turned into paid employment so the idea is that the employers that were on board, as long as the students completed the program they were guaranteed paid summer employment." – **NEEDS Inc.**

This is especially helpful for those youth who might not have a considerable amount of experience, and it provides them with school credits in addition to the chance for paid summer employment. However, it is crucial to ensure that youth find a stable balance that allows them to gain work experience without hindering their academic achievement. This has also been identified as a successful avenue for assistance by an ethno-cultural organization assisting Filipino youth:

> "What do we do? Our mandate is to preserve and promote Filipino culture through education, specifically through access to resources, education and mentorship. We work right now with [*several high schools*] and we're expanding. The premise is to partner second generation Filipino-Canadian youth with newcomer youth." - **ANAK**

These programs focus specifically on the development of young people during the high school years, and this can provide valuable work experience that will assist them in making decisions about future career opportunities as well as providing modest financial resources. Agencies that work with youth often require that these young people are enrolled in high school; due to the fact that newcomers are more likely to stop attending school, this is a clear barrier for those who have dropped out and trying to navigate their place in the local economy (Perreira et al 2007: 10; Kilbride, et al. 2001). It is telling that I was unable to locate any specific programs to assist those newcomer youth who might be in an extremely marginalized position and are not attending school, especially since in previous research, twenty percent of refugees and upwards of seventy percent of English Additional Language students will drop out of high school (Wilkinson 2002; Watt & Roessingh 1994).

Whether services are directed at youth, young professionals or all newcomers in a more general sense, it is important to recognize that there are newcomers who might

require additional assistance during the job search process. These "high needs" clients are identified through the initial assessments done as a part of the entry or orientation stage. These individuals might require more assistance that cannot be provided in the format of group workshops or classes:

> "Also for higher needs people, and that's generally for people identified as higher needs who don't have the family support; so no family relative who speaks English or has been here a long time to help them get places. Or if they just got here, how are they doing – it's a mutual relationship, I can't be doing everything for them. They need to be also going to job sites and applying for jobs as well and finding out if there any obstacles for that. There is a lot of follow up process. So yeah with higher needs clients we have an employer liason, she can actually take people to job sites to apply in person and fill out applications. Especially with people with lower literacy levels, some people aren't literate in their own language so they don't have those transferable skills. So in that case you really have to sit down with them and help them out, we can't do it for them but we tell them 'this is what that says' and 'this is what you would write' and they would fill it out." – **International Centre**

It is encouraging that there are supports for people who might require the extra help filling out forms or in their initial interactions with employers. These services are seeking to ensure that newcomer youth are prepared for the job search and interview process.

Job Search and Interview Process

When youth begin searching for employment, service providers are uniquely positioned to act not only as intermediaries between newcomers and the government, but also as advocates for newcomers' interactions with employers and the local labour market. Once the agency feels that an individual is "job ready" they will assist them in actively searching for jobs either by forwarding job openings, helping youth search through the internet, holding job fairs, writing cover letters and providing advice about approaching employers. As previously mentioned, if an individual is identified as a

higher needs case, then an employer liason might be able to assist them. These were common strategies among many of the employment agencies. Most were connected to various employers, and this became very useful for when they advocate and showcase the skills of newcomer youth:

> "So I'm constantly talking with employers, conducting research, also marketing the clients to them. I always ask them, I think it's a great opportunity to do a number of things at once; what are you really looking for, what is it that you want, when you're doing an interview how do you select candidates, what questions are you most curious about, right?" – **NEEDS Inc.**

This connection with local employers is important in assisting newcomers to find employment. The notion of client driven services is highly related to this partnership because it is extremely important that all interest groups are communicating each others needs. Having an individual who specifically builds these relationships was seen as an extremely important aspect of the job search process:

> "The employer liason, that position itself is a response to client needs. Well, basically what she has the ability to do is find us employers. So she's looking to build those partnerships. That frees up a lot of energy from the facilitators so we can focus more on the client, and yet there is someone there that has that relationship with the employers and knows if the employer is going to be culturally sensitive and she can go actually down to the site and see if this is a place where we can see our clients working." – **International Centre**

This is an essential component of employment services because it is crucial that agencies are aware of local labour market conditions and direct newcomers into businesses and industries that are a good fit. A youth named "Hai" who participated in the youth interviews, indicated that he asked for advice from employment counselor about to what to expect:

> "I tried to ask her of what to do for interviews and what to expect for job applications, because she is the one who does the job application."

This is helpful for newcomer youth because they may not have much experience in searching for work in Canada, and without knowing what is expected from them they may be at a disadvantage due to their unfamiliarity with the norms around the job search process. In addition to seeking out opportunities for employment and building the connections between employers and the newcomer communities, agencies also seek to help youth to develop and improve skills that will assist them in a successful interview.

The process of going to a job interview can be a stressful ordeal for all individuals whether they are born in Canada or not, and for youth their lack of experience may amplify this anxiety. When the youth is a newcomer, there may be the added pressure of trying to adapt to new expectations that might be unfamiliar or go against their cultural disposition (Bauder 2005: 82). For example, from the perspective of a young newcomer named "Lu Lu":

> "I think as Chinese people we are really shy, and English is not your native language right? So it's really hard for us to start talking, to sit in the interview, we feel really really nervous. Sometimes we really don't know how to answer a question, because you know if you are really nervous your brain is bad."

This cultural difference in personal expression was identified by numerous service providers as an issue that employers need to be educated about. Clearly, the notion of selling yourself as an outstanding candidate could hinder youth from cultural groups who might find this concept unfamiliar, and most of the service agencies agreed with their assessment:

> "I think culture, like how to act in a job interview." – **International Centre**

> "Culturally, some cultures have challenges because, they have a more challenging time than others because of the way to find work, the way to

> interview and the way to approach employers is very different." – **Entry Program**
>
> "She's the primary example that comes to mind; every time I would walk into the room she would cover her head a little bit more and turn away and put on a very serious disposition, she was terribly shy. I don't know if it's just an austerity that comes with, that's how you're supposed to behave, and I could see that presenting challenges in finding employment." – **LIM**
>
> "Sometimes it's language and communication. So in Canada, if you're going to go an interview for a job you really have to be able to promote yourself... two things, culturally, it's culturally a different norm to go out and self promote. A lot of cultures are more humble and you don't talk about yourselves like that. A lot of times students that I've talked to say they don't feel comfortable." – **UMCC**

It was telling to see that many of the agencies identified specific cultural groups might face challenges in presenting themselves, and this perspective is also supported by the perceptions of youth respondents. They find that there are substantial divergences in the Canadian workplace when compared to what they were used to in their country of origin. Youth respondent, "Sammy", indicated that she perceived major differences between the two cultural contexts:

> "I had to understand how people think, especially like the Canadian people. Back home in Nigeria it is totally different, you know, now that I've found out. I've been working now so long, wow it's really different... With me I try to be smart about it, I went online and did a lot of research on what to say, how to dress, how to write your resume. So it was, not really easy for me still, but at least I could get by that obstacle. Generally, that would be one of the problems, really understanding what people want."

This really typifies the challenge of newcomer youth as they adjust to different expectations of employers in Canada. What is particularly interesting is the fact that Sammy did not utilize employment services and did much of her own research independently on the internet and by asking her Canadian friends. However, would it be possible for a newcomer with fewer resources to gain access to that same information?

Finally, it is also important to question why employers have preference for one form of cultural representation over another. If diversity is celebrated in this country, it is essential that employers are aware of these real or perceived cultural differences, and further, they must not view one as inherently superior to another. Whether it is overt or covert, ethnocentric perspectives hinder the goals of multiculturalism and diversity for the province. These aspirations for our society must be meaningful and inclusive; we cannot celebrate diversity when it is convenient and then attach stigma to ethno-cultural minorities when their practices are different than the Euro-Canadian norm.

Volunteerism

One significant point that was discussed in many of the interviews conducted with both the youth and service providers was the importance of volunteer positions and internships for the career path of newcomer youth. This can be interpreted in two ways; the first is that newcomers are looking for a way into the Canadian labour market and volunteer experience can provide someone with references and the chance to prove their skills in the Canadian business environment. Secondly, in contrast, this may be indicative of the lack of value placed upon the experience and skills newcomers bring from their country of origin. In this second interpretation, it becomes crucial to ask if employers believe "Canadian experience" has more inherent worth than anything previously gained in a foreign nation. Furthermore, it is important to consider if newcomers are being exploited as a source of free labour.

Despite this mixed interpretation, it must be acknowledged that volunteer positions do assist people in finding employment. For example, Lu Lu described how difficult it was to find a position related to her field:

> "I have to say, really hard, yeah. My experience is different I think than other people because I was looking for a job when I was in school, so I couldn't find one. Then I hear my friends and they are doing volunteer through Winnipeg Volunteer Centre... So I started my current job as a volunteer, then three months later they had a job opening, and then I just stayed. Yeah so, that's why I say it's totally different than other person."

She did not obtain employment until she found a volunteer position. Although it is a common (mis)perception that volunteering is a necessary part of the settlement process for newcomers, it is important to note that this is a considerable source of free labour for employers (Slade 2008: 334; Simich et al. 2005: 262). Further, it is problematic to require newcomers to volunteer for "Canadian experience" when they have relevant experience for the position that they received in their home country. However, for youth who have not gained an employment history while they were in school, it is an effective strategy to gain volunteer or internship placements in order to gain valuable career related exposure. Therefore, the role of volunteering should be interpreted differently depending on the level of experience held by newcomers.

From the perspective of service agencies, volunteering has many benefits for youth. It is important to note that newcomers are less likely than Canadian-born youth to work while in school, and often they have little or no previous work experience (Kunz 2003: 5-15). When asked about difficulties facing newcomers as they search for work, volunteering is seen as a major solution to a lack of experience:

> "I would see [lack of] experience being one, and a way of assisting with that is through volunteering. I can recall a couple of clients who are still in high school, or they've had to go back to high school. You know, they want to work in a daycare eventually, so you know, what I'm looking at with them is, what I've done, with his one client in particular, I would refer her to volunteer services. We have our volunteer coordinator who can connect people to community volunteer placements and that's basically just, I mean as any high school student would do volunteering in the community to get that job experience." **–International Centre**

It is clearly evident that volunteer work is beneficial for those who are entering the workforce for the first time and require experience so they can build their references and employment history:

> "That's where our volunteer programs, like the internship, can really help because it actually helps them meet a mandate because they do have shortages, but it also gives that intern a foot in. If they're performing on the job, showing up and even just showing a little bit of initiative, that's going to reflect very positively on them getting hired in the end. It's like an interview that lasts over 12 weeks, it's really positive." – **NEEDS Inc.**

It is interesting that the service providers recognized that the benefit of volunteers for employers is considerable. However, it would be interesting to investigate further if the benefit to the volunteers is of a comparable proportion.

A very insightful perspective was offered by an ethno-cultural community group related to the concept of volunteerism itself. This also illustrates how mentorship can play an important role in providing youth assistance:

> "We provide them a lot of the newcomers with work experience through volunteerism. Volunteerism is a very foreign idea to most newcomers; taking part in something usually you would have to be paid or it's out of kindness. So volunteerism for some sort of gain is a very foreign idea to them. So we give them opportunities to take part in our mentorship programs as well as events that are happening throughout the city." - **ANAK**

It is likely that service providers have a very pragmatic approach to providing assistance. If employers are looking for experience then providing volunteer or internship opportunities are a solution to that perceived deficit. However, it is also clear that the requisite "Canadian" experience can also be a veiled excuse to not hire a newcomer, and this is especially problematic when we have an active campaign to attract young professionals from abroad. Therefore, it is important to re-emphasize that the impact of

volunteering should be interpreted differently depending upon the individual. However, first it is necessary to continue to examine the broader context including any patterns or trends that agencies had noticed in Winnipeg.

Employment Trends

When asked about trends in the city, responses were much more diverse and it was difficult to generalize to any particular themes. However, there were many significant issues that were discussed by the respondents including language difficulties, the current economic climate, lack of adequate information, newcomers being forced into low-wage employment, and the increase of newcomers arriving as a result of the Provincial Nominee Program. It was extremely powerful when these themes were identified by numerous agencies.

I was primarily interested in uncovering the patterns that agencies themselves perceived as recurring problems, trends in the labour market and additional themes that might be of interest for policy development. For example, an ethno-cultural group identified three major issues facing their community in relation to employment transitions:

> "Those are part of the main trends; following dated information, working in minimum wage jobs and possibly not thinking about university. There are exceptions to that of course." – **ANAK**

It is interesting that the perception of this community group was that many of the youth they were working with were not considering post-secondary education. This is surprising because immigrants achieve university and college credentials at a higher rate than the Canadian born population (Krahn & Taylor 2005: 408). The phenomenon of

newcomers being directed to low-wage positions was also echoed by another ethno-cultural organization:

> "They go to Tim Horton's or you go to St. Amant or you go to a home care, a lot of people go into that because it's an industry to that seems to not have enough people... That's where a lot of people get pushed to initially when they come. Also, there is a call centre... I believe these jobs should be stepping stones for those who are qualified to do something higher than that." – **ACOMI**

The idea that low-wage jobs should be transitional in nature is a significant and insightful comment. Although newcomers may initially have to work anywhere as a "survival job" or to get the necessary "Canadian experience" it is crucial that they are given opportunities to further the progression of their career rather than being relegated to fields that are completely unrelated to their previous education or experience.

Language was identified as a major issue in all of the interviews I conducted, and was often an area of concern for the newcomer youth that were interviewed as well. It is understandable because linguistic ability is frequently cited in the literature as one of the primary barriers to employment (Anisef, et al. 2000). This theme is discussed in detail shortly, but it is also related to the trends identified by agencies. In addition to language, the decrease in the proportion of refugees coming through the program was emphasized:

> "We also have the level of English that students come in with. Most students were at the low level, the foundations and the beginner level. A few were at the higher levels... Three years ago, we were getting a lot less of the Provincial Nominees coming through, we were getting more refugees proportionally." – **Entry Program**

The increasing rate of newcomers coming through in the Provincial Nominee Program was a common theme throughout many of the interviews conducted with service agencies. As a result, some service providers primarily served newcomers who are accepted as a part of the PNP:

> "In a few years, yes that's 10,000 per year and families who will be sponsored over later. You're bringing a lot of people, and you expect them not to get help simply because you're here, get a job... Yet, the funding for the programming is very limiting. I understand that, I don't question that. It's more of, I wish their focus – if you're increasing the immigration, for the immigration alone, how many agencies are we that are doing this? I can only do 40 people at the most a year. We're talking about 10,000!" – **Youth Employment Network**

Additionally, another employment counselor from a different agency stated that approximately seventy percent of their clients were provincial nominees. This is having a significant impact on local services, and clearly will continue to do so, as the goal is to double the rate of newcomers arriving in Manitoba over the next few years. This was identified as one of the largest trends that will have to be seriously addressed by the newcomer service agencies:

> "I think one thing we recognize is that we're increasing immigration so much over the next period of time, and recognizing that if we are we have to provide these supports and they have to be comprehensive, they have to have a long term vision. Otherwise if we're adding so much to our population, it's better to support them front end and build capacity rather than trying to do it down the road." – **Labour and Immigration**

It is encouraging that the provision of services to newcomers will be focused upon the various interconnected issues that might create barriers to reaching their employment goals. It is clear that services must be broad, future directed, and it is essential to provide assistance from the start in order to prevent longer term problems that would inevitably arise without effective support during the process. This is especially true for assisting sponsored family members of which youth will be a significant proportion.

The recent economic downturn was identified as a trend that would clearly have a major influence on the kinds of jobs newcomers are able to find:

> "We've also noticed that employers, with the economy shifting, they're a little more choosey and a little more cautious to hire." – **NEEDS Inc.**

Not only are employers less likely to hire new workers, but they may also consider downsizing their labour force significantly. For example, a major concern for the service providers was related to the rising number of people they were seeing after they had been laid off:

> "What we've noticed the last month here through intake, is that we're getting people that are being laid off. They're coming back to intake because that's where they feel comfortable with, we're very much into this you know feeling that this is where you can come back to and they're being referred on to employment" – **International Centre**

The current economic "crisis" that has unfolded over the last year has likely played a substantial role in this perception, and it is troubling to think of the impact on newcomers who may be disproportionately forced into low-income precarious employment. Perhaps directly related to this was the rise in clients who were having extreme difficulties:

> "Some of the other things that we're noticing is a few more clients coming in "in crisis"... So those clients are given a little bit more of a higher priority, we work equally for all of our clients but again, there's other issues like gang related risk, right? Students dropping out of high school, lots of things, and we only work with students that are in high school, so that is a mandate for us that we have to maintain that relationship with school and that positive future success." – **NEEDS Inc.**

It is positive to note that agencies attempt to meet these needs of individuals who are facing major challenges and require immediate assistance. This also places a great deal of pressure upon employment agencies that are providing this help. It is important to identify the challenges that agencies themselves face as they are providing employment services to newcomers.

Challenges of Providing Services

When the agencies were asked about what challenges face their organization as they provide services, often the discussion would turn toward the difficulties that newcomers face such as language and experience, rather than the structural issues related to the organization itself. This was interesting because it implies that agencies view the challenges they face as synonymous with the difficulties newcomer youth are coping with. This is not surprising given the nature of the services; if an agency focuses upon assisting newcomers to find work, then the challenges that those clients face will indeed become the barriers that the service provider must overcome. However, when probed further on this issue, there were several themes that developed related to difficulties of providing employment services as a newcomer serving agency. These common challenges included the (in)stability of funding, the accessibility of programs and recognizing individuals who have language issues. These challenges are then juxtaposed beside the agencies' perception of challenges that newcomer youth face while they are trying to find employment.

Funding

A lack of resources was identified as a concern for the agencies, but especially the ethno-cultural community organizations. This finding is supported by other research examining how ethno-cultural organizations often face difficulties in obtaining funding due to a "fear of ghettoization" (Guo & Guo 2007: 3). The preference of funders to select larger multi-service agencies over smaller ethno-specific groups has been called a "two-tiered settlement system" (Sadiq 2005: 1). This researcher challenges the provincial government to provide more funding to these smaller organizations because they are closely connected to the community and can respond directly to the needs of newcomers

from their cultural group. Furthermore, agencies that are ethno-specific will have an intimate understanding of the worldview and experiences of newcomers because they are also tied to that history and cultural experience. This could ensure that services are more accessible because youth might be more comfortable in expressing their needs to members of who they perceive as their community.

Funding was identified as a limitation for most of the agencies who clearly illustrated that stable year-to-year funding would allow them to focus more of their time on services rather than writing proposals continuously to ensure they have funding for their programs. Clearly, there is indeed a "lack of priority accorded to support for children of immigrant families" as indicated by the substantial lack of funding dollars (Ngo 2009: 89). This is a blatant contradiction, as the government intends to double immigration levels, and if they were serious about maintaining supports for newcomers the issue of funding would not be so worrisome. As mentioned previously, ethno-cultural community groups had more financial difficulties when it came to providing services. For example:

> "The other is financial. We have a lot of programs and all of us work full-time and on top of that; work full time or we're in school, and on top of that we're involved in the community. So, where do we find the time to fundraise, where do we find the time to do all of those things?" – **ANAK**

This problem was also mentioned by the other ethno-cultural organization that I spoke with. This is an important implication, and clearly more cooperation is needed between the government and agencies in order to provide culturally sensitive support within the community. However, it was not only the ethno-cultural groups that had difficulties in obtaining funding. Although agencies may obtain contracts for a prolonged period of time, it was my perception through their comments that the concern regarding stable

funding was a real challenge. Without stable financial resources, it may be difficult to maintain programming:

> "One, the funding is not 100 percent there yet, it's an example of. For example, I start today, I signed a contract last week. Do I have a contract or not? That kind of scenario, I still trust, because we perform well, that it's always there. I'm sure that if they are going to cut me off they'll let me know prior to. So it's just that kind of scenario." – **Youth Employment Network**

This participant emphasizes the precarious nature of funding for many service providers. It should be noted that if agencies are spending a great deal of their time ensuring they have funding so they can continue their services, they could benefit from financial stability so they can focus more attention on the needs of youth. It also appeared that many agencies were struggling to meet the demand due to a lack of resources:

> "I think more staffing, you know, I'm grateful for how many staff we have, but sometimes we have clients who literally need us to come with them to drop off resume or applications and at this time I just can't do it." – **NEEDS Inc.**

Additional funding might not solve these problems, but it should be a point of concern given the fact that migration to Manitoba will be increasing. It is likely that the individualized attention is something that will become more difficult to provide when resources are being stretched. This would likely be a significant barrier to those newcomers who need one-to-one counseling but are having a difficult time accessing programs that offer those services. The solution to these issues is likely to be more complex than additional funding, but it is significant to note that many of these same problems were expressed by other service providers. Agencies also recognized gaps in funding for adult newcomers.

Although diverging from the focus upon newcomer youth, many agencies identified a lack of programming and funding available to adult immigrants as they search for employment. For example:

> "I guess one of the things that could really help, is for adults, the adult immigrant employment needs some funding to try and help them through that process." – **Success Skills**

> "We're going to be at 20,000 people here by 2016, and I think that's a challenge. Make sure they're in place, let's make sure that people are aware of them and let's make sure that they're accessible, and you're talking about youth but even people over the age of 30, that we have something in place so they don't have to go out and get that job right away." – **International Centre**

Due to the broad definition of youth utilized for this thesis, it is important to recognize that the demarcation between adolescence and adulthood is becoming increasingly fluid and interrelated. Therefore, this perceived lack of services available to adults should be considered as a major implication that should be considered for policy development.

Accessibility

Another issue that is not related to funding is the issue of accessibility and awareness of the programs that already exist. It is extremely important that newcomers are aware of the myriad of services and assistance that are available to them during their employment transition and settlement process. Unfortunately, through many of the youth interviews, it appears that many are not aware of the services that are available in the city. Furthermore, research has shown that newly arrived immigrants do not often access social services despite their significant needs (Guo 2006: 3-4). This sentiment was also discussed by numerous service providers, and it is clear that accessibility is a recognized problem:

> "I want to add a couple of things, she made mention of people not knowing about resources. Sixty percent of our clients are referred by family and friends. Out of those, 40 percent have no idea of any services available at all, and then the other ones they usually been given all the wrong information. So that's very important and right now at this point in time, we have dealt with over 8,800 clients from April 1st until the end of December." – **International Centre**

> "There could be a lot more funding for marketing of the programs, so many people don't even know that these programs exist. I am constantly saying we need to get our name our here, and word of mouth is great, tons of clients just drop in from word of mouth. So that's fantastic, however, I would like to see a little bit more marketing money to be able to make more fancy brochures, to have stuff on bulletin boards, and buses. Places where people use every day services, and I'm constantly going and putting up posters here and there and doing what I can. It's going to come down to money for that marketing. So I'd really like to see that" – **NEEDS Inc.**

A lack of knowledge about services is a clear barrier for both newcomers and agencies because these two groups need to work together in order for there to be successful labour market outcomes. Despite the fact that a large proportion of the people utilizes services are not aware of what supports are available, it is clear that newcomer serving agencies in Winnipeg are trying to help a high number of individuals and their families.

I felt that it was crucial to engage the respondents from cultural communities on this question of awareness to see how they perceived services and if they felt they are being utilized by their communities. I think the outcome of the discussion was very telling:

> "I don't think throwing more money at it is the answer. To answer that question, it should be more accessible, money's not the answer it's accessibility, again that cultural understanding. We're the largest visible minority group, why are people more comfortable to go to their aunt with dated information rather than going to the government with updated information, or the schools. Those questions, are they being asked?
>
> (Disconnect between the community and the agencies?)

> There is. Well with our mentorship program they've been telling us to bring our kids into the refugee and African students program. These kids are college kids back home and these kids are refugees. Don't you think their needs are different?" – **ANAK**

It would be very beneficial for agencies and the communities they are assisting to be well integrated with each other to prevent any real or perceived disconnection between the two groups. In order for service providers to help effectively they need to be responsive to the community, and it is clear that this is an active goal of all the agencies who participated in this study. Word of mouth is a powerful tool and agencies and government should engage with the organizations that are acting as advocates for their communities. Another culturally specific agency discussed how they would seek to bring all these partners together so they could openly discuss the needs of youth in their community:

> "So we felt that when we have funding we will be able to bring service providers together. The second phase is with service providers for newcomers to have a two hour session devoted to the lack of what we see as needs within our community. We will go and talk to the service providers, and we feel that if we do that it will go a long way to in strengthening the capacity the whole of integration.
>
> (Seems to be a need for more interaction between communities and agencies)
>
> Yes." – **ACOMI**

Connecting with the community was an issue discussed in my meetings with other service providers, and it is essential to acknowledge that agencies recognize that there are points of disconnection between agencies and those that they are attempting to provide services to:

> "I'd also like to see more training for the service providers on new ways to make these partnerships, and new issues that they've identified families and cultural groups having. How we can work with groups like that? Sometimes those cross-cultural sensitivities; like with my staff I'm constantly doing once month a staff training, on different issues that I've

> been made away of. Whether by employers, students, schools, community groups, whatever, on how we can be very sensitive to the different needs of these cultures and communities. But it's hard to keep up, and it's hard to create, it takes time, energy and money to make that training." – **NEEDS Inc**

Rather than a problem of accessibility, perhaps the difficulty results from a break in communication between the various interest groups involved. In order to provide assistance that will ensure successful employment transitions of newcomers, ethno-cultural communities and the broader employment service providers must work as a coherent team. Without open discussion, it is likely that programs might be underutilized with newcomers being unaware of the assistance available and these services themselves might lag behind the needs of individuals in the community. Finally, this notion of building a cooperative partnership with youth will also assist agencies in accurately identifying the challenges that newcomers face in the labour market.

What Sort of Challenges do Newcomers Face?

There are many challenges that are faced by newcomers as they search for employment, and many of these came up in my discussions with service providers and youth. Although there are a considerable number of difficulties that can be faced, there were similarities in most, if not all, of the interviews conducted. If there were any dominant themes that I recognized throughout the study, I would have to say that the agencies stated it quite clearly:

> "So those are the three things that come to mind; the discrimination, credentials and language skills." – **Entry Program**

> "So there is a combination of factors but especially those three, language, credential recognition and Canadian experience." – **EPW**

It is very telling that discrimination was a frequent topic of discussion during the interviews, and all of these points are discussed in further detail. Furthermore, the issue of official language proficiency was mentioned by every service provider. In addition to language, the role of "Canadian experience", recognition of foreign credentials, access to child-care, being drawn into gang activity, poverty and discrimination were identified as the major challenges newcomers face when they are trying to gain access to the career-related employment.

Language

Much of the literature related to newcomers and the barriers they face in the labour market speaks of the issue of language proficiency (Anisef, et al. 2000; Krahn & Taylor 2005; Reitz & Banarjee 2006). Again, it is important to acknowledge that linguistic ability is a major criterion for entry in the Provincial Nominee Program. It is understandable that many newcomers arrive in Manitoba with lower language ability and would require assistance with building their English or French language skills even if they pass the Canadian Language Benchmark assessment. This difficulty was expressed by a youth named "Jessie" in relation to a number of interrelated factors influencing their employment opportunities:

> "Language skills. I think my educational background is not bad and when I try to find a job you lack the working experience here in Canada although you have it in your home country but you do not have the working experience here and also after they see your resume they will want to interview you. That is kind of frustrating for me because you have to plan for a long time for the interview and if you get nervous I [stutter]."

This was also a difficulty for many other young people, and often it affects their self esteem. More than one youth would frequently apologize for their "poor English" when I

had absolutely no problem conversing with them. However, language was often identified as a primary challenge by service providers:

> "Well, language obviously, if they don't have language that is a challenge" – **Entry Program**

> "I would think just the knowledge; language is definitely a barrier, we're not really set up to teach EAL, we do the employment EAL portion, but if someone comes in here and can barely speak English we're not really set up to work with that. So then what I will do is say to them 'go back to school for 6 months, work really hard on your English, get involved with community things, volunteer, do whatever you can to basically saturate yourself with English, come back and see me in 6 months" – **NEEDS Inc**

This is an important area for the Canadian labour market because of the value placed upon communicative skills in the workplace:

> "Language is also a huge barrier, but you know, it's a huge challenge because I feel for that individual. You have amazing potential and you're doing wonderful, but keep working, keep saturating yourself with that language component and come back to me and we'll make it happen. I've seen great success with that." – **NEEDS Inc.**

> "This is for anybody, plus you also struggle with how to do this in a new environment, the language barrier. Sometimes, some employers prefer Canadians, there is a really underlying preference for Canadians over immigrants. All those things altogether, to be a newcomer is more problematic" – **EPW**

It is essential to question whether or not newcomers are often viewed as having a language deficit without actually assessing their abilities fairly. However, for those who do lack language skills it is essential that they obtain training to assist them with developing their English or French abilities. The preference of employers to hire those who are similar to themselves has been identified, and this could be particularly concerning for newcomers who are often perceived as "outsiders" by the dominant culture (Opheim 2007: 257). This notion of employers preferring Canadian-born

employees over newcomers is very disturbing, and the issue of discrimination will be discussed as the analysis progresses.

It also clear that the understanding of language is also a pathway for understanding another culture:

> "My wife says do you think they understand the culture is it likely you understand the culture because language is tied to culture. I said that you for saying that. So if you don't understand the language will you understand how to work in a Canadian establishment? It's the same way."
> **- ACOMI**

The importance of language as a method of understanding culture is significant, and in a society that places such an importance on interpersonal communication it is understandable that proficiency in English is a substantial concern. However, it is also clear that many employers assume newcomers will have language deficits, especially if the applicant speaks English with an "accent" (Kilbride et al 2001). This assumption is highly related to the requirement from employers that newcomers have work experience within the Canadian context.

Canadian Experience

Employers often a request that newcomer applicants show they have obtained work experience in Canada. This concept of "Canadian experience" needs to be critically assessed, and this has been identified as one of the major barriers to newcomers as they search for employment (Grabke 2008: 3; Omidvar & Richmond 2003: 3; Guo & Guo 2007: 4). A youth respondent named "Hai" indicated that this lack of experience was a real challenge:

> "Challenges again for people like me who came here to study, they do not have enough experience that people are looking for. Even like sales or working at McDonalds or whatever just socializing with people, working

> skills. It is something that we all lack off because we came here when we were 19 years old, you come here to study and all of a sudden you have to find a job."

This was also recognized as a problem by many groups, but it was also often unquestioned. Many agencies recognized that employers ask for Canadian experience and so they ensure that the individuals they are working with obtain an employment history from within the country. This is identified as a challenge for many reasons:

> "Some employers can't identify problems in a cultural way, I've seen that. There's obviously something going on that is culturally informed but they don't look at it that way. They just think it's a personality thing, or something's wrong with the person." – **International Centre**

> "I believe it's a lack of education. For me personally, this is where I differ from the community, I don't blame the employers. They don't know, there is no way they can know all the countries, and know the work ethics, know the education and know the kind of work experience that people have had in those countries. So they go with the ones they are familiar with." – **ACOMI**

This very balanced interpretation of the requirement of Canadian experience is intriguing because it was clear that they were turning the situation around to see things from within their own cultural context. In addition to this fascinating discourse, this passage touches upon another issue that this researcher feels extremely strongly about. Many employment services focus upon real or perceived deficits of individuals (the newcomers) rather than addressing the systemic problem of racism and discrimination in the local job market. It is an important question to ask why Canadian experience is a necessary requirement for newcomer youth if they have relevant work experience from their country of origin. Furthermore, we must question why it is essential that newcomer youth need experience as it is not usually required for Canadian-born youth as they transition from school to

employment. One respondent indicated that there is a need for more training for local employers:

> "Hmm, we need more resources and to work with other employers as well. Sometimes if there is training for employers for employers to understand that newcomers have really outstanding experience and skills, they can do more. Creating awareness for employers, that's one area. The other thing that I really emphasize on the government part to give more focus and more attention to the credential issue." – **ACOMI**

Although it is understandable to be wary of someone who lacks experience entirely, there is a clear "deficit" on the employers end of the process because some do not grasp the value of skills and education that newcomers bring with them. This requirement for Canadian experience was viewed as completely nonsensical by one employment counselor:

> "Another barrier which I always find funny, some employers are looking for Canadian experience from newcomers. I don't know how they can bring Canadian experience with them unless they work here, where will they get the chance? These are the major challenges." – **EPW**

This statement poignantly identifies a crucial problem; when newcomers arrive in Canada it is nearly impossible that they would have acquired any "Canadian" work history, and yet, these individuals are denied entry into the labour market because of this prerequisite they lack through no fault of their own. Therefore, newcomers are faced with an impossibly frustrating situation as they try to break into an labour market that often places these unnecessary expectations on people. Perhaps instead of primarily focusing upon the challenges facing newcomers on the individual level, it would be beneficial to develop a more holistic approach that would place more emphasis on education for local employers about foreign credentials and experience.

Credential Recognition

In addition to the problems of having their foreign experience recognized by employers, many newcomers also face the difficulty of having their foreign educational credentials recognized by employers and regulatory bodies. This process can be extremely time consuming and even expensive (Grabke 2008: 7; Erisman & Looney 2007). This issue is often not raised in the limited research on newcomer youth, and as noted in the introduction it is clear that some youth arrive in Canada and are forced to repeat high school before they can obtain post-secondary training. The unequal value placed upon of foreign credentials and experience is a consistent challenge that was discussed by service providers and the youth that were interviewed. There is also an increasingly critical body of literature focused upon this issue, and it is clear that this is a major challenge for newcomers (Grabke 2008; Buzdugan 2006; Kilbride, et al. 2001; Omidvar & Richmond 2003). Although there is a lot of work being done to improve this process, it was a common criticism heard from respondents:

> "Also the credential piece, that's a common criticism because I hear stories from other countries it's really highly advertised almost like a population strategy "Come to Canada" we're getting all these really highly skilled people who maybe have to wait a year or more to work in their field. So they're very frustrated people, and cheated in a sense. That process needs to be kind of fine tuned I think." – **International Centre**

This is significant for Manitoba because with the nominee program, most of these individuals have a very high level of education and skills that are in demand in the province. If their experience is not recognized they may end up working in areas that are not utilizing their skills:

> "That's actually a major barrier, and it's so frustrating for anybody who's highly skilled, and well educated and yet they're unable to practice. What hurts so much to me is when I hear an engineer just doing production

> work, or a teacher doing call centre. There's nothing wrong with a call centre, no, but they have more to offer" – **Youth Employment Network**

It is understandable that employers would want to ensure that the credentials are equivalent to the Canadian system. It is also important to acknowledge that if a newcomer has not been working in their field for several years as they work through the process of having their credentials recognized, they will not have an opportunity to further develop the skills they have acquired abroad. This is another significant contradiction because newcomers receive points for their education upon arrival, but they are not recognized in the labour market. This issue was discussed by one of the ethno-cultural groups I spoke with:

> "That is a lack of understanding. This set of individuals they were worried about, they didn't take into consideration that when they came in because their degree was not recognized so they started doing clerical work. So no improvement, they've been doing it for 10 or 15 years so they've lost contact with whatever knowledge they had." – **ACOMI**

This statement emphasizes how important it is to have early assessments done so newcomers do not face enormous delays in being able to practice in their field and build upon the knowledge that they had obtained in their home country. Finally, it is crucial to emphasize that there are resources available for employers to determine if credentials are equivalent:

> "So this whole assessment of credentials… we had someone with real estate background, and the city of Winnipeg was saying that they don't know if their credentials were ok. So yes, there is a gap, the employer can request Manitoba Labour, the credentials people, to do the assessment. To assure them that theirs is an equivalent type of background, and there is all of that that goes around your background and experience." – **Success Skills**

This is a good example of the additional challenges that newcomers face when compared to Canadian-born individuals. Furthermore, this issue of foreign education has mostly

centered on newcomer adults rather than the experience of youth. The process of credential recognition needs to be more efficient, and employers must recognize that foreign education should not be viewed with less inherent value than domestic training. It is also important to not that not all challenges are specific to the experience of being a newcomer, and access to child-care is a prime example of a broader challenge facing all individuals in Manitoba.

Child Care

The final theme that was common to many interviews was in relation to child-care, and this is an important issue when it comes to employment transitions because it could play a major role in the ability of young newcomer parents to find adequate employment. For example, "Nita" expressed that it was more difficult to find child-care than it was for her to find a job:

> "It took me long to find day-care, if I tell you the truth, and then finding a job. (*Daycare slowed things?*) Yeah, that's for sure. I had to wait for day-care and then get to that point."

Access to high quality, affordable child-care in the province of Manitoba is a problem for all parents (Friendly, et al. 2007; Child Care Coalition of Manitoba 2001; 2004). However, for a newcomer who has relocated to a new country, there might be less social supports, such as family living in the area which leave them with fewer options. This would result in a delay in finding employment because they may not have this social network that would help assist them in caring for their children as they enter the labour force. This problem of access to day-care was also supported in my discussions with various agencies. When I asked about the major barriers facing newcomers, access to child-care was identified:

> "Child care. We sign off that they're on this specific program, so they can get the subsidy, but just to understand that you need to rush out and get yourself on that wait list... The immediate hurdles of the child care, the English, are the huge stumbling blocks that frustrate people." – **Success Skills**

Clearly, for those young people who do have children, the challenge of finding day-care plays a role in obtaining employment. In addition to it being an employment barrier, lack of child-care was also identified as a more general barrier to successful integration because it limits people from accessing services like language training:

> "There is another gap which is child care. So people who have small children, preschool aged children, they can't attend our program they can't get this information, they go straight to English classes, but the focus in those classes are on developing language skills. They might not be able to get all the information they need. So child care limits peoples possibilities, opportunities" – **Entry Program**

This is an issue that is faced by all people in Manitoba, and requires attention from the government in order to provide further assistance to those who might be limited in their search for employment because of a lack of access to child-care services. However, there were two themes that consistently came up in interviews related to the major social barriers of poverty and ethnic discrimination in Canada.

Social Obstacles

Poverty

The role of socio-economic inequality on the lives of newcomers is an important issue to discuss. I was particularly concerned that many immigrants and refugees disproportionately fall into poverty (Omidvar & Richmond 2003: 2; Perreira, et al. 2007: 9; Reitz & Banarjee 2006: 5). A lack of financial resources may exacerbate the

difficulties faced by newcomers as they attempt to gain access to the labour market. This was especially true for those arriving as refugees:

> "Yeah, in that one also you can talk more about the refugees, they will feel that. A lot of them come here with little or nothing and when they're coming if they're Anglophone it's easier for them to pick up a job and get out of debt. Their flight tickets are paid for, but it's a loan they have to pay it back within two years or something. If they come in and they don't get a job in time it gets worse. So for refugees, yeah poverty plays into it." – **ACOMI**

It is understandable that there would be additional challenges for refugees; however, it is clear that other new immigrants might face similar challenges:

> "Obviously, if you're coming from a very rural background and all you knew coming to Canada was fishing and farming you're going to have a hard time finding work here because your English is limited, your work experience is limited. You're not in specific skill or training that is useful here, that is sought after here. So poverty, definitely from that end will effect it. Poverty also within Canada, well it all comes down to education. Now you need education, so if you're impoverished, that goes for any community." – **ANAK**

The applicability of skills and work experience gained in their country of origin to the labour market in Canada may play a role. The role of education is identified as a major stepping stone to economic stability, and this is clearly established through the literature related to employment transitions of youth. However, there are differing interpretations of the role of poverty on the employment strategies of newcomers:

> "Poverty is a very general term, and it's a broad thing. Newcomers are often poor to start with, they don't have any accumulated capital so you could say they're a poor person. Unless they find a job immediately they don't have anything to pay bills. I always wonder, no matter how; most of the time, newcomers they don't want to go to the welfare system. They are really proud and they keep their dignity. They really try to find some sort of jobs, rather than looking for welfare" – **EPW**

It is intriguing to examine the different perceptions of poverty and how it may play a role in the employment chances of individuals (Corak 2006; Kilbride & Anisef 2001). It is

also interesting to note that there is clear stigma associated with utilizing "welfare" or employment assistance. This is unfortunate because income assistance can help newcomers to support themselves while they receive training that might aid them in obtaining access to stable, higher-wage employment. Additional limiting factors that result from poverty were identified:

> "I guess the obvious ones, access to a certain type of clothes for interviews, your priorities, to get bus fare together to get to an interview. A confidence issue maybe" – **International Centre**

It is important to recognize that poverty impacts all individuals regardless of your citizenship status, and especially when it is related to finding adequate stable employment opportunities (Saunders, et al. 2006: 10; Levy & Kaye 2004). Unfortunately, this is an additional cumulative barrier that may create extreme difficulties and stress for newcomers who are grappling with settlement in addition to finding employment.

Poverty may also play a role in the academic achievement of newcomer youth as they may be under pressure to assist in supporting their family financially. One service provider clearly identified that this is a challenge:

> "Oh yes, I think another piece to that is a lot of the youth are working two or three jobs to support their parents and then sending money back home even if they're still going to school because they're working two or three jobs because they're supporting the family." – **International Centre**

It is crucial to note that although poverty was seen as a negative barrier for newcomers as they search for employment, there was an alternative discourse that came up in related to these economic barriers.

In contrast to the previous discussions of low-income and how it is a barrier to successful entrance into the labour market, the influence of socio-economic status was also seen as an a catalyst that would provide an incentive to newcomers as they search for

employment. Poverty was sometimes viewed as a factor that might motivate newcomers to seek employment, and that it was not always a limitation:

> "Family dynamics, financial barriers like economic status, you know but that also drives people too right? So it's a barrier but in some ways, I always try to turn it around, it's something that's going to motivate you." **– NEEDS Inc.**

This perspective was also discussed by another service provider:

> "When I talk about poverty being a cycle, you can get out of it if you want to, I don't have anything against people who are poor, because that's part of society. That's part of our lives, but if anybody – if you read all the successful stories of people, even famous actors, they all started as poor people, but they used that as a motivation to succeed because they wanted out of the cycle. To me, that is what counts." **– Youth Employment Network**

This was an alternative view to the common response that poverty was primarily a limitation, and it is important to consider that overcoming the limitations of a low socio-economic status could provide a high sense of satisfaction for individuals. However, this must not overshadow the fact that low-income does create a lot of difficulties for people. Although it may motivate people to attain higher education so they can find a good job, the fact remains that economic inequality persists and creates barriers for newcomers who may be more susceptible to poverty.

Gang Activity

One theme that I had not originally considered was the issue of newcomer youth being involved in gang activities in the city. Although no questions were related to gang involvement, it was a concern of many service providers. Those youth who are marginalized in a society are often drawn into gangs because it provides them with a sense of social belonging, and for youth who do not have jobs it may also be a financially

lucrative organization (Baker, et al. 2003). One respondent clearly understood the link between poverty and gang involvement:

> "It combined poverty issue as well as newcomer issue is the gang issue. It's easier to make a quick buck in a gang; it's much more seductive and appealing for a lot of kids. That's a big challenge for service providers, is trying to keep kids out of gangs… There are a lot of kids in gangs who aren't in school who hang out near schools trying to recruit other kids. So that's a big challenge. That's the most powerful example that popped up for me." – **LIM**

I found it interesting that the issue of gangs came up in my interviews, and it is clearly a concern of newcomer serving agencies because it was a recurring theme mentioned without any prompting. It became more of a concern when I had a service provider inform me that young people were bringing up the problem directly:

> "Yeah, recently, I've had some clients that come in and they've said 'we're being hassled by a bunch of gangs, and we want to stand firm. I didn't know these people were connected, I went with them and they were like we're going to break into this house, and I sat in the car and said no I'm not going that'. It's been really positive to see that they are standing firm and saying that they're not getting involved. That's actually has caused them a lot of hardship because now they're a target." – **NEEDS Inc**

Additionally, an ethno-cultural agency also brought up the problem of gangs influencing youth, and it was of particular interest because of their perception of why youth become involved in gangs:

> "As a Filipino-Canadian watching, you see how easily it is for them to be pulled into things like gangs, how easily to be pulled into a relationships or early teen pregnancies. Things like that because they have no where else to go but to each other, and Filipino Canadian youth I guess to the same degree. You're being othered as this newcomer" – **ANAK**

This was a very strong statement that stood out because the notion of "the other" was very powerful. The sense of community and the support that young people obtain from gangs indicates a clear lack of support from alternative sources. However, it is important

that young newcomers are not seen as "at risk" for becoming involved in gang activity just because of their immigrant status:

> "I also think there's a preconception of youth being a part of gangs and stuff like that... That might happen, and people might be more vulnerable to that, but that's not the rule." – **International Centre**

The notion that there is an assumption that newcomers will become involved in criminal activities is quite disturbing. It is important to note that it is only small proportion of youth who may be involved in gangs, but it is a difficult issue for agencies, schools, communities nonetheless. It is critical that people do not assume newcomer youth will become gang members, and furthermore, the social conditions that influence young people to join gangs must be addressed. However, those who do become involved in criminal activity may have limited knowledge of the Canadian justice system and a general distrust or fear of police (Ngo 2009: 85). This is problematic for when young newcomers who might come into contact with the justice system. Marginalization and socio-economic disadvantages are clearly issues that we must confront. A related issue that has been clearly evident as an undercurrent throughout the analysis is the problem of ethnic discrimination.

Discrimination

Another central theme that developed from the discussions with respondents was related to discrimination. There were no direct questions about discrimination in the youth interviews, but the issue was clearly outlined by a youth named "Nita":

> "No, like not very strong, but sometimes I do feel biasness from some people, but mostly it's ok. It's not bad place to live as an immigrant...Yeah, being immigrant I think. It would have been easy if I was a citizen here. *(Could you elaborate?)* Yeah, being an immigrant and looking different from other people. Like biasness, I can talk about that.

> Sometimes I do feel like people have different, how they view immigrant, but in most cases it is ok so far. (*By biasness, you mean in the sense?*) Looking different, and like pronunciation, and so that is hard sometimes."

It is difficult to accept that due to your status as a newcomer or a visible minority, it is likely that you will face discrimination in the labour market and interpersonal relationships. This challenge was identified by "Sammy" when I asked if she felt her treatment as a workplace was based upon her status as a newcomer:

> "No, I try not to bother or look about that. I just think, I just don't bother myself about it… I don't want to believe that it has anything to do with that right? I try not to bother myself about it, because it would be more depressing to know that that is what it is. So no, it's already stressful enough to be a student, so."

Service providers were much less reluctant to discuss issues of ethnic discrimination. Although I developed a question that examined the perception of "racism" in the community, the topic often came up before I raised the point:

> "I think people with strong accents, I think accent is a part of that language thing. Filipinos that have quite standard English will find jobs easier than those with a stronger accent. Which is kind of understandable, you have to be able to communicate because communication is huge as we were saying. It's not credentials it's not technical skills it's communication, inter-personal communication that is really high. … My perception is that employers generally are not overtly discriminatory, but we have these little hidden prejudices." – **Entry Program**

It is true that interpersonal communication is an essential aspect of succeeding in the Canadian labour market. However, it is clear that any miscommunication may not only be due to actual difficulties that newcomers have with developing proficiency with either of the official languages. Perhaps their language skills are quite developed, but they may speak with a strong dialect or accent. The role of accents and how this may influence the perceptions of newcomers by employers was also echoed by the International Centre:

> "People in terms of accents or you know they have conceptions of people in their mind just based on where they're from. Or you know, people say the most ridiculous things sometimes, and you know, I think people have fears" – **International Centre**

This supports the theoretical notion that discrimination is hidden and not overtly expressed in the population. Additionally, it was expressed that the perception of Canadian society as open and welcoming can often be somewhat distorted:

> "I'm sure most people would say that we're not racist here, we're polite I think. Canadians are generally polite, but I don't know from an employers' perspective. They are used to being able to select employees from the mainstream, and if anyone is different, well you don't really know what to do with them if they're a little bit different." – **Entry Program**

Drawing from Critical Race Theory, it is clear that underlying issues of ethnic discrimination or inter-group misunderstandings remain a significant problem in Canadian society. They may manifest in the form of subconscious prejudicial beliefs, and misunderstandings based on a lack of communication between newcomers and the Canadian mainstream. Therefore, it may not always be directly expressed; rather it is hidden or masked and an employment agency serving newcomers clearly indicated:

> "I think that there are still issues of racism and discrimination, although no one is going to say that, but a lot of times students will come back and say that they feel that. I don't know, I certainly think that probably does exist. I don't know on what kind of a scale but I think that probably is still an issue." – **UMCC**

> "Not overtly, covertly. I can tell you that most of the time they don't deny a job for a newcomer because they're black or because they're another colour, but they'll say you lack Canadian experience or they'll give you another excuse. It's definitely there though." – **Employment Projects of Winnipeg**

The paradox of "Canadian experience" as a prerequisite for finding employment in Winnipeg was a recurring theme, and it is an ethnocentric conception. Although

newcomers do often face a period of adjustment as they settle in Winnipeg, employers should place more value upon the credentials and inter-cultural understandings that newcomers can contribute to the job site. When they bring skills and work experience from their country of origin, it is problematic if employers request Canadian experience from someone who has not yet had the opportunity to demonstrate their capabilities. These examples emphasize the various ways ethnicity or "immigrant" status plays a role in creating inequality in the labour market in Winnipeg as perceived by local service providers.

The perceptions of discrimination were varied among the respondents from the organizations, and in particular, the response of the Filipino organization I interviewed was a good example of the subtle forms of racism that exist in the employment setting. There are clearly:

> "Cultural nuances that might be unknown – my sister worked at [**a business**], she was the only second generation in with a group of newcomers, and they of course brought their own food to eat which is rice or fish, and it can have a smell, and if you're not accustomed to that food you can think badly of it. For us it's no big deal, but when they were sitting at a lunch table a non-Filipino took the time to go "ew" you know? Things like that, and you grow up in the school system with that too, and I don't want to go on and list all the racist experiences I've had, but it does exist and if they don't tell you that it doesn't exist they're really kidding themselves. When we apply for grants, they say you're too ethno-specific, and I think that's blatant racism really." - **ANAK**

Although this is not an extreme example of ethnocentrism, it is obvious that even during the most routine interactions, during lunch at your place of employment, there is a chance for such negative experiences. What is particularly troubling is the question about funding ethno-cultural community groups, and if this is problematic for the government and the community.

Although it is clearly evident that there many forms of discrimination, both overtly and covertly expressed, there were some excellent examples of positive responses to such a difficult challenge. For example, after commenting on the inevitability of racism in Canada, one respondent suggested that it is important to focus upon ways to help youth, or newcomers in general, to deal with experiencing discrimination:

> "Again, instead of being able to say to that person 'that's not appropriate', 'I take offense to that, and please when you're around me, please let's not talk about that' that's a very mature thing to be able to deal with. So instead, they yell and scream and fight, and it causes a lot of problems. So what we try to say to them don't automatically assume that this person is being racist towards you. Ask them what they mean by that comment, or ask them what they're talking about. Say 'that's not appropriate, I find that extremely offensive. Would you like me to call down your family or race, religion and things like that' and those are the conversations, stand up and say no to bullying, that is an appropriate way to handle that, right? That way your message is going to be stronger, it's going to get across. I would say we're becoming more socially acceptable, but there are still those issues, I think its ignorance, it really is." – **NEEDS Inc.**

The role of a service provider is to assist people deal with adjusting to their new environment in Winnipeg, and this response is encouraging because it is a constructive and realistic approach to dealing with such a difficult problem like discrimination. Although it would be ideal to eliminate prejudice and discriminatory practices, it is difficult to address the problem immediately. Therefore, it is crucial that young people are given the skills to constructively deal with situations where they may face racism.

Service providers and psycho-social counselors can provide assistance to newcomers directly while facing these difficult problems. However, the government is not easily able to directly intervene to provide solutions to the everyday experience of discrimination that newcomers often face as they settle in Winnipeg. From the structural level, it is an interest of the government to fund programs that educate the public about

cultural diversity and to eliminate racism. Additionally, the government can act on this problem by establishing legislation that addresses discrimination in the labour market. Finally, the role of educating employers is significant, and this might be an appropriate avenue to decrease the discriminatory and prejudicial attitudes that are still prevalent in the country. These are significant steps to create a more inclusive society, and the representatives of the provincial government responded similarly when asked about the impact of racism on employment chances:

> "I haven't come across it as a flagged issue in my work as of yet. I think with the impression that people get, that cultural impression, I think a lot of it has to do with how a lot of youth present themselves also and whether or not they come across as confident. Cultural barriers, where you show respect by deference might be a disadvantage in North American culture as compared to being assertive and outgoing, shaking hands and everything." – **Manitoba Labour and Immigration**

The Manitoba government does recognize that problems can arise within a diverse population. It is interesting to note that the concept of cultural differences in assertiveness can also provide challenges in a competitive labour market.

The general impression from the service providers of Winnipeg poignantly describe how the challenge of discrimination is complex and difficult to eliminate, especially when these prejudices are hidden beneath the surface. Unfortunately, there are also several examples of more extreme racist experiences, and these issues surely must be addressed through educational awareness amongst the general population. Alternatively, it is crucial that service providers continue to provide newcomer youth with the strategies and tools for combating racism in a more positive way. Finally, educating the employers about the wealth of skills that newcomers bring, and the 'cultural nuances' that exist would provide more welcoming work environments and promote diversity.

Gaps in Services

A major component of improving services that are offered to newcomer youth while they are searching for employment is recognizing the gaps is assistance and where people might be falling through the cracks. One ethno-cultural community perceived that many youth were not receiving individualized assistance:

> "Right now what I identify as a gap is really the one on one coaching. When a lot of immigrants go into these programs they assume I will say wrongly that someone is going to coach them, is going to look out for them, tell them where the job opening is, how to prepare for it, but you don't get that" – **ACOMI**

This is significant because many of the employment services do offer one-on-one sessions for the youth they work with. It appears that although many agencies do offer these services. However, it is also clear that with additional resources, service providers would like to provide more face-to-face supports for the clients they assist. This also might indicate a lack of information in newcomer communities about what sort of employment assistance is available from local agencies. This connection between newcomer service providers and the local ethno-cultural communities might be an area that needs improvement as this concern was also mentioned by another culturally specific organization:

> "I think there is a disconnect again between the community and the agency, you can start up as many training sessions as you want, you can pour as much money as you want into everything, but if you can't get the people to go there is something wrong… I think they should be more ethno-specific, services. Like it's nice to have, I guess it's nice to have those services period, it doesn't matter who's giving them… Yes, they should exist, but when it comes to more personal conflict like homosexuality, teen pregnancy, drugs and gangs I think that should be given from a very sensitive cultural stand point." – **ANAK**

It is important to note that there are some subjects that may be viewed differently depending on the cultural and social context that the issue is addressed. The importance of cultural awareness and sensitivity is well taken, and it should be considered that under certain circumstances, services might be more successful if they are geared with a more ethno-specific focus. Although this may be difficult to implement, it is apparent that there is need for more of an open discussion between the agencies and various newcomer communities. Community outreach may also be helpful for everyone.

There were also gaps in relation to youth who are seventeen years old and may need assistance but are too old to receive certain youth services and are too young to apply for services meant for adults:

> "There are no services for people like that, they don't necessarily fall under child and family services, because they're not a ward of the state, or whatever they deem. They're not necessarily old enough to apply for social assistance on their own." – **NEEDS Inc.**

It has been identified in the literature that there are gaps for newcomers who are in an "integration limbo" when they are considered too young for adult programs but too old for programs directed at children (Kunz 2003: 5). Finally, it is significant to note that not all agencies believed there were gaps in services:

> "No, I think Winnipeg is one place where we have really, we have a very fine tuned system of services." – **Youth Employment Network**

It is important to emphasize that there are a number of agencies focusing upon assisting newcomers find employment. This response was in contrast to many other respondents, but it is significant to acknowledge that there are many programs available to assist newcomer youth. The most crucial factor appears to be ensuring that people in the community are aware and able to access the programming that already exists.

How Are Youth Faring in their General Integration Process?

In addition to questions related to employment, I also asked service providers about their perception of the more general process of integration and how newcomers' were coping with this period of adjustment. While the integration experiences of most new immigrants is generally unproblematic, it is important to note that some newcomers may face more difficulties and there should be supports in place to assist them (Wilkinson 2008: 155). It was interesting to note that many of the agencies identified personal attributes as a major factor when asked about the general integration experiences of youth:

> "I think if they have community and so on they do well. If they are good with people they do better. If they make friends easily with people from other countries, if they're not afraid to use English and make mistakes. Those people who are more extroverted do better than the introverted ones. So it depends on community network, it depends on personality, if you're outgoing or not outgoing, and it depends upon positive attitude. Those with positive attitudes do better. People with multiple traumas are going do not as well, unless they've developed really good self-care strategies" – **Entry Program**

It is clear that personal characteristics do play an important role. Additionally, those newcomers who have faced traumatic experiences might face additional difficulties (Kilbride, et al. 2001). The importance of social support was also identified by another agency that really echoed the previous passage:

> "I think it depends on your tenacity and how much research you do before you go. You know, and really, what is your strength. How determined are you to do this. Being aware of resources I think that's number one, we always have this saying "The better the start the better the future" what kind of resources can we assist with. We often hear about loneliness so now we're trying to look at some programming for that. Like that social support, you're not alone." **- International Centre**

It is significant that agencies identify the need for social support, and I am optimistic that they will seek to improve the social network of newcomers so they do not feel isolated. However, the theme of individual factors really was prominent when we discussed the broader context of integration:

> "I think they're doing ok, I think again, it really comes down to individuals. I think there's, in all honesty, in a lot of places where English is being taught in the schools for a very long time like China the Philippines, Japan and India; they're faring a lot better because the language component is there... Culturally there are still some things that they're learning, but I think it's a quicker process for them. For some of the students that are coming from other countries, like the Burmese and those countries, those countries it's a lot slower because they're coming with very little English." – **NEEDS Inc**

The primacy of English language proficiency was always a central issue when it came to many of the questions I asked. However, another aspect of integration experiences included the concept of a "period of adjustment" that was seen as normal for all newcomers:

> "In all realisticness, I think it usually takes a good one to two years for sure to integrate. I think that's success if they can, there are some students who are still having problems two or three years down the road, but its underlying personal things." – **NEEDS Inc**

This notion that newcomers need a couple years to become accustomed to working in Manitoba was also reiterated by another agency:

> "The integration normally will take place in about 2-3 years, I honestly believe that once a person has been here for at least 3 years they've started feeling the market, the workplace and they become comfortable. To me, there are very few isolated cases where even five years they're still not comfortable, but they're very seldom" – **Youth Employment Network**

Even further, this adjustment period was acknowledged by one of the ethno-cultural groups that I spoke with. What was especially telling was the perception of how frustrating it can be for newcomers:

> "The people who struggle very much are those who have the language problem. What happens usually, it's an accepted thing now that you have a period of about two years to pay your dues. Sometimes when you come in you have to go back to school, you have to do odd jobs, and that will cost you some time. It's sort of a transition period. People make it, people just want to hit the ground running, that's what causes the frustration." – **ACOMI**

It is generally understood that when anyone moves to a new environment there is going to be a period of adjustment that is necessary to become comfortable and proficient in navigating their new setting (Reitz & Banarjee 2006: 5). However, there are employment barriers that are not solely related to any temporary state of adaptation. It is essential that Canadian society also adjusts, and Manitoba must be prepared to change as our population of newcomers rises.

Positive Experiences

Rather than focusing primarily on the challenges and difficulties that newcomers' face when they are searching for employment, it is a goal of this study to highlight the positive experiences and stories that were shared with me while I conducted this research. There were many positive experiences that were expressed to me by service providers, and this is an indication that we should not view newcomer youth as a group that will always experience difficulties and barriers in the labour market. These are stories that are valuable as the narrative themselves, and not necessarily for their sociological importance or analytical insights. One story in particular was very emotional and compelling:

> "One of my most rewarding experiences has been lately, one of our students actually, it's very sad, very very sad. He was beat up, terribly, to the point where they didn't even think he was going to live. I saw him in the hospital throughout his journey. He had to have brain surgery, all these crazy things, rehabilitation. So, so, so sad. But we were able to raise money and set up a trust fund for him, and he's doing so good. He's starting to walk again and he's starting to improve, and I'm just so excited

> because to me that's personally rewarding to see all the challenges and it validates every moment of what I do. Because it lets me know that there's a community there that's supporting him, and I told him, your employer when you get out of this, your job is waiting for you." – **NEEDS Inc**

It may seem paradoxical to include this piece as an example of positivity. However, I felt it was extremely powerful because it emphasized how a community can come together to overcome huge obstacles in order to support their young people. The dedication of the service provider was also very telling, and it shows how even the most difficult of situations can improve due to positive influences.

This notion of staying positive is an important theme that arose throughout the study, and it is especially important:

> "She's half Ethiopian and half Filipino and she's wrestling with her identity and culture. To hear her talk about how we should work together, her perception, a 17 year old kid with her perceptions of the world, such a mature perspective. It gives me hope, that kids can work together, and I hope that all the negativity will go away if we stay positive." – **ANAK**

There are also young newcomers who overcome enormous obstacles when they first arrive in the country, and it was very heartwarming to hear that despite these difficult challenges young people can succeed. Often a crucial factor is the role of mentorship and positive role models who can help guide newcomer youth through the process of adjusting to Canadian society:

> "A little guy in our mentorship program, 17 years old, his family was too poor to put him through school. His father died from what I understood and his mother is aging... He didn't go to school, he couldn't they were too poor. I guess a relative here was able to sponsor them and they arrived, and this kid was destined for failure. Put in the school system here with no English, no math, whatever. He went into our mentorship program, the teachers were expecting him to drop out eventually, 'one of those kids he can just work in a factory' or whatever. He went into our program, we pushed him. We partnered him with someone who was very friendly, and they got on really great. Now he's doing well in school, he's popular with the ladies now… so he's doing really well for himself." – **ANAK**

Another success story illustrates the difficulty of having foreign credentials recognized, and although it took a considerable amount of time it is clear that reaching that goal is exceptionally meaningful for all those involved:

> "One of my biggest success story I would say is one of our clients who happened to be – I cannot say the name – she came here as a nurse, she was licensed in the Philippines but never practiced and here she could not get a job as a nurse. Therefore, she's a single mom, her challenge was that she doesn't have relatives that would help her with taking care of the kids; child care, housing, we talked about how to get back to being a nurse. She started from taking upgrading, and then until she's gone through this since the mid 90s, and just three months ago I got the phone call that I was hoping – she said "I passed my registered nurse" and whoa! I cried actually I was crying on the phone when I talked to her, because I saw this person from scratch." – **Youth Employment Network**

Although it is frustrating to see how long it took this individual to obtain the same employment position that they had held in their country of origin, it is extremely positive to see the level of dedication that newcomers maintain despite facing such challenges.

Rather than specific case examples, there were also many service providers who stated their experience of positive stories in more general terms:

> "Oh have lots of success stories. There are people who come in with sometimes zero self esteem, they were very mad, very disoriented and disorganized. But they pull themselves up, I really appreciate this, they pull themselves up and try to get back on track" – **EPW**

From this statement it is easy to appreciate how difficult the role of service provider must be at times. It is understandable that many newcomers become frustrated and angry with being excluded from full participation in Canadian society. The notion of overcoming frustration or even fear was also shared with me from another agency:

> "What I'm saying is, I think one that I could appreciate when a client comes here crying, scared and afraid. Then being able to go out and get a job, to me that's a success story. It's not a matter of "how" successful they

are, it may be a small step, and yet it's a major step for me." – **Youth Employment Network**

It is clear that success is a relative assessment, and these small steps so to speak are important.

As a researcher, I often found it troubling that there is so much negativity around the study of social phenomenon. Although this is a necessary component of improving social problems, it can be difficult to remain positive when the focus narrows in on such dark realities. For this reason I felt that it is absolutely essential to emphasize that although many newcomers face difficulties, there are also stories of amazing achievements and triumph despite adversity. However, these happy outcomes are always in contrast to the additional obstacles that newcomers face as a result of their status as immigrants. These agencies and youth respondents have clearly demonstrated that newcomers face additional challenges in entering the employment market and with their general integration and inclusion into Canadian society.

Concluding Words

I was impressed by the wide range of programs and supports that were offered by the local newcomer service community. Although it would require comparison to other cities, I do think Winnipeg is well situated to assist the increasing number of newcomers who will be arriving in the province. I really was inspired by the hard work I was able to witness in many of the agencies. The passion that drives service workers was clearly evident to me in my discussions with them, and regardless of outcome it should be noted that the agencies I spoke with are working extremely hard to help newcomers integrate into the social environment and labour market of Winnipeg. Despite ending on this

positive note, I think there is a considerable amount of work that needs to be done. There are crucial problems that need a multifaceted response in order to reduce and eliminate the impact of discrimination. Furthermore, the employers' perception of foreign credentials and experiences is an issue that requires immediate action. I will outline these issues in greater detail in the following chapter as there are many questions that are raised as a result of this study, and there are implications for policy as well.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

Although a considerable amount of research has been conducted on Canadian-born youth and their employment transition, there have been very few studies examining how this experience may diverge for newly arrived immigrants (Wilkinson 2008; Anisef, et al. 2000). Additionally, the previous research on newcomer service agencies has not identified the crucial role that social services play as young Canadian immigrants are trying to find a meaningful place in the "Canadian" labour market. The goal of this study was to examine how social organizations perceive newcomer youth employment transitions, and to include the perspectives of youth, agencies and the government. This contributes to the literature insofar as it provides insight into two under-researched areas. First, the school to work transitions of newcomers, and secondly, the roles and perceptions of newcomer service agencies during this process. As previously stated, my research questions asked how newcomer service agencies assisted newcomers in obtaining employment, and if agencies and young immigrants had similar concerns and perceptions of the school-to-work transition process.

The theoretical perspective of structuration was essential for this thesis because it allowed for the simultaneous comparison of multiple levels of analysis. The inclusion of youth perspectives would not be possible without this theoretical framework; as a result, the themes that developed were perceived from a multifaceted perspective of the youth, agencies and the governmental strategy. This allows for a more holistic view, and I was able to identify common concerns and areas where additional communication would provide better support for young newcomers. The fact that most agencies identified their role as responsive to the needs of clients illustrates how social systems are reflexive

entities that reproduce themselves through the interactions of individuals and groups. Although we may be constrained by our structural environment, these institutional factors are created by the actions of individuals in the arena of social relations, and therefore, we have the responsibility to create opportunities for meaningful changes in discriminatory or exclusionary structural conditions. Finally, it is essential that young newcomers are engaged with agencies and ethno-cultural community groups because without their participation, employment services might not address their concerns and varied needs. Furthermore, if young people are not involved in the community, it is unlikely that they will be aware of the services that exist to support them. It must be the role of service agencies, and researchers, to find ways to empower young immigrants so they have the opportunity to play an active role during their employment transition. This clearly emphasizes the necessity of reciprocity between the two groups for more effective services, and this process is best conceptualized through the lens of structuration theory.

Structure or Agency?

The difficulties faced by newcomer youth in their employment search are complex and not easily categorized into systemic or individualistic factors. Rather, the obstacles faced by young immigrants emphasize the interaction between structural and personal characteristics. It is important to for the researcher to make the connections between structure and agency when studying social phenomenon (Giddens 1984: xxx). Clearly, this is less a question of structure or agency; instead, the investigation outlines how these loci of control are both influencing newcomer youth during their employment search.

The structural factors that influence the employment chances of young immigrants as perceived by local agencies and youth include "Canadian" experience, credential recognition, access to child-care, gang involvement and discrimination in the labour market. However, the individual agency of youth can be amplified with the assistance of immigrant serving agencies. Giddens (1984) asserts that it is the actions of individuals that create and replicate the structural conditions existing in the social environment. Therefore, it is crucial that services and young newcomers are empowered so they have the ability to challenge the broader systemic factors that create barriers for immigrants in the labour market. What individuals observe as the "permanence" of these external characteristics must be challenged, and through the theory of structuration this becomes possible. Systemic conditions can be reformed directly through the agency of newcomer youth, and the social services that support them. Many young people attempt to empower themselves to overcome these barriers through language training, job search support and obtaining additional educational credentials. These actions are a testament to the tenacity of young immigrants, and their individual agency is apparent insofar as they seek to improve their personal ability in order to overcome systemic barriers for employment. However, young people must be empowered and their voices must be heard so they may challenge systemic conditions.

A significant barrier that prevents individuals from exercising their agency is related to power, and in the case of young newcomers', inequality leading to differential power relations. Human agency must include not just the intention of the individual but also their capability of exercising their will (Giddens 1984: 8-9). Service agencies provide more resources for newcomers, thereby increasing their capacity to have an

influence on the social conditions where they focus their efforts (Giddens 1984:15-16). Essentially, by providing young immigrants with information regarding the rules of the local employment market and access to resources such as service agencies, there is a greater likelihood that the agency of newcomers will be asserted (Giddens 1984: 18-19). By including newcomers in the process of the duality of structure, social conditions will be reproduced in a way that is more inclusive to all peoples. Through open discussion, various actors can each play a role in changing the structural factors that lead to discrimination and social exclusion.

Identifying and Addressing Discrimination in the Labour Market

Unfortunately, the influence of discrimination in the labour market and broader social environment in the province of Manitoba, and likely the rest of Canada, was a serious concern raised by all the agency contacts. Additionally, although they were less direct in articulating the influence of ethnocentrism on their labour market experiences, many of the youth interviews also touched upon issues of cultural biases and discrimination. Critical Race Theory asserts that discrimination is still a pressing concern; if racism has become a hidden undercurrent in Canadian society, it is a problem that must be directly addressed. It is the role of researchers, agencies and government to expose hidden prejudices and provide meaningful solutions to these broader structural barriers. It is a positive observation that agencies seek to provide newcomer youth with strategies to cope with the difficult experience of facing discrimination. However, it is crucial that the prejudicial attitudes of the public and employers are challenged in order to educate and hopefully, change perceptions.

CRT is essential because it clearly illustrates how ethnicity plays a role in creating differential power relations, and this hierarchy plays a major role in the labour market. When employers require that newcomers' obtain "Canadian" experience, researchers should identify that this prerequisite is an example of "hidden" discrimination. Furthermore, it is significant that many service providers remarked that racism was not an overt practice, but rather, exclusion based upon ethnicity was often masked through hidden prejudices and the perception of newcomer skill and experience as inferior to that of Canadian-born youth. The recognition of foreign credentials is similarly suspicious, and it is important to ask why young newcomer professionals experience such difficulties in having their education assessed and acknowledged in a timely manner. CRT is essential because it uncovers an underlying prejudice, perhaps not intentional, and this must be acknowledged and eliminated through research, education and ensuring the employers and youth receive adequate information regarding these barriers. Through the interviews conducted, it is clear that many organizations are taking active steps toward addressing this problem.

The goals of African Communities of Manitoba Inc. was extremely positive; their plan to bring agencies, employers and the government together to discuss the challenges and needs facing young newcomers of African descent would provide an excellent forum to honestly talk about these issues related to discrimination that often remain unspoken. This researcher suggests that other ethno-cultural communities should be provided with assistance so they too can engage with local services and employers. Many other agencies discussed how important it was to identify employers that were a good fit for their clients, and the implication was clearly that certain companies are less willing to hire young

newcomers. In some cases this was not merely implied, rather, participants indicated that they were acutely aware of employers who were unwilling to hire immigrants. Throughout the discussion of "Canadian experience" and the challenge of foreign credential recognition, it is clear that often these are euphemisms for the preference of mainstream Canadian "standards".

I believe that the challenge of discrimination in the labour market can be ameliorated with cooperation between the newcomer community, agencies, employers, the government and researchers. Critical Race Theory is helpful for identifying the persistence of discriminatory attitudes in a so-called open and welcoming society like Canada. However, CRT also provides an avenue through which researchers can take an active role in advocating for meaningful social change to eliminate discrimination. This thesis helps to inform local service providers about the role of racism in the local labour market, and awareness of this problem is an essential step for developing solutions. The assumption made by employers that foreign credentials and experience are inferior to those obtained in Canada is a discriminatory structural barrier that must be eliminated. Employers must be educated about the wealth of skills and abilities of young newcomers, and service providers are well situated to provide this information to employers.

The provincial government does recognize this as a serious problem facing immigrants, and provide the Manitoba Diversity and Intercultural Training Program for service providers and employers (LIM 2009). This program is an avenue for discussing the role of culture and how to create a diverse and welcoming workplace. This is an example of positive action for change, and further resources should be directed at providing intercultural training. Additionally, there needs to be a systematic way for

newcomers to have their foreign credentials assessed, as this has been a major concern expressed by all of the agencies.

The Provincial Nominee Program

One of the more significant themes that arose through most of the interviews is the increasing rate of newcomers to the Province of Manitoba as a result of the nominee program. Clearly, there is a direct need for the government to take a strong leadership role in ensuring that local agencies are set up to accommodate their strategy of attracting 20,000 newcomers to the province annually. There needs to be a significant and meaningful increase in funding directed toward newcomer services if the province wishes to encourage such a large number of young people to migrate here. Agencies can also protect themselves from unstable funding by seeking out funding sources that are independent from the government; however, the province must be committed to ensuring that newcomers are able to receive appropriate services and find a stable pattern of life in Manitoba. This includes finding meaningful career opportunities in the local labour market. There is a blatant contradiction within the current approach; the active will to encourage and draw highly-skilled young newcomers ensures a direct benefit to the local employment market resulting positive economic growth. However, the support and benefit to these newcomers is not being reciprocated.

Additionally, it is significant to note that although the majority of newcomers are arriving through the PNP, a quarter of new immigrants are arriving through the family and refugee categories (LIM 2007). It is essential that these groups of new immigrants receive appropriate services as well, and it is important to consider that their needs may diverge from the young professionals attracted through the nominee program. Regardless,

it is crucial that the provincial government allocates the financial resources for newcomer services based upon the increasing number of immigrants that will be arriving to Manitoba. However, it is also the responsibility of the federal government to provide the provinces with resources necessary to provide adequate services to newcomers. Therefore, there must be increase in funding from all levels of government to ensure that services will continue to assist newcomer youth in their employment search. The scope and accessibility of services are issues that must be addressed; it is clear that if agencies are currently struggling as a result of limited funding, this will only be exacerbated if an increase in immigration is not met with a parallel increase in dollars for support and services. Additionally, the role of the ethno-cultural organizations should be provided with more financial support and inclusion into the current system of services.

Increase Support to Ethno-cultural Groups

The experience of ethno-specific agencies was in contrast to the larger and more established newcomer service providers. One important implication is that there may be an unequal distribution of funding dollars between these two groups. This is significant because these organizations have similar goals as, and act like, other newcomer agencies, and they are favourably positioned to act as links between newcomers and the more formalized service providers (Guo 2006: 5). I believe that culturally specific services are essential for newly arrived immigrants; if these agencies had more resources available to them they would be more visible in the local community, and as a result they would be able to connect with a greater proportion of newcomers. From there, they can further build the social relationships that newcomers need to develop by interacting more with the government and other more established newcomer service agencies. This would help

to alleviate the concerns demonstrated by several agencies around the fact that many new immigrants were not aware of their services. Additionally, newcomers might feel more comfortable seeking advice about particular issues from an organization that they identify with. The power of a shared historical understanding and less challenges arising from language barriers would be extremely helpful for newcomers. Therefore, support for ethno-cultural communities should be considered as a serious implication for policy development.

Immigration and the School-to-Work Transition

This thesis contributes to several interrelated areas of research such as immigration, school-to-work transitions and newcomer social services. The application of sociological theory to the study of immigration is essential because much of the previous research relies heavily upon a-theoretical methodology and descriptive techniques. Theory provides a conceptual framework allowing for an intellectually stimulating analysis. In addition to theoretical contributions, this thesis provides insight into the integration experiences of newcomers in Winnipeg.

The current research on immigration to Canada emphasizes that the process of newcomer integration is a "two way street" with the society adapting to fit the needs of immigrants as they become accustomed to their new country (Ngo 2009; Winnemore & Biles 2006). Furthermore, previous research has shown that service providers often use this concept, and this is supported in the findings of this thesis as well. However, it is clear that there are fewer programs and services designed to ensure the community change in response to an increasingly diverse cultural environment (Ngo 2009: 89). Although there are indications that the province is working on developing better methods

to ensure that employers are informed about the skills of newcomers, it is the position of this researcher that services currently have only the resources to provide support to youth rather than the broader community. In order to foster inter-cultural understanding and acceptance it is essential to include all parties, otherwise many of the systemic prejudices will be difficult to ameliorate. Finally, going beyond the broader questions related to integration, it is clear that newcomer status plays a major role in the school-to-work transition of young people.

Previous Canadian studies on the employment transitions of youth do not place enough emphasis on the potentially differential experiences of young immigrants. Although most newcomers fare well as they search for employment, it is clear that there are additional barriers that are faced with many immigrants being heavily reliant upon social services to assist them during the process. This thesis contributes to the knowledge base that is developing around the school-to-work transition of young immigrants and this is significant because more information will help to provide more holistic and effective employment services. This will hopefully foster an easier transition process for newcomers through better informed support systems in the community.

It is interesting to note that previous research on newcomer service agencies has indicated that immigrants must often rely upon supports offered by community associations and churches who lack a broader framework of specialized agencies to assist during their settlement and employment search (Ngo 2009: 82-83; Al-Krenawi & Graham 2003). The findings of this thesis suggest that in the city of Winnipeg, there is an active effort to provide systematic social supports for young immigrants through specialized newcomer service agencies. This is a positive finding that runs contrary to

previous research conducted in other Canadian cities. However, further research would be needed with a cross-provincial comparison to determine how other cities are providing services to young immigrants. Despite the presence of many services in Winnipeg, it was also common for respondents to emphasize that the persistence of ethnic discrimination remains a significant challenge for newcomer youth as they search for work. Additionally, the two-tiered system of newcomer service delivery is clearly apparent with ethno-cultural groups having a substantial difficulty in obtaining funding for their valuable contributions (Sadiq 2005). Therefore, there is a need for meaningful change to ensure that any barriers faced by young immigrants are identified and eliminated.

Barriers to Employment for Newcomer Youth

My discussion with "Tony" illustrates how difficult it can be for newcomers to obtain employment:

> "No, it's hard you know? Especially for immigrant people. Some people, you know he knows maybe French or English from colonized country. Especially for African people from African country. Mine is not a colonized country, some people only speak my language is affected by that problem. It's very hard, very difficult... Even if the job is very simple or something. Here, I came to Canada here and it's very hard for me. Life is very hard, especially a new immigrant."

Tony received assistance from several local agencies, and hopes to complete his high school education in order to move on to post-secondary training. From my discussions with other young newcomers, it is apparent that there are challenges which can be difficult to overcome. This is why the assistance of immigrant service agencies is crucial as it increases the level of social support available to those who require that extra help and support navigating the local labour market.

Significant challenges perceived by employment agencies included but were not limited to language skills, foreign credential and experience recognition, discrimination in the labour market, access to child-care, poverty and a lack of access to the programs that are available. It is also understandable that young immigrants may have less familiarity with the expectations of employers, and this is an important consideration for service agencies who inform them of these norms.

An essential point to acknowledge is the fact that newcomer youth and agencies identified common concerns and challenges that may create barriers for immigrants in obtaining meaningful employment. This is likely due to the fact that agencies remain responsive to the needs and concerns of their young clientele. In addition to affirming the reflexive nature of social relations as posited by structuration theory, it is clear that agencies are listening to the needs of newcomers. This ensures that services are responsive to the needs of the community, and results in more successful service provision so that newcomers are able to confront and overcome any challenges they face when searching for career related employment.

Opportunities for Future Research

Due to the fact that this study was largely exploratory in nature, there are many questions that would be useful to develop in future studies on the employment transitions of youth. It would be interesting to examine if there are any differences in services provided between provinces such as Manitoba, Quebec, Ontario and Alberta. This would be essential because there may be different goals of the provincial governments in

regards to their regional immigration strategies. Any influence on funding or program development would be a significant contribution to research on the social services provided to newcomers in Canada. A provincial comparison would allow for an assessment of services to be conducted insofar as programs could be examined across different provincial contexts.

Additionally, there is one crucial stakeholder that was not included in this current study; the role of employers and their perceptions of the labour pool available to them would provide a very insightful perspective. It would be useful to see the concerns of employers, and if they have similar interpretations of immigration and the skills of newcomers. This might provide information that would allow for programs to be developed to educate employers about the wealth of skills and experience that new immigrants bring to Manitoba and Canada. Furthermore, building connections between immigration researchers and employers allows for information to flow between the two groups.

Another area that future research should be concerned with is the perceived lack of services for newcomers over the age of thirty with lower language benchmarks. This was a concern raised by several respondents, and it is important to investigate if there is a lack of support for this particular group and how large the gap is. Again, it would be important to utilize cross-provincial comparisons to determine if this problem is common to other regions of Canada or if it is specific to Manitoba.

The role of the Provincial Nominee Program is significant for the Manitoban context, and it would be useful to determine if this program is effective for the province. However, the perceptions of newcomers are extremely important, and further research

could determine if their goals and expectations for migration and resettlement were achieved. Are newcomers receiving the information they need before they start the process of moving to Manitoba? Once they arrive, are they receiving the support they require from the community, government and agencies? These are crucial questions that are best answered by speaking with newcomers, and determining their experiences. Although the structuration approach was useful for this study to examine the interactions between various levels of analysis in social relations, it would be essential to give newcomers an opportunity to voice their concerns, experiences and aspirations independently of research on agencies and the structural context that exists in the province. This approach would go further than discussions with youth to determine how the newcomer community feels about their migration experience.

Concluding Words

The role of service providers in the employment transition of young immigrants is essential to provide information, support and even access to the labour market. It is apparent that there are a wide range of services available to newcomer youth in Winnipeg, and this is a positive finding. However, it is also essential to acknowledge that there are troubling barriers facing immigrants such as discrimination in the labour market and a lack of recognition for their foreign credentials and experience. I was impressed by the level of dedication to supporting newcomers expressed by service providers. These agencies are significant because they provide newcomers with support, mentorship, crucial information and assist them in building their social network and employment related skills and experience. However, I believe one of the most important roles played

by newcomer service agencies involves their position as facilitator and advocate between the immigrant community and local employers.

In conclusion, it is the opinion of this researcher that ethno-cultural groups are in a marginalized position and require additional support. This is essential because these community groups represent the immigrant populations that newcomer services are attempting to provide. They clearly have an essential role in providing assistance to youth in their community, and they deserve more support from the government and service providers. Importantly, they have something to offer, a perspective and a story that is essential to include if we are to ensure Canada truly becomes a nation that is inclusive of newcomers and their histories while acknowledging the enormous contributions of immigration:

> "No one takes the time to ask, to learn, to realize whether they're promoting the right thing. Are they understanding? No. It's top down, everything is top down. I think services, the scheme of things, everyone needs to realize that there is more to it. We need that cultural sensitivity. I think that really should exist... So, also people like you, hearing what we have to say. Knowing that we have something relevant to share, and not just being, you know, there... So you see these newcomer kids understanding our message that we're here to help each other." – **ANAK**

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APPENDIX A: Introductory Script

Introductory Script

Hi my name is Jasmine Thomas, and I am conducting research for the completion of my Master's thesis at the Department of Sociology at the University of Manitoba. I am contacting you today about your interest in participating in my project involving service providers in Winnipeg and how they assist newcomer youth during the school-to-work transition. *APPROPRIATE SENTENCE*: (Your contact information was provided by another respondent who thought you might wish to participate in this project OR I was directed to your organization by my thesis adviser who thought you would be interested in participating in this research). I am interested in learning about the work your organization does with newcomer youth as they search for employment in Winnipeg. This information is important to determine what services are being provided for immigrant youth, and also to determine what further assistance would be helpful for youth as they search for jobs.

This project is examining the role of service providers in providing assistance to immigrant youth as they search for employment in Winnipeg.

This project is part of a larger study involving three provinces that involved conducting interviews with newcomer youth. The participation of service organizations allows for a more holistic view of the employment transitions of new immigrants in the city of Winnipeg. The combination of the perspective of youth with the service organizations that provide assistance will be valuable in developing a comprehensive view of the challenges and successes of immigrant youth as they search and find their place in the labour market.

We are hoping to ask you a number of questions related to your experiences working with newcomer youth in your organization. Questions will revolve around what types of services your organization provides to youth during their job search, successful stories of youth finding employment, perceived challenges that newcomers face, and the role of the role of the government and community during this process. We expect the interviews to take approximately 30 to 60 minutes. Please be aware that you may end the interview at any time and/or refuse to answer any of the questions asked without any penalties. All the information you provide will be kept confidential. Your participation in this study would be greatly appreciated, and if you would like to take part in a face-to-face interview please contact me at umthomaj@cc.umanitoba.ca c

If you have any further questions feel free to ask me or contact my adviser Professor Lori Wilkinson

APPENDIX B: Consent Form

UNIVERSITY
OF MANITOBA

Consent Form: Service Providers

Immigrant Serving Organizations and the School to Work Transitions of Newcomer Youth in Winnipeg

Principal Investigator: Jasmine Thomas, M.A. student, Department of Sociology
301L Isbister Building [illegible] Ema
Thesis Adviser: Dr. Lori Wilkinson, Department of Sociology

This consent form ensures your informed consent during this research project, and a copy should be kept for your own records. This form outlines the purpose and goals of this research, and how your participation is involved. If you have any additional questions about this project, please feel free to ask. Please take your time as you read through this form and ensure that you have an understanding of the information described.

Purpose:
This research is to be conducted as a requirement of my Master's program at the University of Manitoba under the supervision of Dr. Lori Wilkinson at the Department of Sociology.

This research seeks to include the perspective of local service providers that work directly with newcomer youth as they search for employment in Winnipeg. Service providers have direct contact with youth, and the goal of this project is to determine what services are being provided in the city. I would like to examine the perceptions of service providers about how they perceive the school-to-work transition of immigrant youth, and to document successful stories as well as potential barriers such as racism or discrimination that youth may face. This information will be extremely valuable in determining what sort of programs are available in Winnipeg, and also for making recommendations of what services are still required in order to assist youth as they search for employment in a new country.

You are invited to participate in a face-to-face interview. However, it is important to note that your participation is STRICTLY voluntary. I must stress again that participation is voluntary, and if you choose not to participate it will not have any impact on your

relationship with Dr. Wilkinson or the University of Manitoba. If you agree to take part in this research, you will be invited to participate in the interview and answer the questions presented. You may end the interview at any time and/or refuse to answer any questions.

Procedure:
You have been selected to participate in this study because you are an individual working with a service provider that assists newcomer youth find employment in Winnipeg.

If you agree to participate in this research, you will take part in a face-to-face interview lasting about thirty minutes to one hour. During this interview you will be asked to answer questions relating to your experiences working with immigrant youth as they search for employment, and how your organization responds to problems faced by immigrants. The interview will be conducted at a location that is mutually agreeable, and the meeting will be audio-taped, with your permission.

I will be asking a number of questions related to the services your organization provides to newcomers, and also about the successful stories of newcomers finding employment that you have experienced. You will also be asked questions about your perception of barriers that newcomers may face as they attempt to seek a career in the Winnipeg labour market.

Upon completion of this thesis, I will provide a detailed summary of the findings to the respondents and the service organizations that have participated in this research. A full copy of the thesis will be provided to any individuals or groups that are interested in the completed project.

Risks:
There is no anticipated physical or psychological risk involved in your participation in this study. Should you decline to participate there will be no negative consequences. You may choose to not answer any of the questions during the interview, and you may end the discussion at any time. Please indicate if you feel that a question is sensitive and you do not want specific information disclosed. Confidentiality will be ensured in the following ways:

- Your name and contact information will only be included on the signed consent form, and these forms will be locked in a secure filing cabinet in a locked office on the University of Manitoba campus.
- You will be acting as a representative of the social organization that you work for, and any personal identifiers will not be disclosed.
- Only the researcher and her thesis adviser will have access to the data.
- Audio recording will be destroyed once transcripts have been made.
- Data will be destroyed upon completion of this project (April 2011)

Direct Benefits:
There are no direct benefits for your participation in this research project.

Costs and Compensation:
There is no cost to you for participating in this project, and there will be no compensation.

Questions:
Please contact Jasmine Thomas about any questions you may have about this project. You may also contact her Master's thesis adviser Dr. Lori Wilkinson

If you have any further questions about the study and your rights as a study participant, or comments or complaints about the study, you may contact Maggie Bowman at the Psychology/Sociology Research Ethics Board

Consent:
Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in this research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and/or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

This research has been approved by the Psychology/Sociology Research Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

_____

Participant's Signature Date

_____

Researcher's Signature Date

I consent to having this interview audio-recorded:

No ( )

Yes ( )

I am interested in obtaining a summary of the findings from this research project:

No ( )

Yes ( ): If yes, how would you like to receive the results?

By Email ( ) Please provide email address: _____

By Surface mail ( ) Please provide mailing address:

_____

_____

APPENDIX C: Interview Guide

Interview Guide – Service Providers

I have a series of questions prepared, but let me first ask you about your general impression of how newcomer youth are faring as they search for employment?

1. How does your organization provide assistance to newcomers during the employment search process? Is this a specific goal of this organization, or has this service been developed to fit a need of the community?

2. Are there any trends you have witnessed as you work with youth as they search for jobs in the city?

3. What are the major challenges facing your organization in providing services to newcomers?

4. What do you perceive as challenges facing youth as they are trying to find employment in Winnipeg?

6. Are there any gaps in services or programs that you feel are missing?

7. Do newcomer youth face more difficulties finding employment than other youth in Winnipeg? If they perceive a difference, then why do they think there are differences?

8. What social factors, such as poverty, play a role in the employment transitions of youth?

9. Do you feel that discrimination is a problem in the labour market?

10. Should the government step in to provide training or other types of additional support?

11. What could be done to improve the services you provide to youth during their job search?

12. What is the greatest challenge you have experienced while working with newcomer youth as they find employment?

13. What is the biggest success story you have experienced while working with newcomer youth as they find employment?

14. What positive experiences have you noted during your work with immigrant youth as they search for jobs in Winnipeg?

15. How do you feel newcomer youth are faring during the general integration process?