

Voices From the Margin:  
Challenges and Possibilities Facing Newcomers in the Inner City of Winnipeg

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## Introduction

With transnational migration reaching unprecedented levels in Canada and by extension in Manitoba, the need for new trajectories of intercultural understanding and minority-relevant policy has never been greater. To date, in contrast to Canada as a whole, few studies effectively focus on the issues, challenges, and experiences of immigrants themselves in Winnipeg. While Manitoba has been successful at attracting immigrants, newcomers continue to face many challenges and difficulties living in Winnipeg. There are programs and services available to help newcomers, but some key problem areas continue to persist.

This honours paper takes a small step in addressing this significant gap in literature. I use the voices of participants in this study, immigrants, refugees, service providers, teachers, to inquire about challenges that they face and solutions that they themselves deem to be workable. This paper weaves together newcomers' cultural, political, and social lives and shows how they are resilient and negotiate their space and identities as Canadians. Despite challenges, the newcomers, individually and as group, have shown resilience and have created solutions and alternatives.

I have divided this paper into five parts. The first part, "Globalization and Movement of People" provides a general context to understand why people move, who they are, and how national and international governments categorize them. I discuss the importance of immigrants to Canada as a country that is built on immigration. Then, I show that Manitoba, like other provinces in Canada, has been relying on immigrants for its growth and prosperity. Immigration is not the story of the past for Manitoba, but continues to play an important role in its present development. The Manitoba

Government, through the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP), has developed a successful immigration strategy. The Province of Manitoba is striving to increase the number of yearly immigrants to Manitoba to 20,000 by the year 2017. This section looks at different categories of immigrants that settle in Manitoba in general and in Winnipeg, in particular.

In the second part of this paper, I explain the methodology that I have used to conduct this research. In this research, I used a combination of quantitative and qualitative methodologies. I focus on the inner city of Winnipeg and primarily rely on the data that I have gathered through interviewing fourteen individuals, immigrants, refugees, service providers, and teachers. In this section, I provide detailed information about the participants, interview questions and limitations of this method of analysis. I make it clear that my goal is to use the voices of participants in order to grasp the complexity of the issues that face newcomers in Winnipeg. In this research, I am mindful of the shortcomings of both qualitative and quantitative methods, am influenced by the post-colonial and feminist methodology, and pay particular attention to the relations of power within our society.

In the third part of this paper, I use the information that I gathered through interviews with the 14 participants to discuss some of the challenges and barriers that they have identified. I use voices of participants to discuss the complexity of the challenges immigrants and refugees face in their attempt to settle in Winnipeg: language, issues related to parenting and children's education, gender relations of power within the household, financial and emotional problems within families, the accreditation process, problems in the labour market and challenges associated with finding affordable housing.

In the third section, “Working for Change”, I attempt to show that despite difficulties participants in this study have a sense of agency and resiliency. Immigrants and refugees use various tactics and strategies to improve their situations. I discuss some of the community-based organizations that participants have developed to help each other. I also outline suggestions and solutions that participants believe are workable and should be introduced in the educational system, governmental and non-governmental organizations.

This paper ends by concluding remarks in the fifth part. In the conclusion, I outline the key findings of this research. I believe this original research adds new knowledge to our understanding of multiple challenges facing newcomers in Winnipeg. The number of participants in this study is small, but the findings of this research provide important insights in improving the existing policies and working towards the transformation of the inner city of Winnipeg. This study makes it clear that we need alternative programs that is participatory and recognizes the complexity and diversity of the needs of the newcomers to this province.

## Part 1 - Globalization and Movement of People: Immigration to Canada and Manitoba

Our globalized world is increasingly interconnected through the development of communication technology, movement of capital and through the wave of people who are, for various reasons, living their lives in a country which is not their country of origin (Stalker 2001:10). Although migration is not new, it has reached unprecedented levels throughout the world. For a variety of reasons, the movement of people is increasingly facilitated in various parts of the world. People are exchanging one 'northern' country for another, people from the 'south' are moving to the 'north', and there is unprecedented movement between 'southern' countries themselves, often because of conflict and the need to seek refuge. Thus, migration is not limited to a particular region or area. This is a wave that flows in all directions and thus has implications for all people and all nations (Annan 2000:130).

The effects of the movement of people are numerous. The success and stability of our interconnected global society will depend on how these effects are acknowledged and dealt with by those in the position to accentuate the positive aspects, and minimize the negative aspects. The effects, benefits and repercussions are felt at individual and group levels, as well at micro-meso and local levels (Annan 2000). There are many challenges involved with ensuring the success of the growing movement of population. However, these difficulties must give way to the pursuit of the many opportunities that arise because of migration for the development of a more tolerant and just society.

### 1.1 Theories of Migration

Migration and movement of people has a long history. Individuals and groups have criss-crossed the globe for centuries. Migrants travel in many different ways and for a variety

of reasons<sup>1</sup>. Despite the scare stories, only about 3 percent of the world's population lives outside the country of their birth (Stalker 2001:10). Current global migration patterns are particularly complex and include a variety of groups: refugees, economic migrants who are seeking a better life, as well as people who cross borders with the help of smugglers<sup>2</sup>.

There are theories of migration that try to explain why people migrate. Regardless of their differences, they can be categorized into two categories: those that put the emphasis on the individual and others who stress the structural factors. The individual analysis uses the human capital approach and sees migrants as rational human beings who weigh their options and migrate to increase their gain. The structural analysis realizes that migration is not an individual decision. There are economic, social, and political forces that push people to leave their country of birth. As well, in the receiving countries there are structural forces that attract immigrants. For instance, it is widely recognized that immigrants have been a major source of economic prosperity for the richest country in the world, the United States. Canada, like the United States, continues to rely on immigration to boost its economy.

It is important to understand the differences that exist among people who move. In particular, refugees<sup>3</sup> and migrants are different and are treated differently under the

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<sup>1</sup> Migrants can be classified into five categories Settlers are people who intend to live permanently in a new country; professionals, these include those who are employed by transnational corporations; undocumented workers are those who are illegal (the United States has the largest number of illegal immigrants); and refugees and asylum seekers (Stalker 2001:10-12).

<sup>2</sup> Smugglers have built multibillion-dollar business by preying on the desire and desperation of people who believe they cannot cross borders in any other ways (UNHRC 2007-2008: 6).

<sup>3</sup> The term 'asylum seeker' and 'refugee' are often confused. An asylum seeker is someone who says he or she is a refugee, but whose claim is yet to be evaluated.

modern international law<sup>4</sup>. Migrants, especially economic migrants, choose to move in order to improve the future prospects of themselves and their families. Refugees have to move in order to save their lives and freedom. Refugees who flee war or persecution are in vulnerable situation<sup>5</sup>. Their own government either does not protect them or threatens their lives. Even people who are forced to migrate because of flood and other natural disasters are not in the same position as refugees. Governments are usually sympathetic towards them. Modern warfare, has affected people's movement within and outside their countries (Jones 2004).

The two main groups of the people on the move (refugees and economic migrants) are increasingly being confused. The body of international law designed to protect refugees is under intense pressure. Border controls are constantly being strengthened and made stricter. The aim is to improve security and keep out illegal immigrants (UNHCR 2007-2008:9). Those who smuggle people do not distinguish between refugees and migrants; they smuggle anyone who can pay.

Table 1 provides a break down of people of concern to the United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees (hereafter UNHCR). There are 32.9 million uprooted people in the world who are in need of protection. This figure represents 56 percent increase compared to the previous year. Much of the increase is due to a rise in the number of

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<sup>4</sup> This is particularly relevant for understanding the situation of the refugee participants in this research. It is widely recognized that refugees suffer from stress and trauma and strong sense of loss (Herman 1997; Magro 2008). Therefore, they need special attention by various levels of service providers.

<sup>5</sup> Eric Hobsbawm characterizes 20<sup>th</sup> century as the most murderous in recorded history (2002:49). He further states, "War in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is not likely to be as murderous as it was in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. But armed violence, creating disproportionate suffering and loss will remain omnipresent and endemic-occasionally epidemic- in a large part of the world. The prospect of a century of peace is remote." (2002:55).

people living in refugee-like situations within their own countries. Of these, 47 percent are children. Only 48 percent are refugees (and falling). These uprooted people leave their country of origin for the same reasons as refugees, but have not crossed a national border. As such, refugee convention does not protect them (Ball and Gready 2006:78).

## 1.2 Definitions of Migrants

(1) Refugee: The 1951 Refugee Convention describes refugees as people who are outside their country of nationality or habitual residence and have a well-founded fear of persecution because of their race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion. People fleeing conflicts or generalized violence are also generally considered as refugees, although sometimes under legal mechanisms other than the 1951 Convention (UNHCR 2007-2008). Table 2 presents the top ten countries of refugee origins. As of January 2007, Afghanistan and Iraq each had over 2 million refugees, followed by approximately 700,000 people from Sudan. Conflict and war have forced people to move and seek refuge. The top five countries of resettlement for refugees in 2006 were United States (41,300), Australia (13,400), Canada (10,700), Sweden (2,400) and Norway (1000) (UNHCR 2007-2008).

(2) Asylum Seeker: Someone who has made a claim that he or she is a refugee, and is waiting for that claim to be accepted or rejected is termed an asylum seeker. The term contains no presumption either way; it simply describes the fact that someone has lodged the claim. Some asylum seekers will be judged refugees and others will not (UNHCR 2007-2008). Table 3 draws our attention to the fact that Pakistan and Iran are the top two asylum countries, followed by the United States.

(3) Migrant: A wide ranging term that covers most people who move to a foreign country for a variety of reasons and for a certain length of time (usually a minimum of a year, so as not to include very temporary visitors such as tourists, people on business visits, etc). Different from 'immigrant', this means someone who takes up permanent residence in a country other than his or her original homeland (UNHCR 2007-2008).

(4) Economic Migrant: Someone who leaves his/her country of origin for financial reasons, rather than for refugee ones (UNHCR 2007-2008).

(5) Internally Displaced Person (IDP): Someone who has been forced to move from his or her home because of conflict, persecution (i.e. refugee-like reasons), or because of a natural disaster or some other unusual circumstances of this type. Unlike refugees, an IDP remains inside his or her own country (UNHCR 2007-2008).

(6) Stateless Person: Someone who is not considered as a national by any state or someone who does not receive fundamental rights enjoyed by other nationals in their home state. Some stateless people do not officially exist and therefore have virtually no rights at all. Unlike other groups, stateless persons may have never moved away from the place they were born. Some stateless people are also refugees (UNHCR 2007-2008).

### 1.3 Immigrants in Canada

Countries such as Canada, Australia and the United States are attracting more and more newcomers. Canada is a country built on immigration and well aware of the challenges and opportunities brought forth by the movement of people. Canada is a destination for a large number of international migrants, both voluntary and forced, and is considered as one of the most multicultural societies in the world. Recent statistics show that immigration in Canada outpaced every other G-8 industrialized nations from 2001 to

2006. Canada's population increased about 1.6 million, from close to thirty million in 2001 to over 31 million in 2006 (Weeks 2007; Table 4)<sup>6</sup>. Out of the total population of Canada, the number of immigrants increased from about four million in 1991 to over six million in 2006 (Table 4). The overwhelming majority of immigrants live in large Canadian cities of Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal (Table 5). As well, the sources of immigrants to Canada have changed in recent decades, with increasing numbers coming from non-European countries (Table 6). These immigrants and their children are adding to the diverse make-up of Canada's population, making it one of the most ethnically diverse nations in the world. About 23 percent of the population aged fifteen years and over are the first generation (born outside Canada). The second generation, who are Canadian born and have at least one parent who was born outside Canada, accounted for 17 percent of the total population aged fifteen years and older. About 58 percent or six out of every ten Canadians are third generation, meaning they are the offspring of Canadian-born parents or possibly Canadian-born grandparents (Statistics Canada 2002).

Canada's cultural diversity is reflected at the level of ethnic and immigrant composition. At the time of confederation, Canada's population was 60 percent British and 30 percent French. By 1981, the respective figures declined to 40 percent and 27 percent. In 1991, the figures were even more revealing, 41.7 percent of the population reported having some non-British or non-French ethnic origins (Leman 1999:2). By 2001, recent immigrants accounted for over one-third of the foreign-born population in Canada. In fact, the proportion of foreign-born Canadians has been increasing from 16.1 percent in 1991 to 18.4 percent in 2001 and to 19.8 percent in 2006 (Table 4). The cities

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<sup>6</sup> I am aware that figures in various statistical reports for Canada and Manitoba may have discrepancies.

of Toronto with 43.7 percent and Vancouver with 37.5 percent have the highest percentage in this respect (Ghorayshi et.al. 2005:4).

The era preceding 1971 is best interpreted as a time of gradual movement towards acceptance of ethnic diversity as legitimate and integral to Canadian society. Events and developments during the 1960s paved the way for the eventual demise of assimilation as government policy and the subsequent appearance of multiculturalism. Pressures for change came from the assertiveness of Canada's aboriginal peoples, the forces of Quebecois nationalism and the increasing proportion of ethnic minorities who resented their place in society (Leman 1999). Many steps are taken at various levels of government to ensure preservation of culture and language, to reduce discrimination, to enhance cultural awareness and to increase understanding. Canadian national policies are developed to respect multiple identities. As a multicultural nation, Canada has immense possibilities in harnessing the potential of its diverse population (Mafinezam 2004).

As a member of the United Nations, Canada has a humanitarian obligation and tradition of accepting refugees into the country. Table 7 shows Canada's refugees by source country. There were in total 32,683 refugees admitted to Canada in 2004, increasing to 35,783 in 2005 and then to 42,715 in 2007 (CIC 2006). These figures show that war, conflict and the state's failure to protect their people, for the most part, force people to seek refuge in Canada.

When the Canadian government sponsors a refugee, the refugee is given an initial stipend to purchase any immediately needed supplies and continues to receive financial support for one year at local social assistance rates (CIC 2008). Refugees can also arrive in the country through private sponsorship by family members and community

organizations. Sponsors are expected to provide some support to refugees, including the provision of basic needs in settlement. Sponsors are required to provide some form of proof of their ability to financially support those that they sponsor. Finally, some people can claim refugee status after arriving in Canada on their own.

Since June 28, 2002, Canada's immigration program has been based on the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (hereafter IRPA) and its regulations. IRPA replaces the Immigration Act of 1976 and makes a clear distinction between the basic social, cultural and economic goals of the immigration program and the humanitarian goals of the refugee protection program (CIC 2006).

There are three basic categories of permanent residents. Table 8 provides information in immigration levels in Canada: (1) Economic Class: skilled workers, business immigrants, provincial nominees and live-in caregivers, as well as members of their immediate family, the majority of people who come to Canada arrive under the category of Economic Class. (2) Family Class: spouses and partners, children, parents and grandparents of the sponsors. (3) Protected Persons Category: government-assisted and privately-sponsored refugees selected abroad, individuals who are recognized in Canada as Convention refugees or persons in need of protection, as well as persons who have been granted protection through the pre-removal risk assessment process. Protected persons may include their family members in their applications for permanent residence. The term "refugees" is used to represent "protected persons". In exceptional circumstances based on humanitarian, compassionate or public policy considerations, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (hereafter CIC) has the authority to grant permanent

resident status to foreign nationals who do not meet the usual selection criteria. In addition to selecting permanent residents, CIC also grants temporary residence to foreign nationals who come to Canada to work, study or visit.

#### 1.4 Immigrants in Manitoba

Manitoba, like other provinces in Canada, has a long history of immigration. Immigration is not the story of the past and continues to play an important role in the development of Manitoba. Table 9 shows that the number of immigrants and non-permanent residents in Manitoba are on the rise.

Attracting immigrants to Manitoba has been a priority of the provincial government and they have achieved success in this endeavour (Sanders 2006: B7). Manitoba is cited to be a leader in developing a successful immigration strategy through the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) (Manitoba Government 2006). The PNP program matches skilled foreign workers with companies who are facing labour shortages. This program was pioneered in Manitoba and other provinces have begun to develop similar programs. Having exceeded the goal of 10,000 immigrants to Manitoba by the end of 2006, a 24 percent rise from the previous year, the province is now striving to continue that increase to 20,000 immigrants per year by the year 2017 (Manitoba Government 2006; Cash 2006:A5). More than 41,000 immigrants settled in Manitoba between 2001 and 2006. Immigrants have offset the net loss of more than 30,000 Manitobans who moved to other provinces during the same period (Rabson 2007).

Among different categories of immigrants, the Economic Class accounts for the largest number of immigrants (Tables 10 and 11). They include the provincial nominees, skilled workers, business immigrants and live-in caregivers. Provincial nominee's

selection reflects local labour market and business needs. With an aging population and the growing need of the labour market, the Canadian government is actively involved in attracting the Economic Class of immigrants.

Census data for 2006 shows that 70 percent of Manitoba's immigrants over the age of twenty-five are highly educated with broad range of professional and trade skills. Although the ration of male and female immigrants is comparable, the distribution of principal applicant differs. In the Economic Class, 72 percent are male and 28 percent are female. The respective figures for Family Class are 39 percent and 61 percent, and for Refugee Class 64 percent and 36 percent (Manitoba Government 2006).

Tables 10 and 11 show that in Manitoba, like Canada as a whole, the vast majority of immigrants arrive under one of three classes: (1) Refugees, (2) Economic Immigrants, and (3) Family Class Immigrants. Increasingly immigrants who come to Manitoba settle in urban centres and the largest proportion of immigrants, 76 percent, settle in Winnipeg, the next highest figures are 8.3 percent for Winkler and 4 percent for Steinbach (Table 13). Table 12 shows the country of origin of immigrants to Manitoba, like that of Canada, is changing. The overwhelming majority of immigrants are from non-western countries. The Philippines, Germany, India and Korea have consistently ranked as the top five source countries for Economic Class of immigration to Manitoba.

The following paragraphs describe immigration in Manitoba as it pertains to the three different classes of immigration:

(1) Refugee Class: Of the 10, 051 immigrants Manitoba received in 2006, 1,241 were refugees (Manitoba Government 2006; Tables 10 and 11). Manitoba accepts a larger per capita share of the refugees who land in Canada, with most settling in

Winnipeg's inner city (Manitoba Government 2006). While refugees arrive in Winnipeg from a variety of countries around the world, the top source countries for refugees in 2006 were from Afghanistan, Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia and Egypt (Manitoba Government 2006). Table 14 shows that Manitoba is accepting more immigrants from African countries; the majority of them being refugees.

(2) Economic Migrant Class: Studies show that there is a strong relationship between the needs of labour market and immigration (Beaujot 2002). Canada, as a receiving country, gives some attention to family reunification and has a humanitarian attitude to refugees, but the economic category tends to dominate immigration policy (Beaujot 2002). In general, research in this area draws our attention to the positive contributions of immigrants to the economies of the Western World. Of the major rich countries of immigration in the industrial countries, except Japan, all have had significant amount of immigrant workers. The cases in point are the U.S., Canada and Australia. These countries have used immigration to satisfy the needs of their labour market (Stalker 2001: 63). The vast majority of newcomers to Manitoba are immigrants under the Economic Class; in 2006 this represented 73.4 percent or 7,375 out of 10,051 newcomers (Manitoba Government 2006; Tables 10 and 11). This success is the result of Manitoba's innovative Provincial Nominee Program, which matches skilled foreign workers to businesses and communities needing workers to fill various labour shortages in cities and towns (Redekop 2006:A8).

(3) Family Class: Those admitted under the Family Class represented 1,332 immigrants in 2006 (Manitoba Government 2006; Tables 10 and 11). Family Class immigrants have family members who have previously settled here and are willing to

support the immigrants' settlement needs upon arrival. As with economic class sponsors, family class sponsors must provide proof of their ability to finance the immigrant's settlement. As indicated by one respondent in this study this proof must be a bank account with at least \$10,000 in it.

### 1.5 Service Providers

Winnipeg offers a variety of services oriented towards the successful settlement of newcomers into the city. The following descriptions of services are meant to give a broad overview of some of the services that are available in Winnipeg.

There are numerous government and government-assisted services helping newcomers. For instance, the Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council Inc, also known as Welcome Place, helps refugees to settle in Manitoba. As well, the International Center, through its various programs helps newcomers from many backgrounds. Both of these institutions are located in the downtown, Central Park area. Services offered by Welcome Place include pickup from the airport, orientation to the city, referrals to community services and health care, the acquisition of temporary housing until Welcome Place is able to move the refugees into permanent housing, English courses as an Additional Language training, a variety of sponsorship services, life skills training and also protection and referrals for those who arrive as refugee claimants. The International Center offers a wide range of services including settlement services, referrals and counseling. Adult education assessment, information on schooling and education options, employment services including resume writing and interview skills building are offered as well as nutrition, health and safety awareness. Classes and workshops are available for various needs including cooking classes for beginners, citizenship preparation, job

preparation and conversational English classes. Overall, all these programs intend to help the better settlement of newcomers.

Refugees and Immigrants who begin their orientation at Welcome Place and International Center are often referred to more appropriate services depending on the nature of the advice or help they are seeking. Some of these places help with counseling for traumatic experiences, abuses, etc. One such place is the Immigrant Women's Association, which offers free cross-cultural counseling for women in abusive relationships. The Islamic Social Services Association offers training and seminars on various aspects including Islamic parenting and marital/substance/abuse counseling. Seed Winnipeg Inc. offers free seminars on money management training to those living on low incomes. Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba (hereafter IRCOM) is an all in one housing complex with sixty-two contained units where refugees and immigrants can rent low-income apartments for a period of one year to a limit of three years during their settlement. IRCOM is unique in their endeavor to provide on-site settlement services including language training, recreation programs for children, as well as referral services. Other referrals may be to job fairs, community centers, food banks, health clinics, recreation and leisure centers, child care options, and so on.

Language training is offered at various levels and places to immigrants and refugees. The provincial government funds free English language training for permanent residents, refugee claimants and also for provincial nominees (including spouses and adult children) (Province of Manitoba 2008). Red River College, Winnipeg School Division, Winnipeg Technical College, Work Start, English Skills Center and Neighborhood Classes all provide various program levels from beginner to advanced, to

specialized courses. The beginner courses are offered full time at Winnipeg Technical College. Part-time courses in the evening or day and also comprehensive full-time classes are offered in numerous Winnipeg School Division and Neighbourhood Classes throughout the city. All other places offer only advanced programs. The provincial government funds these programs. It is important to note that the above list does not exhaust what is available. For example, the Needs Centre offers programs where children can arrive after school and learn conversational English with volunteers. As well, they can enjoy crafts, do homework and learn computer skills. Tutoring is also offered in many Winnipeg schools and other educational venues.

## Part 2 – Methodology

Social scientists continue to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of both quantitative and qualitative methods (Dafinoiu 2003; Russell 1995; Nobles 2002; Palys 2003; Neuman 1997; Bryant 1980). Feminist scholars have added to this tradition and have accurately criticized academic disciplines for ignoring the experience of women. Along the same line, post-colonial theorists have stressed the biases in the academia when studying marginalized groups. They have posed crucial questions regarding concepts and methods. Who makes them? How are they defined, tested, and measured? By answering these questions it has become clear that our theories and methods are andocentric, sexist, biased, paternalistic, etc. (Gandhi 1998; Hooks 2000; Ghorayshi 1996). This literature points out how these shortcomings have left negative impacts on policies and planning with regards to marginalized groups.

### 2.1 Multiple Methods

In this research I am aware of the limitations of Census data, the difficulties associated with the use of quantitatively oriented research design and also the difficulties associated with standardized interviewing. I pay attention to the shortcomings of both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection. As well, I am mindful of the debate surrounding academic concepts and theoretical frameworks. In this study, I use both qualitative and quantitative data. I use secondary sources, such as academic literature, government and non-governmental publications, but primarily rely on qualitative original data that I have gathered through my interviews of fourteen participants in this study. I use narrative inquiry to compensate for the shortcomings of the existing information on immigrants and refugees who are, for the most part, new to Winnipeg.

My concern in this study is to document the experiences of individuals, in this case, newcomers to Winnipeg. How they interpret and understand their experiences of settlement and integration in Winnipeg. I have conducted interviews with newcomers, settlement service providers and educators within the inner city of Winnipeg in order to understand the complexity of the issues revealed in this case study of fourteen participants. By adopting this method, my goal is to lay bare the views of immigrants and refugees, their assumptions and what it is that they find problematic, as well as what they find hopeful in their lives in Winnipeg. Service providers and teachers have first hand experiences with the newcomers and provide an insider's view of the working of various institutions that are created to help immigrants and refugees.

In conducting this research, I am mindful of the importance of the relations of power within society and the manner in which power manifests itself and is exercised (Foucault 1972; Said 1978; Smith 1997). I draw from different sources to present the complex factors that contribute to the challenges that participants have identified. In my attempt to understand the reality as experienced by the participants in this study, I try to reduce the polarity between researcher and participant. This means that participants are the 'knower' and makers of knowledge.

## 2.2 Participants

This study focuses on the original data that I have collected by interviewing fourteen participants. I used a semi-structured questionnaire to interview participants (Appendix 3). Based on the literature on immigrants and refugees, I developed guideline questions covering five categories: (1) Participants' life before coming to Canada and the circumstances under which they came. (2) Their life in Winnipeg such as their daily

activities, services and tools they have used to settle, barriers they have faced, how they overcame their difficulties and their suggestions for improvements. (3) Their communities, their friends and family, neighbourhood and their support system as a whole. (4) Their identity, their integration into the Canadian society; and (5) their ties to their home countries, whether emotional or financial, and how those ties affect living in Winnipeg.

When interviewing service providers and teachers the questions were tailored to document the available services for immigrants and refugees. I was interested to understand service providers' evaluation of the available programs, their views of barriers and difficulties that face their clients and what changes and programs they would like to see in order to improve the situation of the newcomers in the inner city of Winnipeg. This information has provided a structure of knowledge that helped me to identify systematic deficiencies within the existing NGO and government institutions.

A research proposal and ethics application was submitted and approved by the University of Winnipeg Senate Committee on Ethic and Human Research and Scholarship in November 2007 in advance of beginning the interviews. Interviewees were found by various methods. Posters explaining the project (Appendix 5) were displayed in various places in Winnipeg such as government and non-governmental offices that provide services to newcomers. Some of these places included schools, places of worship, ethnic neighbourhoods, apartment buildings, university campus, etc. We also found interviewees through personal networking and organizational contacts. It is important to note that once strong connections were made with various individuals, participants were also solicited via their personal networks. For instance, a number of

individuals who have been active in the community provided contacts of people who might be interested in sharing their experiences with the research team. In addition, many respondents were able to provide additional contacts that were willing to be interviewed.

The interviews were conducted from October 2007 to February 2008. Each interview took an average of one hour. Participants were given a one-sheet summary of the description, goal and purpose of the project. As well, participants were aware of the general topics of the questions and their rights to withdraw from the interview or answering any questions. They signed the consent form (Appendix 2) and were assured that the result of the interview would be kept in a secure place and their anonymity respected. Participants had the right to refuse to answer any question or to withdraw from the interview without any consequence. All participants were offered an honorarium (Appendix 4) of \$25 for their time<sup>7</sup>. The interviews were transcribed and analyzed.

Table 15 provides information regarding the general characteristics of the fourteen participants that I interviewed. It shows that the interviewees came from varied African countries as well as places like Iraq, Philippines, Mexico and Ukraine. I recognize that a large number of participants are from African countries and are refugees. This is explained by the fact that this study focuses on the inner city of Winnipeg, a place where a large proportion of African refugees settle. Eight of the participants are married. There are three women who are divorced and the rest are single. Their age groups range from twenty-two to fifty, with the majority in the thirty to forty years old category. As Table 15 shows, consistent with the data in Canada as a whole, participants have a high level of education and are multilingual.

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<sup>7</sup> Some participants did not accept the honorarium. As well, service providers did not receive the honorarium.

### 2.3 Limitations

This original research adds much needed new knowledge to our understanding of the challenges and possibilities that face newcomers in Manitoba, but it has the following limitations. (1) Most of the participants have been in Winnipeg only for a short time period and thus can only speak to their limited experiences in Winnipeg. This means their experiences do not allow me to talk about integration of immigrants in general. (2) This research sheds light on the experiences of newcomers in Winnipeg, but it does not claim to represent the vast experiences of diverse groups of immigrants who reside in Winnipeg. Because the focus of this study is the inner city of Winnipeg, the sample has over-representation of refugees and African people. (3) I am aware that the small sample size (fourteen) adds another layer to the limitation of this study. However, this study has provided a forum that participants have used to express their views and suggest improvements to policies and programs. (4) Finally, a strict timeline for completion of my honours' thesis did not allow me to share the final print with the participants of this study.

Despite limitations, this research adds new knowledge to the existing literature on immigrants and refugees in Manitoba. It provides new insights into challenges and possibilities that face Diaspora groups in the inner city of Winnipeg. More importantly, it presents the voices of participants who use their life experiences and suggest alternatives that can be crucial in the improvement and development of existing policies.

### Part 3 - Challenges and Barriers

Many of Winnipeg's newcomers, especially refugees and those with low income initially find homes in the downtown area of Winnipeg and face many difficulties. Similar to other studies, both in Canada and in Manitoba, this study outlines some of the settlement and integration barriers that newcomers face (Simich 2000; Simbandumwe 2007). This research outlines multiple barriers that participants faced in meeting their basic needs such as: learning the language, finding employment, taking care of their families and finding appropriate housing. They face difficulties that involve social, cultural and economic adaptation that affect their domestic and public life. All of these factors have left impacts on participants' domestic and public life.

The following headings present the major challenges that participants identified:

#### 3.1 Language

Often the first challenge of immigration is learning the language and navigating a new culture. Manitoba statistics show that 47.6 percent of all newcomers, including principal applicants and their dependants, do not have adequate abilities in English as assessed by the Canadian Language Benchmark (Manitoba Government 2006). Refugees, in particular, find learning a new language particularly hard (Magro 2006-2007).

In general, newcomers struggle to adapt to a new culture at the same time that they try to learn a new language. Added to these challenges is the fact that one's ability to learn varies, depending on other personal factors such as health, family issues, concerns about employment, financial constraints, and so on. Acculturation and learning the language of the adopted country is a complex and long process. Research shows that five to seven years of English language instruction is, in many cases, required to develop

academic English language proficiency (Schliefer and Ngo 2005). Proficiency becomes a critical gatekeeper including or excluding individuals from all professions in Canada.

Participants in this study stressed the importance of learning language and some of the difficulties that they encountered. Among the participants, excluding the three service providers, three could speak English fluently prior to immigrating to Winnipeg. One person reported French as his mother tongue; the second national language of Canada<sup>8</sup>.

For those who did not speak English upon arrival in Canada the learning process was difficult and long. One refugee described that it took nine months of full time English training at Red River College in order to be accepted into further language training for college entrance. Ali, an Arabic speaking participant explained the process of learning the language as follows

“When I came to Canada I only knew one sentence. I could not Speak English...in High school, I used to translate everything in Arabic and put in the computer. I have never seen a computer in my life before so I used to look for the letters. Writing a sentence would take me at least 10 minutes...just to look for letters. And, then translate the whole thing in Arabic. And then try to match the Arabic and the English words. And, then write the answer in Arabic and put it to the computer to translate it to English. Then I memorized all these words and write them down. There was, there was no way out. I wanted to be successful.”

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<sup>8</sup> While Winnipeg does have a Francophone community, English is the dominant language for day-to-day living in Winnipeg.

Research shows that mastering a new language takes time (Schliefer and Ngo 2005; Magro 2006-2007). Participants believed that EAL programming is not enough and in some cases, classes are not easily available. Bilal points out, “one year (of EAL) is not enough to learn the language and get a job”. David adds, “it is hard because every class is full, and you have to wait”.

Not knowing the language, in some cases, has serious impacts on the newcomer’s life. One example is the case of a woman who was about to undergo an operation without understanding what was involved. Without full knowledge and understanding, the woman signed the release form for operation. Farideh states,

“So before the operation, there is one guy who speak Arabic...he says, “you know what you sign for? And she says “no”, he says “we need to remove your womb” and the woman was shocked. Fortunately, the operation was cancelled. So she could seek more information”.

A number of participants stressed that language is a significant contributor to one’s successful settlement and integration. It affects access to services, can improve one’s chances of gaining employment and allows individuals to engage with the wider community. Participants are aware that learning the language is a key that opens doors and helps them to acculturate. For instance, Ali states, “...once I learned English it was easier ...”, Bilal adds, “Once I finished my English course... I have my own job” and Farideh upgraded herself for better employment, “I went to school... and then when I finished the course I did get a job”.

A number of participants noted that language has to be understood within specific culture. They are concerned that, in some cases, settlement service providers do not have either adequate language skills, or the cultural awareness to be able to help their clients. For example, Farideh states,

“One Centre’s employee, he doesn’t know the language properly to translate for clients...some places, have people do a job of interpretation when they don’t understand the language”

Another person stressed the importance of being sensitive to the needs of women and gave this example, “a girl needs to go to the doctor, she doesn’t know the language, but is afraid to speak about her personal issues (to the male translator)”. For instance, Haroon, a service provider, who immigrated to Canada some years ago, believes language to be a human rights issue. He stresses the importance of language proficiency in navigating a new culture and understanding one’s rights. He states,

“Language barriers, yeah, a lot of people are lost or losing their rights by living here and not knowing the system, because language is key to culture. If you do not have that (language) you are basically lost.”

English as an additional language (EAL) training for both adults and children are frequently the first contact point in a new culture for all newcomers. It is believed that

literacy and knowledge is crucial for personal development and success (Freire 1997; Hooks 2006). In addition, literacy provides a basis for understanding new cultures.

Winnipeg does offer many different EAL programs. For instance, the Winnipeg School Division and the Winnipeg Technical College are among many places that offer language training. Advance programs are offered at Red River College, in a Work Start Program, the English Centre, English for Work program and other Neighbourhood Classes (Province of Manitoba 2008). Classes are offered for both adults and youth on a full or part time basis and are often funded by the government for at least one year for those in need.

There are, of course, various governmental and non-governmental service providers in Winnipeg, but they are not able, for a variety of reasons, to respond to the complex and diverse needs of newcomers. People who work in language institutions face resource and personnel challenges, particularly for the three to five years needed to learn the language (Poirer 2006). A division spokesperson for Louis Riel School revealed they do not have the resources needed to carry out the programs they see as necessary (Martin 2005: B10). The spokesperson says they do not have the resources for additional teachers, instructional time, translation, and a full time social worker. Several respondents indicated they faced lengthy wait times to access EAL. This delay invariably lengthens the time it can take for immigrants to settle into Winnipeg successfully.

As ethnic diversity in Winnipeg schools increases, society demands more from educators. Traditionally, the role of the educator was to prepare students for employment or post secondary institutions. However, the growing numbers of refugees in Winnipeg's schools require educators to expand their services into assessment and counselling. Some

children come to school after having experienced significant trauma; they have witnessed the murders of friends and family in their home country. These children bring these memories with them, and share these memories with their trusted teachers. But, in many cases, teachers may not be adequately equipped to manage these children. Cara states,

“After having been told a horrific memory of one student...at that point I was like I don't know if I'm equipped to deal with this...and I thought, well is there anybody supporting (the child)? Like, clearly there are issues here...and we're expecting (the child) to be in this classroom, functioning and learning and following...”

### 3.2 Families Under Stress

The literature on refugees and immigrants provides plenty of evidence that newcomer families face multiple challenges. Families are under immense pressure. Parents' skills are adversely affected and their roles reversed (Magro 2006-2007; Krahn et al. 2003; Tavares and Mackay 2005). Roles can be reversed when immigrant children are able to adapt to the culture and become proficient in the language before their parents are able to. As well parents may be traumatised leaving them unable to bond with their children and unable to provide discipline in a constructive manner (Magro 2008).

Newcomers interviewed explained the transition into Winnipeg as being one of constant struggle and a source of stress within their families. Challenges that faced the families of the participants in this study are varied and complex. All participants, especially refugees, in different words, expressed a sense of loss that followed their move. They talked about family fragmentation or tragic loss of their family members.

They stated how they lost the stabilizing support of family and close friends. Their experiences indicate that they do not have the necessary skills to navigate the legal, social, economic, cultural and educational system in Winnipeg. Among the key issues that face families are parenting skills and authority, gender relations of power, divisions of labour, and financial difficulties.

### 3.2.1 Parenting and Children's Education

Participants with children raised important questions related to their children's education and care. Settlement of their children proved to be a constant struggle. All mothers interviewed felt the transition into this new culture adversely affected their relationships with their children. Much of these feelings had to do with the transition their children were making into the Winnipeg school system. Mothers, especially single mothers, feel overwhelmed at the prospect of tracking the movements of their children. This was said to be especially difficult when a participant's children or child had never been in a formal learning environment prior to immigrating to Canada. One single mother expresses her frustration as follows,

“When there is one mom in the family, and who is so overwhelmed...Like, I do not know what is outside the communities, I do not know where this kid is if he goes outside, what he is doing...I do not know which friend he is making, what he is doing in school. Sometimes they go out, when he enter the house...you ask, ‘what was your day?’ and he says it was fine...She (the mother) does not know to call the teacher, what has he been doing?”

Participants also question age-appropriate<sup>9</sup> placement of children in Manitoba schools. Education is a crucial part of the process of integration and can help the development of a more tolerant society. Upon arrival, youth are put in age appropriate classes, regardless of their prior education. Faiza provided the following statement,

“Like a thirteen years old child who never been in school and came to Canada and goes (straight) to grade eight. He doesn’t even speak or write the language or anything (and) goes to same class with other kids who knows the language, who knows what’s going on...”

Adapting is extremely difficult, particularly for those families that have escaped traumatic events like war. This inability to adapt because of trauma, coupled with the absence of community support by some of these families, could be a cause of the high dropout rates for EAL students, currently estimated to be between 65 and 95 percent across Canada (Tavares and Mackay 2005). Naturally, mothers worry about their children’s inability to adapt to society and remain in school.

Added to these problems is the poor representation of ethnic diversity amongst those who teach in Winnipeg schools. Cara states, “I am the only minority teacher in this

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<sup>9</sup> Studies in Manitoba shows that children are often placed into schools that are either unaware of the child’s history or unequipped to deal with children’s issues and problems. While some children cope despite the lack of support, many do not. As a result, many war-affected children are receiving inadequate education, which increases their chance of becoming a drop out (Tavares and Mackay 2005). Furthermore, it is questionable whether the presence of many cultures within our schools is being properly addressed. Research shows that schools have a critical role to play in the implementation of multiculturalism so that our rich national diversity can be a source of social dynamism and economic growth (Bearisto and Carrigan 2004).

particular school”. She adds that teachers do not appreciate the importance of cultural diversity. She believes that educators do not have adequate multicultural training to enable them to relate to the diverse background of their students. When she was studying to become a teacher in Winnipeg, students only had to take one course on multiculturalism and one course on inner city issues at the University level. Many teachers do not even have this basic training. This educator believes it is only in the past six or seven years that this basic requirement exists at the University level. There is an apparent age gap amongst educators towards understanding diversity and changing demographics within Winnipeg’s student population.

### 3.2.2 Power in the Household

The transition into Canadian culture can also adversely affect the spousal relationship. Women and men diverge in their experience of settlement in Winnipeg. Upon arrival, most women take notice of the positive developments Canada has made towards the equality of women both in the family and in the workplace.

Women perform multiple tasks at home that prevent them from pursuing their own interests. Amel’s example is a case in point, “I have four or five courses to graduate...I am doing some courses but I dropped them when I had the kid...yeah, it is hard with two kids”. Farideh faced stress and difficulties looking for a job at the same time that she had to take care of an eight-year-old child as a single mother. When she got a full time job, she did not know what to do.

“Nobody there to take care of your child. Finding day care was hard. It was very hard. I picked him up from the school. I told my son to wait in school and I asked his teacher to let him stay 30 minutes to play... I could not find a day care for him.”

Many women interviewed expressed that their relationships with their husbands had either changed or ended in divorce. Faiza mentions, “The (country of origin) men have their ego, they don’t want a women to rule over them...they (husbands) are abusing women physically.” Cara, one of the service providers, supports this statement, “Some of the men are abusing the women and the women are now speaking out, and the men are being removed from the home”.

Adel expresses her difficulties in getting to know the Canadian culture because her husband believes that Canadians will make her lose her culture. She talks about how her husband and in-laws control her freedom. “While my husband was not working, I cannot try and work (either)... I cannot even (work) my activities should not be that much that (my husband’s family) talk about it. He was holding me back.” Adel is a highly educated participant with a Bachelor of Science in Genetics.

Division of labour within household is another issue of concern to women. Adel is in charge of taking care of the children and doing the housework, she became unhappy when her husband refused to help even when he had a day off the work. She states,

“This (when women demand greater rights within the household) you know causes some people to separate. That is the most problem that immigrants face here.

Because the woman starts complaining and the man never come down their ego...that will kill them. Men they have to hold their position (in the family).”

One of the service providers believes that “Refugees appear to have higher divorce rates.”

Richard, a refugee himself explains, “So when they get into the new culture, there is a shock between the former culture and the Canadian culture. And from that shock it happens divorce.”

### 3.2.3 Family Fragmentation and Financial Stress

Added to the above problems are the fact that families are fragmented; they share a sense of loss and face lack of support. Faiza feels at loss and states with sadness, “I do not have anyone here”. Farideh thinks it is a tragedy that all her close family members are scattered in different places.

“My mom and my two sisters are in (one country)...I am only here in Canada. My other two sisters are in States and my brother also in States, and my other brother and my other sister they are in South Africa, they live in South Africa...they are all over.”

Richard talks about his loss,

“ I feel is that I am separated from my family, uh, my son and my mother with my younger sisters and my brothers because my father and one of my sisters were

killed in the war...usually, I am thinking about them and I have to strive for better times for them...”

Newcomer families face serious financial problems. They face constant struggle to have ends meet. Many do not have employment or have a very low income. Fahad draws our attention to the financial difficulties that newcomers have,

“People who are born here, born in Canada, they do not have to send money back home. So they work and they can easily save money to go to school. Immigrants cannot easily save money to go to school because they have to take care of their families back home.”

Richard adds,

“I was not working...even if I was working that job did not give me enough to pay for stuff, because every time I was thinking is how can I pay my rent? And when I pay the rent the money that we had was not enough for me to eat. So with my wife...sometimes we used to take just a small part of what food we had just so the next day we would have some to eat...”.

Faiza is right to say that,

“People are desperate...they will say anything to come, agree to anything...this is your ticket, you do not even know when you come here you have to work and pay for that...so even before arriving to Canada we are already indebted to the governments...”.

Richard’s experience supports Faiza’s statement,

“Maybe two or three months after being here I was asked to start paying back the immigration loan. For my wife and me it was over almost five thousand. They asked us to pay \$150 each month. And we found it too much.”

These financially challenged families are also responsible to support those family members that they left behind. Faiza states,

“I send money on a monthly basis. Because everyday they want money. I still have my brother there; I still have my mom’s sister and mom’s aunt there. Any they all played a part in our education. So, in Africa you can give back to your tribe or you do not bring your child up...it is difficult to keep up with my bills and then send money back home...”

Bilal also sends money home, “I help my dad and my brothers and my sister who is going to university...”. The majority of participants, even if they were struggling with their daily expenses, sent money to their country of origin on a regular basis.

### 3.3 Skills and Credentials

In its spring issue of 2007, *Metropolis* had over 40 contributors who focused their discussion on issues related to foreign credential recognition. Effective use of immigrant skills is a high stakes issue and is fiercely debated. In tracing the roots of non-recognition, Guo (2007: 36) accurately states that there is a misconception of knowledge possessed by immigrants and problems associated with the positivistic measurement of skill. In turn, these factors forms a new 'head tax' to exclude the 'undesirable' and to perpetuate oppression in Canada. Along the same line Esses et al. (2007:115) state that "One important factor contributing to the unemployment and underemployment of immigrant is 'skill discounting', which refers to the devaluation and lack of recognition of foreign credentials...of particular concern is that skill discounting is especially likely to affect visible minority immigrants to Canada". As Hawthorne (2007:12) states governments play a major regulatory role "the legislative reality is that Canadian regulatory bodies control recognition, and employers cannot be forced to recruit unrecognized immigrants to work".

Research shows that Canada's economy loses \$4 billion a year through underemployment and unemployment of foreign-trained immigrants (Sanders 2005:A3). Underemployment exists because, "Immigrants and refugees are up against a behemoth of red tape and delays having their skills recognized by professions and regulatory bodies" (Sanders 2005:A3). Manitoba's unemployment rate is currently less than previous years. While this is good news, there remains a disproportionately high rate of unemployment amongst immigrants (Grant and Sweetman 2004). Statistics Canada estimates employment rates for immigrants to be 67 percent, versus 82 percent in

comparison to their Canadian-born counterparts (Statistics Canada 2006). Galabuzi (2006) suggests that the ongoing racism and discrimination in Canada's workforce and employment sectors are a result of what he has termed an 'economic apartheid'.

Many of the participants in this study expressed frustration regarding their experiences in the labour market. In some cases, participants had not been able to find gainful employment for up to five years after arriving in Winnipeg. Most are critical of the accreditation process. Faiza, who holds a college degree in Nursing and university studies in Science, faced accreditation problems.

“The most disappointment was my education. When I wanted to forge ahead I had what I called the stumbling blocks, and sometimes I say I am fortunate because I was speaking English, what would I do if I could not speak English, if I had English barriers. At least I could go out and find, I could read, and see where I could fit in...Coming from an English speaking country we were recognized by the British and our schools is still based on the British system, but yet they could not accept our credentials. That was the most disappointing...”

Fahad is angry that his credential is not valued in Winnipeg and states, “When you come with skill they should not tone your skill down, they should give you a chance to prove your skill, then to arrange something in the system here so you can practice.”

Haroon, a service provider, stressed the problems surrounding the accreditation process and adds to this discussion,

“The credentials is a major problem for our clients. Credentials not being recognized, especially when it comes to certain professions. People have to actually go back to school to take courses and all that. I have a friend of mine who is an x-ray technician, and he sat on welfare for 5 years. He tried every possible way that was suggested to him to go and knock on every door. He volunteered... He went and did whatever they asked him to do. At the end he did not get the job. And he left the city...He has experience working in four countries...”

Richard states,

“I really wanted to start to find a job, but it was hard for me, even some small job it is difficult. So I could not find a job...I went through success skills, I took workshops there about looking for a job and everything. But after that when I go for applying no one is calling me.”

David has a similar experience and thinks of moving to Calgary or Edmonton. Poor skills recognition in smaller cities like Winnipeg is one factor involved in the loss of immigrants to jurisdictions and large metropolitan centres, where a perception exists that these jurisdictions are better equipped to recognize foreign credentials (Krahn et al. 2003).

When probed as to why they face difficulties in the labour market. Adel uses the experience of her husband to mention the difficulties that Muslim newcomers face in the labour market, “9/11, ah September 11, the fate of Muslims changed in Western

countries...and I think it is wrong...The name now, my husband's name is ...". Being Muslim created difficulties for him to get a job as well as in his workplace when he got a job. Amel's belief system and religious practice became an impediment in her work place and in finding an appropriate job.

"No, you have to remove the headscarf. She (the manager) says you have to remove (hijab) from the neck up. She says we have many people who visit so they might not feel comfortable when they see some Muslim especially after 9/11 or whatever they call it".

Richard justifies his failed attempt in finding a job,

"Business and companies here want people who have Canadian experience, maybe because I don't have it". One of the participant states with frustration "I have a BA in Accounting. When I went to the Certified General Accountants, they would only accept 15 of my 60 credit hours...I'm not just saying accept their degree...test them! Government<sup>10</sup> should do more to match skills and to find work for refugees and immigrants".

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<sup>10</sup> The University of Manitoba has programs to recognize credentials and facilitate the licensing processes for internationally educated physicians, dentists, teachers, and engineers (Redekop 2006). The Success Skills Centre and other government-funded initiatives provide employment services like resume building skills and employment information transfer to immigrants and refugees. Other government initiatives include wage assistance to employers and assessment assistance for highly skilled immigrants destined for University of Manitoba programs, facilitating individuals to upgrade their skills to Canadian standards. Many of these initiatives target people whose prior skills are

### 3.4 Housing

The experience of participants in this study supports the evidence that exists in the literature and shows that recent immigrants, in particular refugees and visible minorities, face a growing challenge in labour market integration and thus an increasing likelihood of falling into poverty. Immigrants are having more difficulty closing the gap in their incomes in 2004 than in the 1980s (Picot et al. 2007). The economic challenges facing immigrants are reflected in the increased poverty experienced by immigrant households between 1996 and 2001, an increase that occurred as poverty declined among Canadian born households (Turegun 2007).

The high level of poverty among recent immigrants in Canada has its implications for their housing situation. According to the census data, in 2001, 36 percent of recent immigrants were living in unacceptable housing conditions (Turegun 2008). Refugees in particular face poor housing conditions (Madariaga-Vignudo and Miladinovska-Blazevska 2005). Affordability, quality, and security are among the major issues that newcomers face in housing. Winnipeg also has shortage of affordable housing and this fact has driven up the prices of both rental accommodations and the general prices of houses across the entire city<sup>11</sup>.

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needed in Manitoba to fill labour vacancies in a number of areas including, but not limited to, medicine, early childhood education and engineering, among others.

<sup>11</sup> Across Canada it has been recognized that the majority of people in need of social housing are those families headed by women, low-income families/individuals and socially marginalized groups (Cook et al. 2004). This is frequently the case for the inner city of Winnipeg that has many problems associated with poverty (CCPA MB 2006), including housing that is rapidly deteriorating.

Upon arrival in Winnipeg, many low-income newcomers are placed in Government subsidized Manitoba Housing units in the city center. In particular, the housing around Central Park is often used as temporary housing for newcomers until they are able to find their own place or resident. Finding permanent housing on a low income is very difficult, especially as rent has increased in Winnipeg and is coupled with extremely low vacancy rates (Carter and Polevychok 2004; Madariaga-Vignudo and Miladinovska-Blazevska 2005).

Service providers reinforce the fact that there is not enough affordable housing. One service provider who must find housing for newcomers sheds light on the situation,

“The vacancy rate is almost zero in this city...the main struggles or difficulties is finding affordable rental units. Refugees sponsored by the federal government have a little bit of money. Refugee claimants, they don't have (money), they are on welfare.”

Richard, a refugee, feels the situation is one of constant struggle between paying the rent and having enough food to eat. He states,

“When I came...I was paying \$550, everything I was thinking is how can I pay my rent? And when I pay the rent the money that we had was not enough for me to eat. ...We used to take just a small part of what food we had just so the next day we would have some to eat...those who get the chance to get straight into MB Housing

or housing like WRHA they have the house rent for cheaper, sometimes for three years."

Participants in this study complain about the quality and safety of the housing. One community worker comments that public housing has, "deteriorated because of lack of maintenance, money and all the usual things that happen to houses". Of primary concern is the issue of safety. Adel had an electrical problem with her stove, which eventually ended in a fire and minor burns to her partner. She talked to the property manager a number of times over the course of six months before the fire happened. For the next five months, the kitchen was not repaired and she could not use the stove. Adel had to cook at her sister's house or buy prepared food. She did not know that as tenants, she has a right to safety and security. They are also unaware of the role played by the Residential Tenancies Branch in protecting tenants and mediating in tenant-landlords disputes. Housing is an important precursor to integrating into any society. Having an affordable place is essential and reduces the stress that is facing newcomers' families.

In this section, I briefly presented some of the key problems that face participants in this study. Despite challenges, as the following section shows, newcomers are hopeful and are working for change.

## Part 4 - Working for Change

### 4.1 Community Based Solutions

Despite difficulties, participants in this study are problem solvers, optimists, resourceful, patient, and open to new experiences in Winnipeg. They are optimistic about their future and have a sense of what is termed in the literature as agency (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992; Giddens 1984) or resilience (Anderson 2004). They all comment on positive aspects of living in Canada and they are glad that they live in Winnipeg. Despite all difficulties they like the freedom that Canada offers them. One participant states,

“You know despite what we have been through it (Canada) is better. At least in this place you are someone; you have your own right...this is a beautiful country. I want to build. I want to become a member of it. I want to prosper. I want to give tax. I want to work. I do not want you to give me welfare. I am productive...”.

Fahad adds,

“I am very grateful. I appreciate the way I was treated here. I feel like a human being. Like I have all my rights to live as a human being which I was not experiencing back home...I am a free man.”

Many participants have developed strong friendships to help them cope with loss and separation from family members. They are constantly working for change and improving their situation. They have found solutions, in different ways, to some of the

challenges that face them as newcomers. For instance, newcomers realize that language is important to successful settlement and proficiency in language is required for employment and accessing public services. A group of newcomers have mobilized and created their own networks. They help each other to overcome some of their barriers.

Adel states,

“So there was many problems with the women, they call me ‘can you translate for me? ...If person need help (communicating) with Housing, they will help...they say, ‘please come with me to my doctor’s appointment’”. Amel adds, “I work in a woman’s association, we have in (our) community...I teach some English...my own English”.

The extent to which participants in this study volunteer their time within the community is truly remarkable. All of them, in a variety of ways, are volunteering their time helping members of their own and other people’s communities. Ali has spent many hours to help and share his experiences with people of his age group.

“I do volunteer. I put last year over 400 hours of volunteering... I worked with war-affected children who have a lot worse stories than mine...I volunteer with youth. I volunteer with Aboriginal people...not a lot of volunteering this year...I have lots of personal problems I am trying to get over...”

Farideh is giving back to many communities, “I do volunteer job everywhere. I volunteer at sister MacNamara School, I volunteer for Somali Women’s Association. I volunteer for the Central Park. I volunteer for Welcome Place.” In general, women in their position as mothers, and as women, are helping each other and their children. Newcomer mothers, once integrated into society, often give back to their community by volunteering within the school system. Their contribution has positive effects on the children’s scholastic achievements, the integration of parents into the community and to society as a whole. Women’s groups are a source of empowerment for them. In Amel’s words,

“We have women, especially our women group. Like, some holidays we cook together, we just have fun. We call each other if someone needs something. We bring all the kids and baby-sit for each other always. Also we help each other financially, like if someone died.” Farideh adds, “I have friends from my community...if my son is sick and he is at home by himself. I can call one of my friends...yeah, they always help.” Adel goes to her community to get help that she cannot access otherwise, “there is a lot of help coming from own group because, you know, the help is not there.”

Women, through mentoring, help themselves and their children. They have created mechanisms that fill the existing gaps within the school system. Farideh states,

“We have after school homework club... They (children) get the homework; they don't even know what the paper says. So, we help them, we show them how to read, we show them how to write, and we help them to answer their homework and this stuff. Like, now they are doing well, because we explained to them in our language”.

Women also have developed a network that addresses family issues. One participant has helped women get together so they can talk to each other about any problems they may be experiencing in their homes. In order to do this she first invited the men out and asked their permission. In this way both partners are engaged. She also formed a resident's association with the men and the women so they could all get together to dialogue about many issues from cultural constraints to spousal relationships, to talking about Canadian culture. Faiza is right to state that these culturally based groups empower them and help them to de-traumatize. “Women are making clothes... and they help each other and give advice to each other... and also these (groups) can help us de-traumatize”.

#### 4.2 Acculturation and Orientation

Newcomers and service providers see an urgent need for improving the orientation process for all parties involved. Ali sees an urgent need for proper information,

“ We need to explain law properly because I think a lot of people have problem understanding the law...when I volunteered at the Ellice building here, every

Thursday, there is a group of people that bring a lot of new immigrants and they would explain the law....”.

Fahad believes,

“When they accept immigrants in this province we should try first of all to acclimatize them...integrate them into the culture... the problem is that immigrants are not really properly oriented when they come here...I think governments should set a special educational awareness for immigrants so that they know what services are available.”

Richard adds that people are not properly informed about various cultures that exists in Winnipeg. For him, we need to have a proper orientation for everyone in Winnipeg.

A number of participants made suggestions that aim to reduce stress within the family.

Faiza suggests,

“ When we come that port of entry, that is where there should be services to train the men and women what it means to be a father in Canada, what it means to be a mother in Canada. You see here in Canada you do not beat a woman...man or woman whoever beat the partner; you wouldn't just take them and put them out in wherever. You educate them...”. She continues, “ Before I started getting women out into Central Park, you know what I did? I took the men out first. Because that is the culture, because they think you give them honour, you give them respect.”

Richard suggests,

“Hire some people who have lived with refugees for example and know the reality of refugees, like they know their mentality...these people can help them may be instead of getting lost...there could be a solution, but the solution could come earlier.”

This statement is supported by Cara, who works in one of the schools in Winnipeg, “I am the only minority teacher in this particular school. Um, so I do not think that other teachers are really fully aware of what is involved.”

Those with children want to see changes in the educational system. Farideh is concerned and states, “I always see it is immigrant children who are suffering here and the only thing I would is, if I had the time, I would ask the government to give more opportunity to the newcomer kids.” Parents want transitional schools for their children in order to help them adjust. In Faiza’s words,

“There needs to be a lot of change to the educational system...if the refugee kids, when they come here, especially those who have never been to school, if there was a transitional school for them, for a year or two, before they put them into the main stream, that would be one of the things that I would really like to see... don’t leave them to see where they fall out.”

Camil, who has many years of experience within the inner city community, wants to see a better relationship between schools and newcomer communities. She explains,

“I would say that our schools still have to reach out to the community so that they are working on the same page. Working together with the parents, then the teachers can get so much more out of the kids...we can build this relationship, you know having more free time together to meet the parents and get to know them and find out what the issues are (then) you would see the kids are performing so much better because you are building the link between home and school.”

It is hopeful that schools are becoming more aware of the challenges facing them and are seeking alternative methods to help their students. Community-based schooling is an emerging field for community development professionals and aims to build stronger links between home and school environments. The theory is that schools can, and should, form the backbone of communities and should be the catalyst to bring the entire community together to accomplish common objectives. When parents are engaged in the schools, evidence suggests that scholastic performance and social engagement of children improve. Community development workers believe there are benefits for the entire family when parents become involved in schools.

One particular school division in Winnipeg has taken the concept of ‘community focused schooling’ one step further. They have developed family reception centres, where they address family needs and hear their responses to the existing programs. The

family is then monitored so that any needed follow-up programming can be delivered to those that need it most. Cara, a teacher, explains,

“Louis Riel School Division is doing some great things around newcomer families; they have a family reception centre. So any newcomer family that is enrolling their child in the Louis Riel School Division they go their first and they are sat down with the families, they are interviewed, they get the history of where the family is from, what they, you know any special needs, and they look at that child and then they do a follow up.”

Haroon, a service provider points out services that are available to newcomers are fragmented. He suggests, “And it seems to me that what is needed is that a healthy dialogue should be initiated by the government to connect those agencies all together. A dialogue to identify the gaps and find a solution to fill those gaps and bridge them....” This section shows that participants have many suggestions that can improve how we provide services to immigrants and foster their integration into Winnipeg. Using the voices and experiences of newcomers allows us to develop policies that respond to their needs.

## Part 5 - Conclusion

This study makes it clear that migration is not new, but has reached an unprecedented level throughout the world, both in the North and in the South. The movement of people has multiple effects that are felt at the individual, group, micro-meso and local levels. Canada is a country built on immigration and is well aware of the challenges and opportunities that are brought forth by the movement of people. Canada is a destination for a large number of international migrants, both voluntary and forced, and is considered as one of the most multicultural societies in the world.

Manitoba, like Canada as a whole, has a long history of immigration that continues to play an important role in the development of this province. More than 41,000 immigrants settled in Manitoba between 2001 and 2007. This has offset the net loss of more than thirty thousand people who moved from Manitoba to other provinces during the same period. Manitoba government regards immigration as the key to Manitoba's growth and prosperity and aims to increase the number of immigrants to 20,000 per year by 2017. Government and non-governmental institutions through various initiatives help immigrants and refugees, but the experiences of participants in this study show that problems persist. This research supports the findings in the literature that settlement and integration is a complex and difficult process (Tetey and Puplampu 2005). Participants in this study faced multi-dimensional barriers that make the acculturation process complex and difficult.

Participants in this research are aware of the importance of learning language in their daily lives and in finding employment and accessing various services that are available to them. However, they noted that language has to be understood within its

cultural context. This study supports Freire's critical literacy framework (1997) and brings to our attention that educators and educational institutions need to be better equipped in order to offer transformative learning. The educational system and service providers at all levels, need to understand the social, individual and cultural backgrounds of their clients. There is no doubt that as ethnic diversity increase in Winnipeg, society demands more from our educators and educational institutions.

Newcomers interviewed indicate that they do not have the skill to navigate the legal, social, economic, cultural and educational systems in Winnipeg. Families, especially refugees, struggle to make a living in Winnipeg and take care of those they have left behind. Sending money to family members is a challenge when newcomers themselves are trying to settle. Participants expressed frustration regarding their experiences of skill discounting, problems in the labour market, and finding an affordable place to live. Participants are rightly critical of the accreditation process and the lack of affordable and safe housing.

Those with children felt their move to Winnipeg has adversely affected their parental skills and authority. Mothers, especially single mothers, feel overwhelmed and unequipped to provide the necessary guidance their children need. Parents question the age-appropriate placement of their children, especially those who suffer from the trauma of war. New immigrants, as well as educators, stressed their concerns that there is poor representation of ethnic diversity among those who teach in their schools. They noted that educators do not have adequate multicultural training that enables them to relate to the need of diverse students within schools.

Men and women of this study expressed their views on how their move into a new society has affected gender and spousal relationships. Division of labour, power, and authority within the household are of central concern for the participants of this study. Balancing different demands of daily life within difficult circumstances have affected the women's ability to realize their educational, social, and career aspirations in Winnipeg. Women are critical of the power of patriarchy, ask for equality within the household and negotiate their position. In this process, some women have been successful, but in other cases, their relationship ended in divorce.

There is no doubt that settlement and integration takes time and is a complex and difficult process. However, participants in this study are content, optimistic and happy to be in Winnipeg. They try hard to make Winnipeg a better place to live through their range of voluntary contributions. They are resilient and have a sense of agency. Newcomers are constantly working for change and have found solutions to some of the challenges that they face in their everyday life. They have developed community based circles and self- help groups. Women have formed a network that addresses a range of issues. They help each other and provide support for their children.

Newcomers and service providers see an urgent need for a number of new programs in their communities and within various institutions in Winnipeg. They are clear about what their needs are, have made specific suggestions and have asked for reforms and changes to the existing programs and policies. They have identified urgent need for proper information and orientation before and after the arrival to Winnipeg. They urge schools to develop programs that are aware of the challenges that face them with the arrival of diverse ethnic groups in this city. Included in these programs, they

want to see more inputs from the parents of the students who come from various ethnic groups and have these diverse experiences.

The number of participants in this study is small, but their life experiences guide us to develop research questions and appropriate policies. There is plenty of evidence that show the future of Winnipeg, like Canada as a whole, depends on the continued growth of immigrants from around the globe (Li 2002; Siddiqui 2005). Our challenge as Canadians is to understand how immigrants enrich us.

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Appendix 1 - Tables

Table 1

People of Concern to UNHCR						
	Refugees	Asylum Seekers	I.D.P.'s	Returnees*	Stateless People	Others
Africa	2,608,000	244,000	5,373,000	1,356,000	100,000	72,000
Asia	4,538,000	90,000	3,879,000	1,221,000	5,027,000	157,000
Europe	1,612,000	240,000	542,000	21,000	679,000	332,000
Latin America**	41,000	16,000	3,000,000	-	-	486,000
North America	995,000	148,000	-	-	-	-
Oceania	84,000	2,000	-	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9,878,000</b>	<b>740,000</b>	<b>12,794,000</b>	<b>2,598,000</b>	<b>5,806,000</b>	<b>1,046,000</b>

\* Includes both Refugees and Internally Displaced Person's (I.D.P.'s)

\*\* Includes Caribbean

Source: UNHCR 2007-2008

Table 2

Top Ten Countries of Refugee Origins (Worldwide as of January 2007)	
Country	Refugees
Afghanistan	2,108,000
Iraq*	1,451,000
Sudan	686,000
Somalia	464,000
Congo, Democratic Republic of	402,000
Burundi	397,000
Viet Nam	374,000
Turkey	227,000
Angola	207,000
Myanmar	203,000

\*Estimated at over 2 million by September 2007

Note: Some 334,000 Palestinian refugees also come under UNHCR's mandate, while a further 4.4million Palestinian refugees are cared for by UNRWA

Source: UNHCR 2007-2008

Table 3

Top Ten Asylum Countries (Worldwide as of January 2007)	
Country	Refugees
Pakistan*	1,044,000
Iran	968,000
United States	844,000
Syria	702,000
Germany	605,000
Jordan	500,000
Tanzania	485,000
United Kingdom	301,000
China	301,000
Chad	287,000

\*UNHCR Estimate

Source: UNHCR 2007-2008

Table 4

Canada Immigrant Status				
Census Year	Immigrants	Non-Immigrants	Non - Permanent Residents	Total Population of Canada
1991	4,342,890	22,427,745	223,410	26,994,045
2001	5,448,480	23,991,910	198,640	29,639,030
2006	6,186,950	24,788,720	265,360	31,241,030

Source: Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2006

Table 5

Canada Immigration by Destination City (Top Ten)						
Toronto	38,546	16.3	39,013	14.9	34,256	13.6
Montreal	25,957	11.0	24,988	9.5	25,546	10.2
Mississauga	16,118	6.8	18,976	7.2	16,108	6.4
Vancouver	12,656	5.4	14,638	5.6	12,790	5.1
Scarborough	11,316	4.8	14,365	5.5	11,942	4.7
Calgary	9,308	3.9	11,046	4.2	11,639	4.6
Brampton	7,538	3.2	10,427	4.0	10,002	4.0
Winnipeg	5,891	2.5	6,134	2.3	7,641	3.0
North York	7,085	3.0	8,050	3.1	7,131	2.8
Surrey	4,644		6,237	2.4	6,304	2.5
Edmonton	4,810	2.0	5,669	2.2	6,042	2.4
Total Top Ten Cities	139,104	59.0	153,874	58.7	149,401	59.4
Total Other Cities	96,720	41.0	108,362	41.3	102,248	40.6
Total Immigration	235,824		262,236		251,649	

Source: Manitoba Government 2006

Table 6

Canada Immigration by Source Country (Top Ten)						
Source Countries	2004		2005		2006	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
China, People's Republic of	36,429	15.4	42,292	16.1	33,080	13.1
India	25,575	10.8	33,148	12.6	30,753	12.2
Philippines	13,303	5.6	17,525	6.7	17,717	7.0
Pakistan	12,795	5.4	13,575	5.2	12,332	4.9
United States	7,507	3.2	9,262	3.5	10,943	4.3
Iran	6,063	2.6	5,502	2.1	7,073	2.8
United Kingdom	6,062	2.6	5,865	2.2	6,542	2.6
Korea, Republic of	5,337	2.3	5,819	2.2	6,178	2.5
Colombia	4,438	1.9	6,031	2.3	5,813	2.3
France	5,028	2.1	5,430	2.1	4,915	2.0
Sri Lanka	4,135	1.8	4,690	1.8	4,490	1.8
Romania	5,658	2.4	4,964	1.9	4,393	1.7
Russia	3,685	1.6	3,607	1.4	2,851	1.1
Taiwan	1,992	0.8	3,092	1.2	2,823	1.1
Hong Kong	1,547	0.7	1,783	0.7	1,489	0.6
Yugoslavia (former)	708	0.3	272	0.1	126	0.1
Top 10 source countries	123,757	52.5	144,449	55.1	135,346	53.8
Other countries	112,067	47.5	117,790	44.9	116,303	46.2
Total	235,824	100.0	262,239	100.0	251,649	100.0

Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2006

Table 7

Canada's Refugees by Source Country (Top Ten)				
Pakistan	2,868	8.8	2,423	6.8
Columbia	2,818	8.6	4,519	12.6
China, People's Republic of	2,536	7.8	2,381	6.7
Afghanistan	2,239	6.9	2,644	7.4
Sri Lanka	2,077	6.4	2,245	6.3
Sudan	1,379	4.2	923	2.6
Zimbabwe	1,333	4.1	0	0
India	1,180	3.6	935	2.6
Congo, Democratic Republic of	1,119	3.4	1,033	2.9
Somalia	1,084	3.3	0	0
Turkey	0		1,110	3.1
Ethiopia	0		990	2.8
Top Ten Only	18,633	57.0	19,203	53.7
All Others	14,050	43.0	16,565	46.3
Total	32,683	100.0	35,768	100.0

Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2006

Table 8

Immigration Levels: Canada						
Family Class	62,246	26.4	63,354	24.2	70,508	28.0
Economic Class	127,498	54.1	148,263	56.5	124,921	49.6
Provincial. Nominees*	6,248	2.6	8,047	3.1	13,336	5.3
Refugees	32,731	13.9	35,768	13.6	32,515	12.9
Other**	7,101	3.0	6,804	2.6	10,369	4.2
TOTAL	235,824	100.0%	262,236	100.0%	251,649	100.0%
Difference	14,472	6.5%	26,412	11.2%	10,587	- 4.0%

Source: Manitoba Government 2006

\*Provincial Nominees are a subcategory of the Economic Class

\*\* Other includes Retirees, Backlog, Missing and Unknown

Table 9

Manitoba Immigrant Status				
Census Year	Immigrants	Non-Immigrants	Non - Permanent Residents	Total Population of Canada
1991	138,595	936,765	4,030	1,079,390
2001	133,660	965,520	4,520	1,103,695
2006	151,230	974,735	7,550	1,133,510

Source: Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2006

TABLE 10

Manitoba Immigration Levels by Category						
Family Class						
Immediate Family	814	11.0	880	10.9	886	8.8
Parents, Grandparents and Other	302	4.1	312	3.9	446	4.4
Subtotal	1,116	15.0%	1,192	14.7%	1,332	13.3%
Economic Class						
Skilled Workers - Principal Applicant	302	4.1	337	4.2	250	2.5
Skilled Workers - Dependant	535	7.2	623	7.7	344	3.4
Business - Principal Applicant	21	0.3	25	0.3	12	0.1
Business – Dependent	48	0.6	58	0.7	32	0.3
Provincial Nominee – Principal Applicant	1,313	17.7	1,469	18.1	2,255	22.4
Provincial Nominee - Dependant	2,735	36.8	3,150	38.9	4,406	43.8
Live-in Caregiver - Principal Applicant	40	0.5	49	0.6	54	0.5
Live-in Caregiver - Dependant	6	0.1	14	0.2	22	0.2
Subtotal	5,000	67.3%	5,725	70.7%	7,375	73.4%
Refugees						
Government Assisted Refugees	548	7.4	492	6.1	522	5.2
Privately Sponsored Refugees	608	8.2	493	6.1	633	6.3
Refugees Landed in Canada (Asylum)*	63	0.8	90	1.1	61	0.6
Dependants Abroad**	33	0.4	19	0.2	25	0.2
Subtotal	1,252	16.9%	1,094	13.5%	1,241	12.3%
Other						
Unknown/ Backlog/ Missing	59	0.8	86	1.1	103	1.0
Subtotal	59	0.8%	86	1.1%	103	1.0%
TOTAL	7,427	100.0%	8,097	100.0%	10,051	100.0%

Source: Manitoba Government 2006

\*Refugees Landed in Canada (Asylum) are Refugee Claimants who have been granted asylum in Canada

\*\* Dependants Abroad – Dependants of a refugee landed in Canada who lives abroad

Table 11

Immigration Levels: Manitoba						
Family Class	1,116	1.8	1,192	1.9	1,332	1.9
Economic Class	952	0.7	1,106	0.7	714	0.6
Provincial. Nominees*	4,048	64.8	4,619	57.4	6,661	49.9
Refugees	1,252	3.8	1,094	3.1	1,241	3.8
Other**	59	0.1	86	0.1	103	1.0
TOTAL	7,427	3.1%	8,097	3.1%	10,051	4.0%
Difference	935	14.4%	670	9.0%	1,954	24.1%

Source: Manitoba Government 2006

\*Provincial Nominees are a subcategory of the Economic Class

\*\* Other includes Missing and Unknown

Table 12

Manitoba Immigration by Source Country (Top Ten)						
Philippines	1,529	20.6	1,837	22.7	2,539	25.3
Germany	952	12.8	1,111	13.7	1,620	16.1
India	536	7.2	676	8.3	868	8.6
China	290	3.9	384	4.7	550	5.5
Korea	398	5.4	326	4.0	422	4.2
Ethiopia	305	4.1	277	3.4	388	3.9
Israel	329	4.4	263	3.2	362	3.6
United States			207	2.6	195	1.9
Afghanistan					160	1.6
England	170	2.3	172	2.1	159	1.6
Pakistan			163	2.0		
Ukraine	213	2.9				
Sudan	225	3.0				
Top Ten Only	4,509	60.7	2,253	66.9	7,263	72.3
Total Other Destinations	2,918	39.3%	2,844	35.1	2,788	27.7
Total	7,427	100.0%	8,097	100.0%	10,051	100.0%

Source: Manitoba Government 2006

Table 13

Manitoba Immigration by Community Destination (Top Ten)						
Winnipeg	5,891	79.3	6,134	75.8	7,641	76.0
Winkler	465	6.3	693	8.6	830	8.3
Steinbach	310	4.2	369	4.6	399	4.0
Brandon	130	1.8	181	2.2	172	1.7
Morden	73	1.0	68	0.8	158	1.6
Thompson			48	0.6	53	0.5
Altona	36	0.5			45	0.4
Virden					38	0.4
Ste Anne					32	0.3
Teulon					31	0.3
Stonewall	24	0.3	21	0.3		
Selkirk			18	0.2		
Plum Coulee	26	0.4	17	0.2		
Grunthal	22	0.3	16	0.2		
Arborg	27	0.4				
Top Ten Only	6,929	93.3%	7,565	93.4%	9,399	93.5%
Total Other Destinations	498	6.7%	532	6.6%	652	6.5%
Total	7,427	100.0%	8,097	100.0%	10,051	100.0%

Source: Manitoba Government 2006

Table 14

Immigration to Manitoba From African Countries: 1997-2006				
Year	Refugee	Other Immigrants	Total	% Refugees
1997	146	165	311	47%
1998	140	122	262	53%
1999	244	174	418	58%
2000	489	279	768	64%
2001	482	271	753	64%
2002	472	198	670	70%
2003	884	196	1,080	82%
2004	893	271	1,164	77%
2005	792	348	1,140	69%
2006	893	383	1,276	70%
Total	5,435	2,407	7,842	69%

Source: United Way. 2007. Building Collaborative Relationships. African Canadian Communities. Winnipeg.

Table 15

Participants								
Name*	Gender	Age	Marital Status	# Of Children	Country of Origin	Immigrant Status	Education	Religion
Bilal	Male	42	Married	0	Sudan	Refugee	BA Education	Muslim
Ali	Male	22	Single	0	Sudan	Refugee	Gr. 12	Muslim
Adel	Female	34	Married	1	Somalia	Refugee	BSc Genetics	Muslim
Farideh	Female	30	Divorced	1	Somalia	Refugee	College	Muslim
Faiza	Female	55	Divorced	5	Sierra Leone	Refugee	College	Christian
Amel	Female	30	Married	2	Somalia	Refugee	Gr. 11	Muslim
Richard	Male	32	Married	1	Chad	Refugee	Gr. 12	Christian
Camil	Female	?	Divorced	2	Kenya	Family Class	BA	Muslim
Fahad	Male	38	Married	0	Sierra Leone	Refugee	Gr. 12	Muslim
Cara	Female	35	Single	0	Angola	Refugee	BA Education	Christian
Haroon	Male	30	Married	0	Iraq	Refugee	BA	Muslim
Ray	Male	31	Single	0	Philippines	Economic Class	BA	Christian
Mary	Female	31	Married	1	Mexico	Economic Class	BA Accounting	Christian
David	Male	50	Married	2	Ukraine	Economic Class	College	Christian

\*All names have been changed

## Appendix 2 – Consent Form



### Diaspora Communities in Winnipeg Consent Form

I would like to invite you to participate in the study of Diaspora Communities which is linked to a larger project called “Transforming Aboriginal and Inner City Communities in Manitoba.” This is a Social Sciences & Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) funded project that examines the potential of community development for solving the complex problems facing Manitoba’s multi-ethnic inner city communities. My name is Parvin Ghorayshi, I am a professor of sociology at the University of Winnipeg and I will be heading the Diaspora portion of the project.

The project that you are invited to participate in will focus on the life experiences of recent immigrants in the inner city of Winnipeg and their usage of different programs. I would like to hear your views and document your experiences of living in Winnipeg. We have statistics and formal information on immigrants in Winnipeg and we do know that Manitoba is attracting a growing number of immigrants. However, we do not have first hand knowledge on how immigrants experience their lives in their new home. Through this project I would like to document what you identify as the central issues, in a wide range of areas that face immigrants in Winnipeg.

By taking part in this study, you agree that my research assistants and I tape your responses to my unstructured, general questions. This interview takes about one hour and is strictly confidential and all the recordings and transcripts will be kept in a safe place. This also means that I will separate your name from your responses. As a participant in this study you will be assigned a specific number and that number, instead of your name, will identify your transcript. These anonymous transcripts will be used as the basis for writing of final reports. Please be informed that the information generated through this study will result in a final report and other writings.

Your participation in this project is voluntary. This means you can stop participating at any point and for any reason, without negative consequence. You are welcome to decline answering any questions that you do not want to. You are entitled to an honorarium of \$25.00, please sign the required sections of the honorarium form that is enclosed.

If you have any questions or concerns at any time during the duration of study you are encouraged to contact me, Parvin Ghorayshi at [p.ghorayshi@uwinnipeg.ca](mailto:p.ghorayshi@uwinnipeg.ca) , voice mail: 786-9393 or Kerry Murkin, Program Officer for the University of Winnipeg's Senate Committee on Ethics in Human Research and Scholarship at [k.murkin@uwinnipeg.ca](mailto:k.murkin@uwinnipeg.ca) or at 786-9058.

In sum, I guarantee that the following condition will be met:

- 1 - your real name will not be used in the final draft.
- 2 - If you grant permission for audio recording, no audio recording will be used for any purpose other than to do this study, and will not be played for any reason other than to do this study.
- 3 - Your participation in this study is voluntary; you have the right to withdraw at any point in this study, for any reasons, and without prejudice.
- 4 - You have the right to refuse to answer any questions.
- 5 - If you would like, I can e-mail or mail you a copy of the final draft of the report before it is made public, so that you have an opportunity to ensure that your opinions and statements are accurate. If so, please provide me with your e-mail/ mailing address below:

Before starting, do you have any questions or concerns about the research project as a whole, or about the interview we are about to do?

Do you grant permission to be audio-recorded?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

I agree to the above terms:

Name of Participant (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I agree to these terms:

Name of the Researcher (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix 3 - Interview Guide



Project Title: Diaspora Communities in Winnipeg  
Researcher: Parvin Ghorayshi, Sociology

Demographic Questions

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ (optional)

Gender: Female Male Other

Age or Age Group?

Marital Status:

Number of Children Living With You: \_\_\_\_\_

Age group: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Arrival in Canada: \_\_\_\_\_

Country of Origin: \_\_\_\_\_

Level of Education and where it was completed: \_\_\_\_\_

Where did you receive your education? \_\_\_\_\_

Languages:

1. What is your native language? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Do you have any additional languages? \_\_\_\_\_ What level? \_\_\_\_\_

What is your employment?

How long have you been working at this?

What was your occupation before?

Do you do any other work, such as volunteering? \_\_\_\_\_

Household income or approximate category:

Do you live in a house, apartment, or other? And is it owned or rented?

What area of Winnipeg do you live in and why did you choose this area? \_\_\_\_\_

1. Please describe your life before immigration to Canada.

- What do you remember about your youth and growing up in\_\_\_\_(country of origin)\_\_\_\_?
- What was your family and community life like?

- What are some of your memories of living in \_\_\_(country of origin)\_\_\_?

2. Please tell me about your experience immigrating to Winnipeg.

- What enabled you to immigrate to Winnipeg?
- Was Winnipeg your first choice of places to emigrate, why or why not?
- Did you encounter any difficulties upon entering Canada?
- What were your expectations of Canada and Winnipeg prior to arriving?
- Do you have any family members or friends that emigrated here before you?

3. Please tell me about your first impressions of Winnipeg.

- Was the city close to what you expected or did you find it very different?
- What was first on your to do list when you got here?
- What were some of your positive memories of arriving here? Negative memories?
- What barriers did you experience?
- How did you overcome these barriers?
- What social services and/or immigration programs did you contact?
- How did you find out about these services? Internet, word of mouth, etc?
- Were there any people or services that really stood out in helping you adjust?

4. Please tell me how you feel about Winnipeg Now.

- What is it that you like or dislike most about Winnipeg?
- Do you feel that Winnipeg is an accepting place for newcomers?
- Are you involved in any community services, community events or social events?
- Have you been able to realize any goals that you had before immigrating?
- Overall would you say that life has gotten better, the same or worse for you since immigrating?
- What would you change about Winnipeg if you were given the chance?

5. Please describe your activities on a daily basis.

- Do you do paid work, go to school, take care of your children during the day; do you do housework, volunteer work or any other type of work?
- What do you enjoy doing in your spare time? Sports, arts, community events, church, etc?
- How is your work and spare time activities different from what you did in \_\_\_(country of origin)\_\_\_?
- Are there any services or supports that you use, maybe not everyday, but frequently?
- Do you experience any racism or discrimination in your work and/or other activities? Please explain.
- Do you get along with and enjoy the company of your co-workers?

6. Can you please tell me about your community, neighbours, and friends in Winnipeg? .

- Do you feel that you live in a safe and welcoming neighbourhood? Why or why not?
- Have you made friends with your neighbours and others around where you live?
- Is there anywhere else in Winnipeg that you would rather live?
- Do you participate in religious activities, if so what do you do? Have any of your religious activities changed upon immigrating to Winnipeg from \_\_\_(country of origin)\_\_\_?
- Do you attend an ethnic community centre? If so which one and what do you do there?
- Do you have any other support groups or networks that I have not mentioned?
- Overall what is different about your community life in Winnipeg than in \_\_\_(country of origin)\_\_\_?
- Have you lost or gained any part of you cultural identity? Have you incorporated any Canadian cultural elements?

7. What ties do you have to your Country of Origin?

- Do you have family and/or friends that still live in \_\_\_(country of origin)\_\_\_?
- Have you been able to keep contact with them? How have you kept contact?
- Would you say that you are happier in Winnipeg than you were in \_\_\_(country of origin)\_\_\_?
- Do you send remittances or anything else to your family/friends in \_\_\_(country of origin)\_\_\_?
- What else do you miss about \_\_\_ (country of origin)\_\_\_ other than family/friends?

8. What are some of the difficulties and barriers you experienced in Winnipeg?

9. What Programs and/or Resources did you use to try to overcome these difficulties and barriers?

- How did you find housing? Did you have or are still having trouble finding adequate housing?
- Did you have or are still having trouble getting employment that matches/matched your experience and/or education? Did you use any services to find employment?
- Did you use any skill training/updating programs or services? If so what did you use?
- Were you able to find daycare for your children if you needed it? How did you find daycare?
- Did you use any programs or services oriented towards language training?
- Were you able to find schools for your children and are you happy with their school experiences so far? What are you not happy with?

- Do you feel that the provincial/federal governments have done enough to assure your success in immigrating here? What would you change and why?
- Do you feel, as an immigrant, that you have adequate political representation in your community and area of residence?
- Were any other services or community organizations able to help you?

10. How do you feel about the Programs and Services in Winnipeg?

- Of the Programs and Resources that you did use in Winnipeg which ones stand out to you as having been a good or not so good experience?
- What is your overall opinion of the services and welcoming programs that Winnipeg has in place?
- If you could make any changes to Winnipeg's Programs and Services what would it be?

11. How do you think that some of the barriers can be minimized?

- Do you feel there are differences in how men or women live their lives here from that of your country of origin?
- Has your life as a man or woman changed when you came to Canada and how?
- Has your move to Canada changed your personal relationships, at home and outside home? How?

12. In your experience how do you think that service organizations and support resources can be improved?

13. What is your opinion of Canadian and Manitoba Immigration policies?

- Do you know of any other models that may serve Canada better? Are you member of any political party?

14. Do you have any specific concerns and comments?

15. Would you like to add anything?

Thank you.

Appendix 4 - Honorarium



SSHRC file no.: 833-2007-1001  
Project No.: 548  
Project Name: Diaspora Communities in Winnipeg  
Project Head: Dr. Parvin Ghorayshi

Invoice for Honorarium

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (Print Name), hereby acknowledge that I have participated in a research project for the Manitoba Research Alliance for Transforming Inner-city and Aboriginal Communities. My participation entitles me to a \$25.00, honorarium that will be mailed to my following address.

Full Name of person to be reimbursed for payment of honorarium:

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of interviewee: \_\_\_\_\_.

Name of interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_.

Address where cheque should be mailed to:

\_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 5 – One Page Advertisement



### Newcomers to Winnipeg

If you are a newcomer in Winnipeg (less than five years), or established, we are interested to document your experiences in Winnipeg. We are particularly interested if you reside in the Inner city of Winnipeg. We invite you to participate in our research project.

We are a research team of academics and students from the University of Winnipeg and the University of Manitoba. Our team also includes a wide range of community based Organizations. Our research is supported by the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) and is administered by the Canadian Centre for Public Policy Alternatives (CCPA).

We are interested to document the voices of diverse group of newcomers to Winnipeg, in particular those who live in the inner city. We would like to use these lived experiences to evaluate state policies, identify barriers that exclude individuals and groups from full economic, social and political participation. We emphasize transformation and our goal is to work towards coexistence of democratic, diverse and sustainable communities in Winnipeg.

We request your participation that involves completing one-hour length interview, which will be recorded and transcribed. Participants will remain anonymous and interviews will be confidential.

If you interested and are selected to be interviewed you are entitled to \$25 honorarium.

Please contact:

Parvin Ghorayshi at: [p.ghorayshi@uwinnipeg.ca](mailto:p.ghorayshi@uwinnipeg.ca)

Or Andrea Petruic at: [andreapetruic@gmail.com](mailto:andreapetruic@gmail.com)

Thank you for your interest.