

‘No Canadian Experience’ Barrier:

A Participatory Approach to Examining the Barrier’s Affect on New Immigrants

by

Kristen Petri

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of

the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in

PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION

We accept the thesis as conforming to the required standard

Zhenyi Li, Thesis Faculty Supervisor Date:

School of Communication & Culture, Royal Roads University

Rita Chan, Internal Committee Member Date:

School of Communication & Culture, Royal Roads University

Gilbert Wilkes, External Committee Member Date:

School of Communication & Culture

Phillip Vannini, Thesis Coordinator Date:

School of Communication & Culture, Royal Roads University

Joshua Guilar, Director Date:

School of Communication & Culture, Royal Roads Universit

Abstract

New immigrants to Canada, specifically those of non-Western origin, frequently experience the phenomenon of the ‘no Canadian work experience’ employment barrier. This paper is based on information gathered in a focus group comprised of male and female new immigrants with university education and advanced skills and work experience who have been in Canada for less than five years. The focus group revealed respondents did face the ‘no Canadian experience’ barrier. But they actively created strategies to overcome the barrier, which included: researching and doing more preparation for the realities of the Canadian job market prior to arriving in Canada but not simply relying on insufficient information provided from Canadian government, having decent English language abilities and a mild accent, altering their resumes and verbalization of their experiences to fit in with Canadian employer expectations. This paper also found that government and settlement organization current strategies and services were ineffective for highly educated and skilled immigrants and ignored the needs of immigrant women with young children. In conclusion, issues related to intercultural communication need to be considered for smoothing immigrants’ integration into the Canadian workforce.

Table of Contents

Introduction	6
Literature Review	7
History of Immigration	8
The Barrier and its' Impact	9
Research Design	12
Data Gathering Tools	13
Participant Selection	14
Focus Group Design and Implementation	15
Data Analysis/Analytical Framework	16
Research Findings	16
Introducing the Participants	17
Acculturation and Adaptation	18
Altering the Resume	23
The Importance of Language Ability and Accent	25
Preparing to Enter the Canadian Job Market	28
Government and Settlement Organizations' Support	30

Discussion and Conclusion	38
References	41

Introduction

New immigrants to Canada, specifically those of non-Western origin, frequently experience the phenomenon of the ‘no Canadian work experience’ employment barrier (a frequent reason given for non-hiring). Based on a focus group interview, this paper attempts to find answers to the following questions:

- a) How do new immigrants perceive and experience the barrier?
- b) What methods and techniques have they used to successfully overcome the barrier?
- c) What recommendations do they have to assist government and settlement programs and other new immigrants in their successful integration into the Canadian workforce?

The focus group was made up of new immigrants with university education and advanced skill sets and work experience. The results of this focus group reveal that the ability to adapt to Canadian society is the most significant indicator of success in the Canadian job market. Those who are successful have done so by learning to think like Canadians and adapting their behaviours and even their resumes to meet Canadian employers’ wants and expectations. Factoring in this ability to adapt, focus group participants stressed the importance of researching and being prepared for the realities of the Canadian job market prior to coming to Canada and of having decent English language skills with a mild accent. Further results emphasize that government and settlement programs in place are insufficient and inappropriate for a large number of newcomers; immigrants with more education and skills are unable to benefit from

government support programs since the programs and initiatives in place are targeted towards new immigrants with less education, skills, and experience. Additionally, these programs fail to appropriately address the needs of new immigrant women, many of whom experience increased barriers to the Canadian workforce if they immigrate with young children.

This paper is structured in the following format: section 1 contains the introduction, section 2 the literature review, section 3 outlines the research design, section 4 covers the research findings, and section 5 contains the conclusion of the paper.

Literature Review

In this study, a literature review concerning immigration historical context and the impact of the ‘no Canadian experience’ barrier was conducted. Understanding the historical context and framework is important since Canada has a high level of immigrants, and consequently the successful acceptance and integration of these newcomers into the Canadian job market is significant both economically and socially. According to the 2002 International Migration Report, Canada was ranked sixth in accepting the highest number of migrants on a global scale (United Nations Population Division); yet a large number were unable to find work or were over-qualified and underpaid for the jobs they perform (McIssac, 2003). The impact of this barrier to the job hunting process is also important to explore because the experience of new immigrants in Canada’s job market takes a toll on the mental well-being of individuals as well as having significant and far-reaching financial consequences—these consequences could be magnified in the future considering Canada’s policy of increasing immigration levels.

A significant amount of research has been done to both prove the existence of and illustrate the negative consequences of the ‘no Canadian experience’ barrier. Further research

has been done on certain manifestations of the barrier such as the issue of international accreditation (for example, Reitz, 2001). However, little research was found investigating how the new immigrants themselves perceive this barrier, what government supports they would suggest as being of value, and the efforts these newcomers make to successfully overcome the barrier. This is the area this paper seeks to contribute to.

History of Canadian Immigration

Canada has a long history of immigration. Today, the majority of Canadian citizens trace their roots back to another country. In effect, somewhere along the line virtually all Canadians (except Aboriginal Canadians) are immigrants. According to the Maytree Foundation, net immigration could make up all of Canada's population growth as soon as 2030 (2002).

From the 1960s Canada became open to people from all countries around the world (Reitz, 2001). The majority of these recent immigrants settled in Ontario, British Columbia and Quebec (Fougere, Harvey, Mercenier and Merette, 2005). Take 2006 as an example, Canada became home to 193,164 new immigrants in that single year (Monitor, 2007). This history and current trends make understanding the new immigrant experience in Canada vitally important.

Canada's current immigration policy is based on the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act of 2002*. In this act there are three types of immigrant: family members, economic immigrants and refugees. The economic immigrants are "selected for their skills and ability to contribute to Canada's economy, including skilled workers, business immigrants, provincial and territorial nominees and live-in caregivers" (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2007, p. 9). Much of the Canadian immigration policy is focused on accepting immigrants with higher levels of education and skill sets, resulting in new immigrants having more education, and often a

higher level of skills than native Canadians. In the past, this aided new immigrants in being successful in the job market. Now however, new immigrants are much less successful in the job market in spite of their additional education and skills (Reitz, 2001). This is due in part to the changing face of Canada's new immigrants. In the past the majority of immigrants originated from Europe and the United States. However, as of 2001, immigrants from other parts of the world such as China, India and the Philippines, have made up the majority of newcomers (Statistics Canada, 2007). It also relates to the "no Canadian experience" barrier.

The Barrier and it's Impact

The 'no Canadian experience' barrier has a significant impact on both the immigrants themselves and on Canada as a whole, both socially and economically. Many of the new arrivals to Canada are skilled and/or highly educated workers coming with the dream of starting a new life by putting their talents to work in the Canadian economy. For many, this dream has been stymied; foreign-trained engineers work as taxi drivers and doctors as janitors. Despite Canada's emphasis on admitting highly skilled workers to the country, many immigrants are unable to find jobs in their fields. For example, a doctor educated and trained overseas, has only a 70% probability of working as a physician if he/she arrived in the 1990s, and this figure continues to decline (Boyd and Schellenberg, 2007), yet in 2003 more than 1.2 million Canadians were unable to find a family doctor (CBC, 2006).

A large number of new immigrants are from managerial, professional, skilled and technical backgrounds, yet they find work in their specific fields difficult to obtain in Canada. Often new immigrants end up working in jobs beneath their skill level and thus their skills are

wasted and can become obsolete. According to the Conference Board of Canada, it now takes new immigrants between five and ten years to work into positions that match with their experience, skills and education, and still the majority are underemployed (2007). Over the last few decades the wage gap between immigrants and Canadian-born workers has grown (Grant, 2009), and Reitz backs the following findings:

- (1) Immigrants receive a smaller earnings premium for formal education compared to the native-born (net of other variables),
- (2) Immigrants receive a smaller earnings premium for work experience compared to the native-born (net of other variables), and
- (3) Immigrants from particular origins groups receive lower earnings than immigrants from other origins groups (net of other variables) (2001).

Studies have found that people from some regions of the world have a better chance of finding employment than those from other regions—racism plays a part in this (Boyd & Schellenberg, 2007). Non-European immigrants make 15 to 25 percent less than those from European backgrounds and this holds true for immigrants of all skill and education levels (Reitz, 2001). Additionally, according to Statistics Canada (2008) even amongst new immigrants who went back to school in Canada and received a higher level of post-secondary education, the employment rate was 15.4% below Canadian-born people with the same levels of education. Therefore, despite the fact that these new immigrants have the same education as their Canadian-born counterparts and have equivalent experience levels, research has shown that they still encounter a significant disadvantage in the job market (Reitz, 2001).

In short, the main barrier new immigrants face when entering the Canadian work force is lack of Canadian credentials and Canadian experience. However, this knowledge does not alleviate the impact unemployment, inappropriate employment or underemployment on the individual and their family. The Canadian Mental Health Association states that a job is an important element of a person's self-esteem, and unemployment or underemployment can make people feel worthless—for new immigrants in a new environment, without strong social support networks, this can be even worse (CMHA, 2008). In addition to the emotional distress that unemployment or underemployment can cause the new immigrant, this barrier can also strongly impact Canada's economy. A study conducted by the Conference Board of Canada states that "full elimination of the wage gap between visible minorities and the average for Canada would add about one (1) percent to the level of real GDP in 2016" (2004, p. 5). A human-capital earnings analysis completed by Reitz shows that an earning deficit of \$2.4 billion was attributable to immigrant skill under-utilization, and an additional \$12.6 billion was related to pay inequity. These additional wages would not only contribute to Canada's tax base but also a large amount of this would be put to use in our economy. The Central Bank of Canada has declared that Canada is officially entering a recession, so now more than ever, these additional wages would benefit both the new immigrants themselves and Canada as a whole (Beltrame, 2008). Despite the immigration policies designed to bring in skilled new immigrants, without recognition of their skills and education, much of the benefit of this immigration is negated.

In sum, previous studies have pointed out the significant impact of 'no Canadian experience' on the new immigrants. However, they either took a macro-socio-economic or policy-making perspective since many of these studies intended to serve the government and other public institutions. The direct sufferers of this barrier, the new immigrants, were not

interviewed. Their experiences were not empathized. Their reactions and strategies to overcome the barriers were not surveyed. Their suggestions to the government and other immigrants were not recorded. Therefore, this research aims to explore the “no Canadian experience” barrier from the new immigrants’ perspective with the research design stated next.

Research Design

Immigrants articulate their acculturation process in a way might be different from ours. Therefore, in order to understand their experiences, both John Berry’s theory of *Acculturation* and Edward Said’s theory of *Orientalism* are employed in this project. *Acculturation* deals with the exchange of cultures, and the consequential cultural changes, that human beings experience when different cultures interact in a plural society. Berry states that generally people behave in a “complex pattern of continuity and change in how people go about their lives in the new society” (1997, p. 6). In other words people neither behave exactly as they did in their culture of birth, nor do they begin to act the same as those in the new culture; the answer lies somewhere in-between.

There are many acculturation issues immigrants must face when settling in a new culture. The psychological effects of these acculturation issues impact individuals differently “depending on social and personal variables that reside in the society of origin, the society of settlement, and phenomena that both exist prior to, and arise during, the course of acculturation” (Berry, 1997, p. 5). Throughout this paper the term *acculturation* will be used, as Berry does, to mean the general processes, and cultural and psychological outcomes of intercultural contact (1997).

Said’s theory of *Orientalism* is used throughout this paper in a wider sense to refer to the way in which Westerners typically view non-Westerners in a negative and deprecatory manner.

The central idea of Orientalism is that knowledge about the Orient or non-Westerners is a “semi-mythical construct” not based on fact but based on the concept that “these people over there were not like ‘us’ and didn't appreciate ‘our’ values” (Said, 2003). Furthermore, according to Said in his book *Orientalism*, “the hold these instruments have on the mind is increased by the institutions built around them...The system now culminates in the very institutions of the state” (1991, p. 307); a statement with which Bauder agrees since he believes the economic success (or lack thereof) of new immigrants is influenced by “institutional frameworks, government policies and social practices towards newcomers” (2006, p. 4). This differentiation between the Orient and the Occident (those from the West) is frequently illustrated by the newcomer’s search in the Canadian job market and the perceptions of potential employers.

Data Gathering Tools

The participatory research paradigm was used in this study as it encourages the interviewees to take part in analyzing their own situations and the impact the job search process has on their self-perceptions and lives. Research direction and outcomes were not solely up to the discretion of the researcher, since participants were active in the research process, essentially becoming researchers themselves (Wadsworth, 1998). Ideally participants gained a clearer view of how their status as job-seeking immigrants impacted their lives. This participatory approach is relevant both to the study and the participants themselves since for marginal groups (in this case non-Western new immigrants), who are often voiceless in our society, being able to have a voice and an impact in one arena (this study), could positively empower them in other areas of their lives (Morgan, 1996). Additionally, the format of the study itself acted as a forum to allow

participants to interact with others in similar situations, and provided a safe arena in which to discuss their experiences.

The project was introduced as a way for new immigrants to further understand their own situation and as a forum to express their experiences and opinions. There were no costs for them to participate in this research. Prior to the interview, participants completed a short survey which included questions such as education level, country of origin and number of years in Canada.

Participant Selection

Participants were selected according to the following criteria:

- a) Obtained a post-secondary school level education outside of Canada.
- b) Representative of both males and females.
- c) Immigrated to Canada less than five years prior to study.
- d) A minimum of conversational English (to ensure the lack of language skills impairing job seeking did not impact this study). Conversational English skills were evaluated by the researcher prior to focus group participation and were judged by interviewee comprehension of questions and their ability to clearly communicate answers.
- e) Under the age of forty (to eliminate ageism as a factor).
- f) Of non-Western origin, as previous studies have shown region of origin affects employment, and statistics are different for those from Western countries (Boyd and Schellenberg, 2007). In keeping with Boyd and Schellenberg's writings, for the purposes of this study, Western countries are those located in North America, Western Europe or Australasia (2007).

Participants were found through the researcher's personal contacts. The focus group was limited to three participants as no others within the correct criteria and demographic that were known to the researcher could be found. Although a focus group of four to five participants would have been preferable, the introduction of a complete stranger to the group would have a limiting and negative impact on the group discussion.

Focus Group Design and Implementation

Development of both the pre-focus group questionnaire and focus group interview questions were designed by the researcher with the advice of an academic advisor in light of existing research and the research proposal. Additionally, these pre-determined interview questions were approved in advance by the university Ethics Committee.

Data was collected through a focus group interview of approximately seventy-five minutes, which was audio-taped for transcription, and through moderator observations of the interview sessions and group interaction. Participating in the focus group were two males, one female and the moderator. Greenwood, Whyte and Harkavy (1993) suggested that "participation is a process that must be generated", which means participation is not something that a researcher could impose upon the interviewees. Therefore, in this study, the participants were all volunteers and were informed in advance of the general subject matter to be discussed Verbally and via the participant consent form. Every effort was made to create a highly collaborative process whereby the interviewees could both answer questions and lead the direction of the discussion.

The interview questions were semi-structured. The interviewer initially started the interview by raising the following questions: What was your experience job-searching in

Canada? What was the impact of this experience for you and your family? What services or supports do you think are useful to a new immigrant in the Canadian labour market? In addition to these planned questions, the interviewees were allowed to self-direct the discussion to cover topics they felt to be of importance. This semi-structured interview style allowed participants to speak about topics of concern or importance which the interviewer may not have considered.

For ethical considerations, all interviewees were fully informed of research methods and intended use, and were required to sign a consent form. The names of participants will not be revealed and all personal data which could lead to the identification of a particular individual is kept confidential and in a locked cabinet.

Data Analysis/Analytical Framework

Qualitative analysis was conducted through the use of *coding* where the researcher created a coding system under which chunks of data from the interview transcripts were organized. These codes were assigned according to: type of event, action, opinion, the use of a word or expression, or even an implied meaning on the behalf of the participant (Denscombes, 2007). Following the coding of the data, the codes were categorized under wider terms, themes and relationships amongst the codes and categories that were identified, and finally, this information was used to arrive at generalized statements on the subject (Denscombes, 2007).

Research Findings

Introducing the Participants

Three people participated in the focus group. It was decided not to expand the group because each of these people were known personally to the researcher and bringing a complete

stranger into the focus group would alter the way in which the group interacted and the answers and information elicited. An attempt was made to see if the participants could bring along another new immigrant fitting the same criteria as the current participants but none were able to find someone suiting the outlined participant criteria.

Participants are described in detail in the following paragraphs, but in a manner in which they cannot be identified:

Participant A is a thirty-three year old male who was born and always resided in Brazil before immigrating to Canada. He speaks Portuguese and English. At the time of the focus group he had been in Canada just over three years. In Brazil he obtained a university undergraduate degree and worked in the banking industry. He has never worked in the banking field in Canada and instead has found work in the construction industry. His job hunt for his first Canadian job lasted five months. This participant first came to Canada only with the intention to study English. However, while studying English he met his future wife and decided to immigrate.

Participant B is a thirty-seven year old male who was born in Armenia, lived in Lebanon during his youth and spent his early adulthood in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, prior to moving to Canada. He speaks Armenian, Arabic, French and English and at the time of the focus group had been in Canada for approximately four and a half years. He obtained a university undergraduate degree in Lebanon and worked in the technical sales industry and business development prior to immigrating to Canada. He has been working in the sales field here in Canada, his job hunt for his first Canadian job lasted four months and he is working partially in his field (fifty percent at his estimation). In addition to this participant facing the 'no Canadian

experience' barrier he also had to contend with the stigma of being an Arab in Canada only a few years after the destruction of the World Trade Centre in New York in 2001. This proved to be a significant barrier to this individual.

Participant C is a thirty-three year old female who was born in Honduras and has lived most of her life in Costa Rica prior to immigrating to Canada. She speaks Spanish and English and at the time of the focus group had been in Canada just over three years. She obtained a university undergraduate degree in Costa Rica and worked there as a manager for sales in the engineering industry. She has never worked in the engineering industry in Canada and has instead tried a variety of positions and now is working in a retail sales job. Her job hunt for her first Canadian job lasted a year and a half, but it is necessary to note that she had the extra consideration of paying for daycare for her young child, therefore, this delayed her entry into the Canadian workforce. This participant was the only one in the group to classify her job-hunting experience in Canada as negative.

Acculturation and Adaptation

Focus group participants discussed the 'no Canadian experience' barrier and the methods which they themselves and government settlement services addressed this issue. Results reveal that these new immigrants were aware of the existence of the 'no Canadian experience' barrier prior to immigrating but not to the extent to which it would impact their job search. The study also emphasized that government and settlement services programs were not effectively assisting these type of new immigrants in overcoming the barrier, however, participants were actively working to overcome this barrier on their own. The psychological results of this barrier are

impacted by the new immigrant's experience of *acculturation* in Canada and their encounters with issues of *orientalism* in their job search.

Learning to adapt and fit in to their new society is of vital importance if new immigrants are to be successful in the Canadian job market. Once new immigrants realize how the barrier impacts their job search and adaptation to Canada, they change and adapt in response to their new environment; these changes can occur immediately or over an extended period of time (Berry, 1997). New immigrants have a number of ways they can learn to fit in and therefore be more successful in their job search including: learning to adapt to the Canadian way of thinking and behaving, altering their resumes to meet with Canadian expectations and needs, improving their English language skills and softening accents, conducting extensive research prior to immigrating and being connected to the appropriate resources, and finally, based on their preparation, alter their expectations of life and employability in Canada to match the reality.

Particularly relevant to this process of adaptation to Canadian culture is Berry's theory of *acculturation* as a common theme iterated by all of the participants was the need to understand and modify their own thoughts and actions to the norms of Canadian thinking and behaving. The experiences of these participants show that the Canadian job market prefers cultural *assimilation* versus the concept of *integration* as implied by the government's policy of *multiculturalism*. According to Berry, *integration* allows the immigrant to retain a degree of cultural integrity although they actively seek to participate as an integral part of the wider society (Berry, 1997). *Assimilation* on the other hand, occurs when new immigrants seek to not maintain their own cultural identity but completely blend into the dominant society. The lack of effective government programs to assist these new immigrants in their adaptation and integration into Canada shows the influence of Said's theory of *orientalism* whereby programs are designed to

meet the perceived needs of this group of ‘others’ rather than the reality of their needs. This also supports Bauder’s position that the lack of economic success experienced by new immigrants is rooted in the institutional framework of Canada itself (2006).

Participants in the group illustrated their *acculturation* through their discussion of need for conscious behaviour modification. Participant A spoke about acculturation by mentioning the need to speak the way Canadians do; he learned to never directly say ‘no’ but to instead thank the person and state why he is saying no. For him, Canadians are far less direct than people from his culture, otherwise he felt the Canadian way of doing business and the Brazilian one were very similar. He also stressed the difference between being able to communicate and expressing oneself properly in the way that Canadians expected, and simply being able to speak English.

Participant B strongly emphasized his learning curve and need to adapt to the Canadian culture and way of doing things. He mentioned that when being given a goal he (or someone from another culture) would often approach it in a different manner from Canadians and although the same goal would be achieved, he noticed that Canadians became very frustrated with this different methodology. Consequently he learned to adapt to the way Canadians worked. He managed to get a job after his twenty-fifth interview but as he said “but those twenty-five interviews taught me how to get this job”; after each job he went home and analyzed what happened and learned from it. He was learning to think the way Canadians do and understanding what their expectations and norms were. After two and a half years in Canada he achieved a job which he identified as a successful one but “along the way I learned something new and I changed the way I was speaking or doing things. I moulded myself into whatever

success I was going to get”. Not only did he modify his behaviour but he also stated that he is able to ‘think Canadian’ while at work—a good example of acculturation.

Accompanying the experience of acculturation are feelings (or lack) of self-confidence, self-worth, and the closely intertwined experiences of lack of employment or underemployment; Jirjowong and Manderson identified new immigrant’s inability to gain employment as strongly affecting psychological health (2001). New immigrants who are unsuccessful at adapting to the Canadian way of behaving and thinking will most likely be unsuccessful in the job market and, therefore, may have resulting mental health issues. Unfamiliarity and a lack of familial connections or support networks in their new country may exacerbate this issue. Five psychological needs are met by employment according to Maria Jahoda: time structure, participation in a social purpose, status and identity, social contacts and regular activity (Nordenmark and Strandh, 1999). Lack of these factors can affect an individual’s mental well being if they aren’t being met in some other way such as through socializing; new immigrants often have limited social contacts in addition to unemployment.

Focus group participants felt differently about the effect their job search process in Canada had on their self-confidence and self-worth. Both Participant A and B in the focus group expressed that although the job market in Canada was not an easy market to enter they did not feel particularly negative about the experience. Neither said directly that it affected their confidence levels, however they repeatedly mentioned needing to be persistent and not letting rejection effect them. Participant C, on the other hand felt that for the most part her experience in the Canadian job market had been a negative one and it greatly decreased her sense of self-confidence and self worth. As she said:

“when you are someone who is moving from your country and you have a good education, and you are successful there and you know that you are qualified for a lot of jobs. When you come you come with the mentality that I am good and then when you are here you realized that you are not that good”.

This is similar to a statement made by a new immigrant from Romania in *Intercultures Magazine* “I studied chemistry and physics, but I don't find many opportunities in my field. Immigrants are someone in their countries, but when we come here we are nothing” (Munro, 2009).

Underemployment, which is frequently experienced by new immigrants either in the form of part-time jobs, in working in positions for which they are over-qualified or both, also has a significant impact on mental well-being. One article has an employment expert and immigrant to Canada describing Canada's immigration process as a “broken contract” since Canada requires most new immigrants have post-secondary education and are often recruited by the government because of their skills. But when they arrive they are often unable to work at their level of education or experience or even for the skills for which they were recruited. "To a certain extent, Canada and the Canadian government or Canadian society is breaking a contract," Yan charged. "You can imagine that people can be very, very bitter and unhappy about this situation (Lupick, 2009)."

Overall, new immigrants themselves appear to be making significant efforts in their acculturation process in Canada and their integration into Canadian society—the same however, cannot be said for the government services designated to support this integration. These services are inappropriate for the large numbers of new immigrants in the economic class that Canada is actively seeking to attract.

Altering the Resume

Discounting of foreign experience by Canadian employers is commonly observed (Reitz, 2001), and focus group participants experienced this frequently. Participant C stated “my education in my country they don’t count, or job experience”. She went on to say that in her interviews the focus was always only on her Canadian experience; the job experience and education she had in her own country was never discussed. Said’s theory of *orientalism* is evident here as Canadian employers illustrate that experience and education in another country is somehow not as valid or relevant as education and experience from Canada and other western countries.

Facing this barrier, these new immigrants learned to be creative on their resumes, changing small details, and in some cases altering the location of their work experience to meet Canadian expectations. This was often necessary for them to do just to get the opportunity for an interview. As one participant stated “Let me tell you something, as an immigrant if you are one hundred percent honest you will die of starvation...and I’m not talking about big lies”.

Both participant’s B and C experienced frustration stemming from applying to jobs online and receiving little response despite having high levels of skill, education and experience. In both cases they eventually identified the structure of their resumes (although not the English or grammar) and the location of their experiences to be an issue. Each participant received assistance from a person born and raised in Canada in altering their resume to meet Canadian expectations. Additionally, both found that in order to get positive responses they needed to be creative and ‘tweak’ their resumes – not lying about their skills or experience but changing the location of the experience or exaggerating a small experience to actually reflect what they in

reality had from their home country. Participant B for example changed his resume to say he received his education from the University of New York, and put M.E. campus (standing for Middle East campus) in brackets. His university is affiliated with the University of New York but was located in Lebanon, in the Middle East. He related his reasons for doing this as two-fold; firstly Canadians were mistrustful of education in any place they were not familiar with, and secondly the fact that his university education was from the Middle East was detrimental (since memories of 9-11 were still fresh in the Canadian mindset). Another change he made on his resume was to the location of some of his experience. He had significant experience working for global companies whose names are recognized worldwide and took advantage of this fact by not naming where his job had been located. When he was queried on location once he had reached the interview stage, he emphasized his work in Europe over that of the Middle East to elicit a better response from the interviewer. In actuality his work was based primarily in Dubai with the occasional business trip to Europe. Finally, prior to getting his first job he learned to say that his global company had in fact transferred him to their office in Montreal, which was how he first came to Canada. Therefore, from the interviewers perspective he did have Canadian experience which mitigated the interviewer's leanings towards *orientalism* and mistrust of the 'other'; in the interviewer's mind Berge had worked in Canada before and there for was 'one of them'. It is notable that he never lied about his actual education or experience – just where it came from.

After a long and unsuccessful job search where she received little response, Participant C adjusted her resume to exaggerate the relevance of a part-time position taking care of a small rental property when the owner was out of town. She was responsible for a number of issues including interviewing potential renters and handling emergency situations but the work at the

most amounted to 5-8 hours a month. However, she exaggerated these experiences and as she states: “I said that I was taking care for a big building” and handling leases and property maintenance, when in actual fact it was a normal-sized house rented out to students. She did not lie about her experience but she did expand upon it and make sound more significant than it actually was. Despite her years of experience in management and sales positions in Costa Rica it was only after she put down this part-time position in Canada on her resume that she started to get people responding to her job applications.

Both participants experienced how the Canadian labour market values foreign work experience—effectively zero (Reitz, 2001)—and had to creatively overcome this barrier in order to gain employment. Essentially employers view new immigrants (depending on country of origin) as newly entering the workforce and being without experience despite their age, skills or job experience. This illustrates that many Canadians view education and experience from other non-Western countries as somehow being less valuable and significant—an assumption that has no factual basis.

The Importance of Language Ability and Accent

Each participant consistently throughout the interview stressed the need for decent verbal and written English skills. Participant A stressed the need for new immigrants to interact with those who are Canadian-born in order to improve their English skills. He discussed how some newcomers will only socialize with people from their own culture, illustrating the acculturation issue of *contact and participation* where group members decide how much they should interact with other cultural groups or if they should deal mainly with their own culture (Berry, 1997); something which is practiced by both Canadians and newcomers. Each of the participants had

made significant efforts to improve their English both through classes and their social interactions (except Participant A who was already fluent in English).

Immigrant entry earnings saw a statistical decline since the 1990's; Aydemir and Skuterud estimate that one-third of this deterioration is due to a shift in both language abilities and where new immigrants are originating from (2005). Furthermore they attribute changing regions of birth as having a more significant impact on entry earnings than an actual weakening of language abilities. Accents, although not necessarily indicative of a person's language abilities are an easily identifiable trait that emphasizes the foreignness of some new immigrants over that of others. Again, Said's theory of *orientalism* comes into play here as the heaviness or type of accent can emphasize that the person is not from a western country causing them to be viewed in a negative or deprecatory manner. Participants spoke at length about the disadvantage they experienced of having a heavy accent in the Canadian job market. All were expecting that knowledge of the English language would be an important factor in their job search, but none had considered that the type or heaviness of their accent would be an issue or a barrier to employment in Canada. The type of accent was most important; having an accent in itself didn't matter and in some cases they felt that for certain nationalities, such as the English (a traditional source of immigration), it could actually be of benefit. As Participant B stated:

“If it's really heavy in some way or form you're not going to blend in. It's as simple as that. You don't like it that's your problem. You go and you pay money to go to a language therapist or don't come to Canada—go somewhere else. Because that is just how it is.”

Participant A mentioned that he realized that he didn't get some of the jobs he applied for because he felt even after three years in Canada he still "didn't have the fluency that I needed for the job" and pointed out that he was competing with only Canadians. And Participant C actually experienced the loss of a job because of her lack of confidence in her English speaking ability; this lack of confidence had been reinforced through reaction to her heavy accent in Canada. In both cases the participants accepted and understood the Canadian job market's requirement for English fluency but they were surprised and in some participant's cases did not fully agree with the need for a subtle, or certain type of accent. Again, accents again emphasize to the employer the differences between themselves and the interviewee, or the difference between the orient and the occident.

Throughout the focus group there was no mention of Canadian's adapting their expectations or behaviours to that of the new immigrant although there are indications that some organizations are now seeking to address this issues by trying to understand and somewhat adapt to the newcomers. For example, Enbridge Gas Distribution Inc. in Toronto, recognized that immigrants are becoming a primary source of labour for their organization and, therefore, changed their interview process to accommodate new immigrants; this is much more in line with Canada's reputation for multiculturalism and integration. At Enbridge, newcomers can arrive an hour early for an interview, and read the questions in advance, thereby giving the interviewee the opportunity to think about and clarifying their meaning when answering questions—particularly important in a new language. The director of human resources says "We recognized we would get a better sense of their strengths if we reduced their anxiety levels" (Grant, 2009).

Preparing to Enter the Canadian Job Market

All the participants agreed that they would strongly advise any new immigrants coming to Canada to do intensive research prior to immigrating on Canadian culture, the expectations of the job market, and the immigrants' perceived value to potential employers. The focus group and other research suggest that there is a lack of appropriate knowledge exchange prior to immigrating to Canada, even though pre-departure counselling, training and realistic goal-setting can ease the process of acculturation (Berry, 1997). Although the new immigrants hold a significant responsibility to seek and acquire knowledge of Canada themselves, this illustrates a lack of appropriate programs and information provided by the Canadian government directed towards easing the transition to Canada and integration into Canadian society and employment. Easing this transition would not only benefit the new immigrant themselves but also the Canadian employers seeking skilled workers and the Canadian economy as a whole.

The focus group participants advised potential immigrants to research on the Internet into general topics such as culture, weather and information about the city they are considering moving to. Prior to immigrating, Participant B vacationed in Canada several times and thinks that if new immigrants are financially able to do this they should. Additionally, further suggestions were made as to being prepared for the job market; one being that potential immigrants should rent Canadian virtual phone numbers from voice-over-internet companies such as Vonage (this allows people to dial a local number in Canada but to be connected to a number overseas, the owner of the number pays the long distance charges and the caller only pays for the local call), then posting their resume online and applying for jobs in the Canadian market. By doing this and measuring the response, they can assess how employers are reacting

to their skills, education, and resume. As one participant put it “do whatever you can to know what your value is and you are never going to know exactly until you try.”

According to Reitz, there is a trend in Canada towards using networks of connections in the job search process, however, new immigrants have little or no access to networking in Canada (2007). One inventive way of helping new immigrants research and create networks in Canada is an internet site called *LoonLounge: Canada’s Immigration and Settlement Online Community*. According to their website they are

“a place to meet people and learn about life in Canada and the Canadian immigration experience. LoonLounge is a network of communities through which you can connect with people around the world, share experiences and advice, ask questions, make friends, find a job in Canada and create a settlement plan” (www.loonlounge.com).

This is a resource that those planning to move to Canada can use before they immigrate to connect with others from their home country, investigate job options, and ask questions. This site was created by a Canadian immigration lawyer named David Cohen when he identified a missing link in the Canadian immigration process and realized “that those with contacts and support in Canada are better equipped to establish themselves than those who try to make it on their own” (www.loonlounge.com/about-loonlounge). The knowledge and connections that potential new immigrants can receive from a site such as this would be invaluable in the acculturation process, and those managing immigration applications should encourage the development of such resources and ensure applicants are aware of them.

Another important recommendation the focus group made was for new immigrants to manage their expectations of life in Canada. Both males in the group spoke of not having any

expectations or not expecting too much, and the female spoke of the “American Dream” saying that people often thought about Canada in this way. She also expressed the opinion that people with less education, fewer skills and less experience—for example those that are already working in blue-collar positions in their home country—may be satisfied with the jobs they are able to get here in Canada, and therefore may find the process of adaptation in terms of employment to be easier. On the other hand, Participant C felt those who experienced a higher lifestyle, were more educated and were expecting to work in white-collar jobs would be the ones who may be the most shocked by their value in the Canadian job market—they should be prepared to find jobs commensurate with their education and experience are difficult to obtain. These immigrants may experience “brain waste”, or under-utilization of their skills where they are only able to obtain employment at a skill level below their abilities, and below were they would work at if they were Canadian-born (Reitz, 2001). New immigrants frequently experience significant psychological effects attributed to skill under-utilization and loss of status in Canada; prior knowledge of what they are most likely to experience in the Canadian job market can partially ameliorate any negative psychological consequences (Berry, 1997).

Government and Settlement Organizations' Support

The Canadian government's immigration goals and its programs to facilitate the settlement of newcomers are heading Canada towards an increasingly multicultural society, however, this goal of multiculturalism is stymied by the ‘no Canadian experience’ barrier. If this barrier is not managed correctly and effectively the Canadian government's policy of immigration and multiculturalism will go unrealized.

Citizen and Immigration Canada have set a goal of admitting another 240,000 to 265,000 new immigrants to the country in 2009 with 156,600 in the economic immigrant category.

Therefore, facilitating the transfer of immigrant skills effectively into the Canadian work force is of vital importance (Citizen and Immigration Canada, 2008). As stated previously, this goal is set primarily to provide the labour and skill set to the Canadian workforce needed for efficient and effective functioning. The Canadian immigration policy is designed to admit those that possess the required skills and education to fill gaps in our labour market. In order for this strategy to be effective, once in Canada, new immigrants must be able to obtain employment appropriate to their experience and education level. Studies have revealed a few key barriers to employment including: non-recognition of education credentials and work experience in Canada, inability to correctly assess foreign credentials, lack of correct labour market information provided to those applying for immigration, and the need for appropriate bridging programs (McIssac, 2003). Additionally, according to McIssac, these barriers must be addressed in ways that are appropriate for each geographic area since immigration and settlement policies function differently in different areas (2003).

Recognizing some of these issues, the Canadian government has implemented numerous counteractive initiatives including new immigrant employment programs, recent advertising campaigns targeting potential employers, and the launching of the Foreign Credentials Referrals Office. However, there are still several key issues that need to be tackled or further addressed; the most fundamental of these being whether these government initiatives are appropriate and useful for the groups they are targeting, and, if they not, how to make them so.

Two of the focus group participants, B and C, made use of Canadian government funded programs providing assistance to new immigrants. Participant B went to Costi Immigrant Services and Participant C went to Woodgreen Immigrant Services (both located in Toronto, Ontario). These programs are very similar and provide assistance to new immigrants in creating

resumes, job searching, training, and in some cases assisted job placements. One of the services provided through these programs is access to the Foreign Credential Recognition Program which assesses and verifies credentials and experience received overseas and provides employers with the equivalent in Canadian terms (http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/credential_recognition/index.shtml). This is essential for the purpose of licensing of certain professions and trades. Consequently, providing documentation of education equivalency in particular is important, even more so since the Canadian economy is becoming increasingly “knowledge-based” (Jones, 2004) and educational equivalency programs will provide employers with a true measure of the value of new immigrant education.

Despite strides towards helping in credential recognition there is still a lack of connection between employers’ values and perceptions and the skills and credentials that new immigrants bring to the labour force. Additionally, studies have shown that Canadian employers value experience and skills earned outside of Canada less than those obtained in-country (Aydemir, Skuterud 2005) and according to Reitz “the education premium for immigrants on average is about half of what it is for the native-born (2001). Employers have also been found to treat education from certain countries (such as Asia, Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America) as different and inferior to education obtained in other areas such as Europe (Reitz, 2001). In order to become more effective in aiding new immigrants in their job search and prevent what Reitz terms *brain waste* the government and settlement services should focus on educating Canadian employers on the benefits and vital skills the new immigrants bring to Canada, the value and equivalency of their education, and on how to interview and integrate new immigrants into their companies (2001). The current acculturation of employers to new immigrants is not effective and to this end Berry advocates “institutional change” (1997, p. 28); this institutional change

would have to be implemented firstly in government policies and services and then be filtered through to employers via laws and education. Overall, the current government supports are insufficient to appropriately manage issues such as employer perceptions; this has a negative effect on the employment success of immigrant communities and, therefore, has a negative impact on their belief in the Canadian policy of multiculturalism.

The lack of appropriate labour market information to the new immigrant prior to immigrating is one of the issues that the newly implemented Foreign Referrals Office is attempting to address. According to their website, the Foreign Referrals Office is conducting orientation sessions containing labour market information and accessible government services in India, China and the Philippines, in an effort to better prepare new immigrants for entering the Canadian workforce (<http://www.credentials.gc.ca/about/index.asp>). Citizen and Immigration Canada, in conjunction with the provinces, is encouraging those entering Canada under the entrepreneur program to make exploratory visits and are offering a variety of seminars on investment and business opportunities both prior to, and after the new immigrant arrives in Canada. Programs such as these are vital to new immigrants who come to Canada with the *Canadian (American) Dream* which, as Participant C said, was how she viewed her immigration to Canada. Her subsequent disappointment when her images of life in Canada were met with the reality of the marketplace was significant and strongly impacted her both financially and emotionally.

The need for appropriate bridging programs to help new immigrant successfully enter the Canadian labour market is evident; also evident is that those in place are neither appropriate or effective for the type of new immigrants the Canadian government is actively recruiting. Despite the policy emphasis on admitting increasing numbers of highly skilled and educated immigrants

(Reitz, 2007), government services helping new immigrants entering the Canadian workforce appear to be geared towards only supporting those who have lower levels of skills and education. In the focus group, Participant B related his experience with government programs for new immigrants (although he felt the people providing the services were sincere in their desire to help) where he was almost immediately told that they were not the right people to help him. They were not geared to provide help to immigrants at his skill level or as he says “they are geared more for people working in a factory—slightly senior positions they aren’t equipped for”.

Participant C also found that the job searching and resume writing services she was provided with in her experience at Woodgreen were not appropriate for her situation or her skill level and experience. Additionally, the jobs interviews that she was sent on from Woodgreen were either companies that were interested in hiring people able get a government financial subsidy, or ones that were only paying minimum wage. None of the interviews were for positions either in her field (sales or management) or even close to her skill level (although she does state that her English was a consideration here). Participant C did not qualify for the government subsidy as her husband earned above the threshold level even though they struggled financially, mostly due to their having a small child requiring daycare (the prohibitive expense of daycare prevented her from taking any of the minimum wage positions as her earnings would not cover the cost of her son in daycare). This participant also felt that many of the interviews she was sent on were for company’s that were taking advantage of new immigrants by paying below the normal rate for that position. However, she too felt that the counsellors at Woodgreen were sincere in their efforts to help and she has made some close connections there. The most positive and useful aspect of the Woodgreen services were the English lessons they provided and the

coinciding daycare provided to her son while she was in class. This was of significant value to her and something that she felt was important to her settlement in Canada.

Networking, as mentioned previously, is of increasing importance in the Canadian workforce and the participants indicated that government services geared towards assisting new immigrants in building a network in Canada could prove to be invaluable. Ultimately both Participant A and C were initially hired by someone from the same part of the world—essentially they used their common cultural background to create a network in the job market. Participant A was hired by another Brazilian initially in the construction field. Due to his other business-related skills he managed to prove himself as a valuable asset to the company and was in fact kept on after the man who initially hired him was let go. “Since I had financial and business skills I was doing administration work for him (the boss) as well so I was pretty much like his right arm...I was doing everything because I have skills, I had a degree and everything”. Although his initial opportunity in the organization was provided by someone from the same country once he was given this initial opportunity he went on to prove himself to be an invaluable asset to the organization. The issue here is that had he not had that Brazilian connection in the first place it is doubtful as to whether he would have been hired and given this opportunity to showcase his skills. A program recently offered in Halifax, addresses this issue by offering newcomers the opportunity to network, meet mentors and attain internships (Grant, 2009).

Participant C also stated that she felt she was given a chance in her current position because the manager was also from South America – without that factor she may have never had the chance to prove herself. Whereas in many cases new immigrants face employment discrimination, often connecting with someone from the same or similar culture can help them

overcome the hurdle of obtaining their first job in Canada. Discussions from the focus group imply that government settlement services focusing on creating networks for new immigrants would significantly increase their success in the job market.

For new immigrant women many of the problems and barriers to the Canadian workforce are frequently exacerbated if they immigrate while having young children, and the government and settlement programs in place are doing little to address this issue. Traditional gender roles of the mother being the primary care giver still hold true in Canadian society and are even stronger in many of the countries and cultures where new immigrants are coming from. When these women come to Canada and are looking for affordable childcare so they can work, it often becomes apparent that it is more cost effective for them to stay at home and look after the children. This is partially a result of a need to earn ‘Canadian experience’ and, therefore, often needing to accept low-paying entry-level jobs which do not cover the cost of daycare. This results in these women not only being a new immigrant in the country but also of being out of the work force for a number of years, a factor which frequently makes the problems of finding a job even more difficult and will delay their acculturation process.

Participant C was the only one in this position as she was the only female in the focus group and her son was eight months old when they moved to Canada. The only employment possibilities her initial job search provided were cleaning houses or working in the hospitality industry—no jobs that would make going to work and paying for daycare financially reasonable. She brought up the subject of affordable daycare a number of times during the focus group and commented on how valuable her experience was with Woodgreen providing free daycare during her English lessons; it would have been even more beneficial had this service been available while she completed other licensing or retraining courses and even while she conducted a job

search. Because of lack of affordable daycare and no family support she several times had to take her two year-old son to job interviews. She felt that had she been given a bit more support with her daycare needs upon first arrival in Canada her job prospects may have been different. If free or subsidized daycare was provided for new immigrant women, at least upon their initial entry to Canada, this would help with their integration into the Canadian workforce.

‘Proxy Parenting’—whereby young children are brought up by the extended family in their country of origin—is an alternative way that some families are handling this issue. It is particularly prevalent with immigrants from India and China; they manage the separation from their young children by focusing on setting up a new, hopefully better life, in Canada. According to an article by Raveena Aulakh in the Toronto Star this practice may be the only practical alternative but can cause heartbreak, trauma and problems of adjustment when the child returns to Canada (2008). Often these parents don’t have a choice as subsidies for daycare are only available for those earning under \$20,000 per year and even when families qualify the waiting list for a daycare spot can be up to two years (Aulakh, 2008).

This issue of a delayed entry into the workforce not only affects the new immigrant women themselves but also their entire family; it could significantly impact their family’s overall financial security and the time it takes them to establish themselves in Canada. Haan has noted a decline in home ownership rates for immigrants and this may be one contributing factor (2005). In addition to the financial consequences, delay in entry to the workforce could cause a significant delay in the woman’s acculturation in Canada. With a delay in the acculturation process she may find that when she is able to job hunt she is still facing the issuing of understanding and adapting to the way Canadians think and employer expectations.

Conclusion

This paper was based on the literature already in existence on the topic of new immigrants and their encounters with the 'no Canadian work experience barrier', the theories of *orientalism* and *acculturation*, and data collected through a questionnaire and a focus group. The focus group concentrated on the experiences of immigrants to Canada who had been here for less than five years, originated from non-western countries, possess post-secondary education and a higher level of job experience. Questions related to the Canadian labour market, identifying how this experience affected the participants (positively or negatively) and what supports or resources they view as being valuable in their settlement and job search in Canada. This paper has contributed to the existing body of work aiming to identify new immigrants perception of the 'no Canadian experience' barrier has on new immigrants and the ways in which negative impacts can be minimized or negated.

In conclusion, research into the issue of the 'no Canadian experience' barrier to employment as experienced by new immigrants revealed that the most significant factor indicating successful integration into the Canadian job market was the new immigrant's ability to adapt to Canada and the Canadian way of thinking and behaving. This adaptation and successful acculturation often involve the tweaking of resumes and altering of minor facts such as experience location in order for the new immigrant to be perceived as a valuable asset to the Canadian job market. Also of importance to fitting in and being acceptable to Canadian employers is not only language ability but also having a mild accent or one not strongly identified as being non-western.

The mental and emotional impact of a negative experience in the job searching process is detrimental to everyone but can be particularly hard on new immigrants as their expectations and knowledge of Canada and the Canadian marketplace is often inaccurate and misleading. Additionally, new immigrants often have little or no support network in Canada and are dealing with a new environment, culture and even language. Further research needs to be completed in this area since in this study it became apparent that both managing the expectations of new immigrants through accurate information prior to coming to Canada and increased access to networking and fair employment and hiring practices would go far to negate these psychological issues.

Government services assisting new immigrants were examined as the value of the successful utilization of new immigrant skills and experience in the Canadian workforce is clearly not simply an issue affecting the new immigrants themselves but also all of Canada. This research revealed that a large amount of government services in place to assist new immigrants in entering the Canadian workforce were not appropriate to the highly-skilled workforce that the Canadian immigration policy is geared towards admitting to Canada. These services are better suited perhaps to the family members of the economic immigrant class and refugees rather than as assistance to the economic immigrants themselves. This being said, member of the economic immigrant class are often in need of significant assistance in obtaining employment in Canada since their education, skills and experience are often discounted if not completely negated by Canadian employers.

Additionally, the focus group revealed a significant lack in government and settlement service programs designed to assist new immigrant women with young children. Often these women not only are new to Canada but also spend a significant time out of the workforce in

order to take care of their children. This makes the initial entry into the Canadian job market even more difficult. The consequences range from economic to emotional difficulties, and a delay in acculturation. Government funded daycare programs to new immigrants could make job searching possible. This is also vital to assist them obtaining 'Canadian experience'.

Although lack of success in the job market can have negative consequences on new immigrants both emotionally and financially—as evidenced by increasing poverty rates and reductions in standards of living—it is also an issue costing the Canadian economy billions of dollars every year (Reitz, 2007). Successful integration of new immigrants into our labour force and the appropriate utilization of their skills are much needed in Canada in order to not only maintain our population levels but also for our country to successfully compete in the global economy.

The results of this study were limited by number of focus group participants and the experiences and verbalization of these experiences by the participants. The group size was limited to three participants as all participants were acquaintances of each other and the researcher. It was decided that to introduce another member who was completely unfamiliar with the others would stifle the conversation and, therefore, skew the results. Interpersonal trust was another concern when organizing the focus group. In particular, new immigrants may need more comfortable settings to freely express their experiences and thoughts. A stranger in a group can bring unnecessary impact to the result of this research. The result of this project also supported these considerations. Of course, further research into this area would benefit from further focus group studies to be inclusive of the opinions and experiences of a wider variety of new immigrants to Canada.

References

- Aydemir, A., & Skuterud, M. (2005). Explaining the deteriorating entry earnings of Canada's immigrant cohorts: 1966-2000. *Canadian Journal of Economics*, 38 (2), 641-672.
- Aulkh, R. (2008, November 15). The trauma of raising kids an ocean away. *The Toronto Star*, p. A1, A17.
- Bauder, H. (2006). Origin, employment status and attitudes towards work. *Work, Employment and Society*, 20, 709-729.
- Berry, J.W., Kim, U., & Minde, T., Mok, D. (1987). Comparative studies of acculturative stress. *International Migration Review*, 21 (3), 491-511.
- Berry, J.W. (2008). Immigration, acculturation, and adaptation. *Applied Psychology*, 46 (1), 5-34.
- Betrame, J. (2008, December 9). Bank of Canada declares recession. *The Canadian Press*. Retrieved December 15, 2008, from <http://cnews.canoe.ca/CNEWS/Canada/2008/12/09/7683136-cp.html>.
- Boyd, M. & Schellenberg, G. (2007). Re-accreditation and the occupations of immigrant doctors and engineer. *Health: An Interdisciplinary Journal for the Social Study of Health, Illness and Medicine*, 84, 1-9.
- CBC. (August 2006). Canada's doctor shortage to worsen without changes: *Fraser report*. Retrieved August 23, 2008, from <http://www.cbc.ca>.
- Citizen and Immigration Canada. (2007). Immigration overview. *Permanent and temporary residents*. Retrieved December 13, 2009, from <http://immigrationcgcanda.com/english/resources/statistics/facts2007/permanent/index.asp> .
- Citizen and Immigration Canada. (2008). *Minister Kenney announces immigration levels for 2009; Issues instructions on processing federal skilled workers*. Ottawa: News Release.

- Conference Board of Canada. (2004). Making a visible difference. *The contribution of visible minorities to Canadian economic growth*. Briefing April 2004. Retrieved December 13, 2008, from <http://www.ncvm.gc.ca/files/570-04makingavisibledifference-briefing.pdf>.
- Conference Board of Canada. (September, 2007). Ontario's Looming Labour Shortage Challenges. *Projections of Labour Shortages in Ontario, and Possible Strategies to Engage Unused and Underutilized Human Resources*. Retrieved December 18, 2008, from workforcecoalition.ca/go/wp-content/uploads/2008/03/conference_board_report.pdf.
- Fortin, P. (2006, July 17). The baby boomer's tab. *CBC News*. Retrieved March 27, 2009, from <http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/canada2020/essay-fortin.html>.
- Fougere, M., Harvey, S., Mercenier, J. & Merette, M. (2005). *Population Ageing and Quality Immigration: A National and Regional Perspective for Canada*. Ottawa: Human Resources and Skills Development Canada.
- Grant, T. (2009, January 26). Wading into the talent pool. *The Globe and Mail*. Report on Business. Retrieved February 3, 2009, from <http://business.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/story/RTGAM.20090126.wDIVERSITYimmigrant0123/BNSStory/robAtWork/home>.
- Greenwood, D., Whyte, W. & Harkavay, I. (1993). Participatory Action Research as a Process and a Goal. *Human Relations*, 46, 175-192.
- Haan, M. (2005). The Decline of the Immigrant Homeownership Advantage: Life-Cycle, Declining Fortunes, Toronto and Vancouver, 1981-2001. *Analytical Studies Branch Research Paper Series*, 238. Ottawa: Statistics Canada, Business and Labour Market Analysis.
- Jirojwong, S., & Manderson, L. (2001). Feelings of Sadness: Migration and Subjective Assessment of Mental Health Among Thai Women in Brisbane, Australia. *Transcultural Psychiatry*, 38 (2), 167-186.
- Jones, S. (2004). Canada and the globalized immigrant. *American Behavioural Scientist*, 47, 1263-1277.

- Lupick, T. (2009, April 9). Educated immigrants stuck in survival jobs. *The Georgia Straights*. Retrieved April 26, 2009, from <http://www.straight.com/article-213260/educated-immigrants-stuck-survival-jobs>.
- Munro, M. (2009). A Snapshot of New Beginnings in Canada. *Intercultures Magazine*. Ottawa: Foreign Affairs and International Trade.
- McIssac, E. (2003). Immigrants in Canadian Cities: Census 2001 – What do the data tell us? *Policy Options*. Ottawa: Institute for Research and Public Policy.
- Morgan, D. (1996). Focus Groups. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 22,129-152.
- Nordenmark, M., & Strandh, M. (1999). Towards a Sociological Understanding of Mental Well-Being among the Unemployed: The Role of Economic and Psychosocial Factors. *Sociology*, 33(3), 577- 597.
- Reitz, J. (2001). Immigrant skill utilization in the Canadian labour market: Implications of human capital research. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 3, 347-358.
- Reitz, J. (2007) Immigrant employment success in Canada, Part II: Understanding the decline. *Journal of International Migration and Immigration*, 8 (1), 37-62.
- Said, E. (2003, August 7 - 13). Preface to Orientalism. *Al-Hamra*. Retrieved January 13, 2009, from <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2003/650/op11.html>
- Said, E. (1991). *Orientalism, 25th Anniversary Edition*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Sered, D. (1996). *Orientalism*. Retrieved December 14, 2008, from <http://www.english.emory.edu/Bahri/Orientalism.html>.
- Statistics Canada. (2008). Study: Canadian immigrant labour market. *Analysis by region of highest postsecondary education*. Ottawa: The Daily.

Statistics Canada. (2006). Immigration in Canada. *A Portrait of the Foreign-born Population, 2006 Census: Immigrants came from many countries*. Retrieved April 23, 2008, from <http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census06/analysis/immcit/asia.cfm>.

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2007). *World Population Aging 2007, Executive Summary*. Brussels: Population Division.

United Nations. (2002). *International Migration Report*. Brussels: Population Division.

Wadsworth, Y. (1998). What is participatory action research? Action Research International, Paper 2. Retrieved December 11, 2008, from <http://www.scu.edu.au/schools/gcm/ar/ari/p-ywadsworth98.html>.

Worsick, C. (1996). Immigrant Families in the Canadian Labour Market. *Canadian Public Policy*, 22 (4), 378-396.