Alternative Access to Support, Resources and Resistance: The Role of Newcomer Communities

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Part 1 – Introduction

In recent decades, the ability of people to move and communicate across vast distances has increased owing to augmented global migration flows (Appadurai 1996: 44; Hannerz 1990: 237). Now, people are constantly moving and resettling in new communities, while maintaining vast global networks and ties. Consequently, the settlement and integration of newcomers, the development of immigrant communities and, more recently, diasporas are transforming national identities and local communities. While structural and organizational aspects of diasporas vary, they find commonality and cohesion through a shared culture and historical memory, both of which provide a basis for the transformation of immigrant communities (Clifford 1997: 246). The role of the diaspora, however, as a source of support, resistance and transformation with regards to the integration and settlement process, is often overlooked and downplayed within official government policies. Countries, particularly Western governments, have, despite growing recruitment campaigns to attract and retain newcomers, been unable to respond adequately to the needs of newcomers at the national, provincial and local levels, thereby inhibiting the integration of newcomers (Green 2003: 34; Canadian Council for Refugees 1998; Crisp 2003: 76). Newcomers frequently confront barriers to integration and settlement owing to structural inadequacies and systemic deficiencies that continue to relegate them to the margins.

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1 I do recognize that issues related to settlement and integration are different. Immigrant integration into one’s adopted country typically takes a longer time. Newcomers, for the first few years of their immigration experience, engage in settlement issues. This research, for the most part, reflects the experiences of newcomers as they attempt to settle in Winnipeg.

2 In this study, ‘newcomers’ refers to individuals who are only beginning to become integrated and settled into Winnipeg, whereas ‘immigrants’ refers to individuals who have been here longer and are settled.

3 This is not to say that diasporas are homogeneous. There are divisions between diaspora groups that do share common characteristics.
Focusing on inner-city Winnipeg – and using data from twelve semi-structured interviews conducted with Muslim newcomers who arrived in Winnipeg within the past five years – this paper will examine the role of the diaspora and community networks as a source of social and economic support via access to resources and a space where strategies of resistance to marginalization and exclusion and transformations emerge. In this research, I aim to answer the following general questions: what types of discrimination and marginalization do newcomers experience? How do participants in this study identify themselves? How do diaspora networks act as a source of support and resources? What resources do diasporas provide?

More specifically, my objective is to discover how the multiple identities of newcomers challenge the hegemonic nationalist discourses and, further, how the resistance and transformation provided by the diaspora networks serve as a vital tool for settlement and integration. What’s more, this paper aims to illustrate both how the diaspora and newcomer networks are integral to the settlement process and why more attention should to be given to the institutional organizations of the diaspora.

This research is linked to a larger Community University Research Alliance (CURA) project funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, entitled *Transforming Aboriginal and Inner city Communities in Manitoba*. The role of this larger project is to examine the potential of community development for solving the complex problems facing Manitoba’s multi-ethnic inner city communities. The CURA project produced a significant amount of valuable data regarding the personal experiences of newcomers in inner-city Winnipeg. The focus of my report is only on one topic of the many issues that emerged from the data.

The answers to these questions can differ among immigrants owing to a number of factors, including the length of time they have been in the new country, whether they are refugees or landed immigrants and whether they have citizenship, or not. My interest, however, is not to examine the stages of the settlement process among these groups in detail, but rather to look at the experiences of a newcomer community as a whole in settling in their adopted country.
project has four separate, but inter-related, parts. Dr. Parvin Ghorayshi of the University of Winnipeg is heading the diaspora portion of this project and is supervising this honours thesis, whose structure is outlined below.

First, I provide an overview of some of the current issues found within the existing literature. I critically evaluate market-based theory of migration and question the hegemonic view of citizenship, which does not acknowledge the importance of multiple identities that has resulted from the growing movement of people in our globalized world. I argue that fixed notions of identity lends itself to discrimination and to the construction of the newcomers as the ‘other.’ Next, I present an overview of the methodology and demographic characteristics of the study participants. Then, I use the original data that I have collected in this research to illustrate how the diaspora is a source of support, resistance and transformation by first addressing the circumstances under which participants came to Winnipeg. I proceed to examine some of the issues that newcomers face upon arrival that are often underrepresented within the literature, namely experiences of loss, isolation and disappointment. The next section addresses the discrimination and marginalization that participants experienced, specifically related to their Muslim identity. I also provide an overview of the primary barriers participants reported facing and how these barriers limited their access to employment, housing and education. Following these sections, I focus on how diaspora and newcomers networks serve as a source of support, resistance and transformation. I examine how community involvement and the development of institutional organizations provided a means of gaining information about life in Winnipeg and access to resources as a means of supplementing services already provided and filling the gaps left by governmental and community
service providers. I show the development of how diasporic identity challenges the conformist demands of the hegemonic nation-state and creates new cultural forms that go beyond territorial boundaries. Lastly, I follow this discussion by examining how the vast global networks, composed of friends and family in other countries and their home country, serve as a source of diasporic identity and support. I will demonstrate that the new cultural forms produced within these networks are then introduced into the local setting, thus transforming social space and transcending the symbolic and physical boundaries of national identity and the nation-state. I conclude by illustrating the important role that the diaspora network has in the integration and settlement process, thereby making a case for increased attention and allocated supports to these community organizations within government policy, funding and services.

This research is timely and important given that immigration to Canada and Manitoba, for that matter, has increased dramatically. Statistics Canada reports that nearly 20 percent of Canadians were not born in Canada, which represents a three-fold increase of newcomers in the past seventy-five years (Chui et. al 2007: 5, 7). Further, the focus of this research on immigrants from Muslims and Middle Eastern backgrounds is also important when one considers that 58.3 percent of newcomers that arrived between 2001-06 were from Asian and Middle Eastern countries, a majority of which are primarily Muslim (Chui et. al. 2007: 7). Currently, it is estimated that there is approximately 700,000 people of the Muslim faith in Canada (Islamic Social Service Association 2002). Thus, there is a need to understand the impact of such change on Canadian society, in general, and on Manitoba, in particular.
This research is of particular importance to Manitoba, which has actively recruited newcomers to the province, increased its annual targets and amended immigration procedures to facilitate the process of immigration. The Manitoba Bureau of Statistics projects that by 2026, without immigration, Manitoba’s population will actually decrease (Government of Manitoba, Demographic Conference 2007). Currently, the number of immigrants to Manitoba increased by 24 percent between 2005-06, representing about 4 percent of the total immigration to Canada in 2006 (Government of Manitoba 2006: 2). Indeed, immigration is expected to continue increasing over the next two decades, especially since the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program is scheduled to augment the number of immigrants brought into the province in this category to 20,000 per year by 2016 (Government of Manitoba, Demographic Conference 2007). This is widely regarded as an adequate number of newcomers needed to maintain the provincial population at its current levels. Consequently, it is expected that new immigrants will account for 27.4 percent of Manitoba’s population (Government of Manitoba, Demographic Conference 2007). Currently, 13.3 percent of Manitoba’s population was not born in Canada (Chui et. al. 2007: 16). Indeed, this need for population growth, and the concomitant recruitment strategy by the Manitoba government, creates a strong pull factor for migrants to choose to settle in Canada, in general, and in Manitoba, in particular. The Provincial Nominee Program is, in fact, primarily responsible for the large increase in immigration to Manitoba, making Manitoba an attractive destination for newcomers because the Program is based on family networks and re-unification. Ergo, this research attempts to better understand the effects of this increased settlement. But
before moving on to a more in depth analysis of the data, the next section provides a review of existing literature on the subject.

Part 2 – Literature Review

What Factors Contribute to Migration?

There are many factors that influence the growing movement of people that we are witnessing around the globe, including Canada. In what follows, I present a critical view of the theories that emphasize the role of the economic market. I question the fixed view of identity that does not recognize and, instead, undermines the diversity among the population. I argue that the hegemonic nationalist ideology fosters discrimination, constructs newcomers as the ‘other’ and impedes settlement and integration. I emphasize the importance of social capital and networks in individual and groups decisions of immigration, as well as the support that these networks provide to the migrants in their new localities. These networks, at the local, national and international levels, become both a source of support, resistance and transformation.

Older models of migration tend to focus on micro level of analysis. The micro level considers the individual’s personal choices of migration based on values, desires and expectations (Faist 2004: 30). This perspective employs a neo-classical, micro economic cost-benefit analysis that emphasizes the extent to which individuals weigh their expected economic wealth and social benefits against the costs associated with migration with an expectation of a positive outcome (Arango et. al. 2006: 37). This

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7 In general, migration theory remains conservative in its emphasis on market forces as a chief decision-making factor.
economic model emphasizes the potential economic gains to be had by migration owing to expected increases in personal wealth. This model, often referred to as demand-pull, also assumes that one migrates in search of better employment opportunities in more economically advantaged regions. Market forces are seen as the key factors that contribute to the movement of people. Within this view, structural issues, such as the global flows of capital, lead to geographic differences in the supply and demand for labour (Arango et. al. 2006: 36; Faist 2004: 63).

Apart from the market factors, there are non-market push factors that force people to migrate, which are primarily macro level structural issues. For example, political factors, such as exclusionary state policies, escalate tensions and can lead to political unrest and civil wars (Zolberg 2006: 120). This is particularly important as global conflict and war, along with government neglects, are displacing a growing number of populations around the world. For instance, Sudan hosts the largest displaced population in the world and has one of every nine of the world’s uprooted people (Dau 2006; Meredith 2005).

In general, the discussion of migration tends to focus on the individual decisions of migration (Faist 2004: 30; Arango et. al. 2006: 36; Stalker 2001: 21) and ignores the actual experiences of newcomer, the importance of groups and networks. This means that there exists a disconnect between theoretical models of migration, the role of state policies and the experiences of newcomers at the local level (Fawcett 1989: 671). This also means that, as academics, researchers, policy makers and activists, we do not get a

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8 The use of neo-classical economic models, specifically a cost-benefit analysis, serves at reproducing the economic supremacy of richer nations, particularly the West, over developing nations. It also reproduces the colonialist and imperialist binary of periphery to centre migration, thus ignoring the massive movement of people from the West to the Southern countries as tourists and the business class.
full picture of the situation of newcomers. This paper takes a small step and shifts the
focus of the discussion by looking at the importance of the social ties, networks and
groups in the decisions and experiences of migration – forced or voluntary.

Only recently have theoretical models of migration begun to incorporate social
network theory into their structure, thus reflecting the increasing role that local
communities, groups and individuals – as well as global networks – play in decisions that
lead to the increasing global flows of people, capital and information. The growing
connectedness of people across vast territories has meant that migration decisions are no
longer primarily economic, but also include social ties and networks. Faist (2004) has
developed what he terms the MESO level analysis that incorporates social and symbolic
ties, such as family, ethnic, national, political and religious affiliations (31). Such
networks affect decisions to migrate. These ties and networks have also been referred to
as social capital. Faist (2004) defines social ties as continuing interpersonal transactions
with attached shared interests, obligations, expectations and norms (101). Of particular
importance are the content of the ties, the position of actors and the strength and size of
networks (ibid.: 101). Symbolic ties constitute ties that are not continuous, but are face-
to-face and indirect, to which actors attach shared meanings, memories and
representations. These ties make up the symbolic links needed to form and sustain a
community based on shared religion, language, ethnicity or place of birth (ibid.: 102).
Social capital, in this context, is the resources and assets contained within these ties that
help people or groups to achieve their goals that allow actors to cooperate (ibid.: 102).

Migration patterns can be traced based on these ties and social capital. Because
social capital serves to reduce transaction costs, such as finding employment and housing
in the host country, individuals will migrate based on the strength of these ties and the potential for greater access to social capital. These ties perform an adaptive function, facilitating the settlement of newcomers by minimising the adaptation costs via access to the resources of others and improved information (Arango et. al. 2006: 43). The importance of these ties becomes evident as an actor incorporates the strength and density of these networks and relations into their decision-making. This includes not only the ties that already exist in a potential host country, but also an account of what individuals in pre-existing social ties are doing and the needs of family members (Faist 2004: 145). According to Nielsen (1999), among Muslims, for instance, migration has frequently been centred on the community and family, with the pattern following kinship and community relations. Groups of migrants from one village will emigrate together, which will be followed by successive waves of immigrants from the same village, thus resulting in the emergence of extended households in the new country (25). As movement becomes regular and more frequent, these successive waves of migration patterns become institutionalized and structured due to cumulative causation. And as people migrate and their numbers increase, the social and symbolic ties become concentrated in a specific place. Thus, this concentration means that more people will move to a specific place because of the strength of their social ties there. Ergo, additional movement becomes easier and more likely because the amount of social capital increases as this type of migration becomes more frequent, (Arango et. al. 2006: 46).

Nationalist Discourses and Exclusion of Newcomers
There are complex factors that compel people to move. As I have argued, Canada is increasingly becoming home to a large number of immigrants – both forced and voluntary. This has generated both challenges and possibilities.

Canada identifies itself as a culturally pluralistic society, but rapid immigration has challenged the stability of state mechanisms for managing diversity. Instead, a hasty reallocation of power and resources has brought a shift in national and social discourses towards one of fear, difference and exclusion (Papademetriou 2003: 43). There are signs that current discourses and immigration policies have been reproducing discriminating ideologies by establishing boundaries – both symbolic and physical – between foreign-born individuals and those born in Canada (Inter Pares 2006: 2). These rigid boundaries maintain social and class hierarchies and exclude newcomers from developing a sense of belonging and inclusion (Inter Pares 2006: 3). This is particularly reflected in nationalist discourses and ideologies. Using a rigid and exclusionary discourse, nationalists defend the classical model of the nation-state stressing that state membership presupposes national membership and thus those who do not identify primarily with the nation, as an imagined community based on symbolic characteristics, cannot be members of the nation-state (Brubaker 2006: 410). Naturalization is the process by which newcomers develop the identification with, and loyalty to, the nation-state that is presupposed among those born in the nation-state. The strategies traditionally used by states regarding newcomer integration have been assimilation or ethnic pluralism/multiculturalism.

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9 In fact, the deterritorialized collective history and identity of diasporas means immigrants can never be assimilated into the fixed notion of nation-state, thus remain outside it (Clifford 1997: 253).
10 Traditionally, there have been three primary paths to attaining citizenship: *jus sanguinis*, where children inherit the citizenship of their parents; *jus soli*, where one receives citizenship in their place of birth; and naturalization, where non-nationals can acquire citizenship after a certain amount of time living in the host country (Lahav and Messina 2006: 12). The first two are a sort of full and formal membership in the nation-state.
Assimilationist policies expect that the newcomer will melt into the core and into its values and behaviours, while relinquishing citizenship of, and identification with, their home country and its culture and practices (Faist 2004: 253, 271). Conversely, ethnic pluralism/multiculturalism recognizes difference, allows for some cultural retention that is transplanted into the new context and gives rise to ethnic niches constituted by symbolic and material elements of their home culture (like ethnic neighbourhoods) (Faist 2004: 253). In this regard, diaspora members will never gain legitimate and equal membership because they will, in their very nature, remain outside the status quo of their adopted nation-state. This defence of the traditional definition of citizenship and the problematization of migration is due to fears that multiculturalism and diasporic identities will erode the hegemonic national culture and unity and challenge the practices of the nation and the loyalty demanded by the state (Inter Pares 2006: 5; Faist 2006: 612; Castles and Davidson 2000: 45).

A prime example of this fear in defence of the hegemonic is the escalating marginalization of ethnic groups and the widespread racial profiling of Muslims since the attacks on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001. On the whole, governments have been moving away from multicultural policies in the name of national security by tightening border and internal controls over the population, especially non-citizens (Faist 2006: 609; Arat-Koc 2006: 216). Indeed, this security-migration nexus reinforces, for example, the construction of Islam and Muslims as potential ‘terrorists’ and reproduces hegemonic racist discourses that treat the entire Muslim community as the ‘other’ (Faist 2006: 613; Modood 2003: 100). These racialized images of Muslims as terrorists have
made them targets of both national security and discrimination by the public\textsuperscript{11} (Arat-Koc 2006: 220; Ismael and Measor, 2003).

The growing migration in this globalized age has brought major challenges to immigration policy and the ideology of fixed national identity. Specifically, my analysis of the interviews with recent immigrants supports the debate in the literature that people are not disconnected from their home country and that there is a difference between political loyalty to the host country and the cultural identification that goes beyond it (Safran 2004: 21). This question has given rise to a debate that is particularly important to Canada where the governments at national and provincial levels are trying to attract more immigrants. This thesis challenges the hegemonic notion of fixed Canadian identity and instead shows that identity is not fixed but is fragmented and constantly changing.

The Construction of the ‘Other’ and Access to Resources

Within the hegemonic discourse, immigrants are constructed as what Edward Said terms the ‘other’ (1975). This contributes to the social, economic and political marginalization of newcomers, which rests, in part, on their status as ethno-cultural minorities. This negatively affects the life opportunities of immigrants by regulating access to resources such as adequate employment, housing and education (Brubaker 2006: 412). Picot and Sweetman (2005) illustrate this bias by identifying a paradox within the statistics. They point out that while, during the 1990s, more newcomers had a university education and greater economic skills, economic earnings among adult male newcomers actually fell by

\textsuperscript{11} In fact, Said’s term ‘orientalism’ has frequently been used to make sense of the growing anti-Muslim sentiment that has gripped North America and Europe (Khan 1998: 466; Howelle and Shryock 2003: 458; Ismael and Measor 2003). Said’s notion of ‘orientalism’ points out that during the colonial period, the Muslim East was constructed as the opposite of Christian Europe and therefore its enemy. And, according to Ismael and Measor (2003), knowledge of Islam became essential to the control of the Islamic population and that this power-knowledge paradigm lead to the development of barriers and parameters used to represent and understand it (NA).
13 percent between 1980 and 2000; there is an increase in the respective figure for Canadian born individuals. What’s more, the percentage of newcomers with a family income below the poverty line rose by 11.2 percent within the same time period; the respective figure for the Canadian born individuals shows a decrease (Picot and Sweetman 2005: 6, 11). Indeed, upon arrival, newcomers become tied to the segmented labour market system, which reproduces class inequalities that are exacerbated by ethnic, linguistic and nationalist divisions. Newcomers are often placed at the bottom of the class hierarchy within the host country’s labour market due to many factors such as lack of relevant and socially determined skills, education and language (Armstrong 1976: 401; Castles and Davidson 2000: 75-76). In fact, the demand for newcomers in Western nations, as an attempt to respond to the needs of the labour market and promote economic growth\(^\text{12}\) – especially regional growth by dispersing immigrants to smaller communities across Canada – occurs within a capitalist hierarchy that ghettoizes and fosters the proletarianization of newcomers (Green 2003: 34; Humphrey 1998: 29, 37). This demand is particularly evident in low-paid, low-skill occupations. For instance, in his study of the Lebanese diaspora in Australia, Humphrey (1998) found that the majority of the Lebanese migrants were non-English speaking labour migrants with non-relevant and unrecognized skills. This meant that they were immediately marginalized in the secondary labour market. Consequently, they became either low-skilled labourers with low wages or were unemployed. In addition, they were unable to access education and other job training programs because of the need to work and earn money to support their

\(^{12}\) Particularly owing to the declining birth rate and the aging population.
families (Humphrey 1998: 29, 51). Many newcomers facing economic marginalization, however, often find economic opportunities within their community networks and ties.

Diaspora Communities

With the rise in the number and movement of people, diaspora communities are responding to the needs of immigrants. Current diaspora communities are distinguishable from previous forms of immigrant communities in that they have come to be characterized by the maintenance of complex global networks. This has generated and resulted in the transmission of a shared identity that transcends traditional national boundaries. The term diaspora is increasingly being used to describe expatriate communities that: (1) are dispersed to two or more locations; (2) maintain a memory, vision, or myth about their original home country; (3) believe they are not fully accepted by the host country; (4) see ancestral home as a place of eventual return; (5) are committed to the maintenance or restoration of their home country; (6) and whose consciousness and solidarity as a group are defined by the relationship with the home country (Safran, as cited in Clifford 1997: 247). In other words, diaspora refers to a relatively cohesive community whose shared identity, which maintained among members of the diaspora across national boundaries, is based on a collective history of displacement from their home country and are defined against the norms of the nation-state and indigenous claims to the land (Clifford 1997: 249).

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13 The relation of these communities to globalization is located, according to Cohen (1997), in five features of globalization. These are: a world economy with efficient communications and cheaper transportation, which makes interpersonal relationship easier; the witnessing of more fluid and short-term forms of international migration, such as intermittent stays abroad; the development of global cities that have a greater role in global flows; the creation of cosmopolitan and local cultures; and the deterritorialization of social identity that challenges the hegemony of the nation-state (157).
The features and characteristics of diasporas to be examined more closely in the following section are the blurring of national identity and its implication for the construction of diasporic identity and memory; their relationship with the host state and access to social, economic and political resources; the development of global networks and transnationalism; and the diaspora as a source of resistance and transformation.

Diaspora and the Politics of identity

Strong diasporic identity and consciousness develops based on a collective identity involving a common core of shared beliefs, ideas and history that is maintained via a collective memory transmitted via global networks\(^{14}\) (Faist 2004: 225; Huyssen 2003: 149). Owing to processes of deterritorialization and the blurring of national and territorial boundaries, identity is now spread across vast geographic distances sustained by global networks within which identity markers shift and overlap (Appadurai 1996: 41; DeAngelis 2003: 276). It is within these networks that modes of cultural production among diasporas occur through the “flow of objects, ideologies, cultural commodities, imageries, financial arrangement and generational innovation via hybridity, creolization and crossover in the new cultural products associated with enhanced connections between local settings”\(^{15}\) (Ember et. al. 2005: 559). It is also within these networks where the...

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\(^{14}\) Consequently, the shared cultural elements, such as religion, language and customs, become symbolic differences around which the construction of the ‘other’ occurs (Castles and Davidson 2000: 80).

\(^{15}\) This is further explained using Appadurai’s (1996) model of global flows, which identifies the disjuncture that has developed under processes of globalization (34-36). His model represents five types of global flows that affect the decision-making and integration process of migrants. Ethnoscapes refers to the increasing movement of people across borders, which includes not only migrants, but also more impermanent types like tourists and business people. He then refers to technoscapes as the fluid configurations of technology that moves at high speed. In the same vein, he refers to financescapes as the global flows of capital and wealth that are fast. These flows are influenced and partly maintained by the distribution and production of information around the world, which he calls mediascapes. This is particularly important because mediascapes presents only pieces of information that transcend boundaries and whose images create an imagined world which tend to distort events in other local settings. Lastly, ideoscapes refers to the dissemination of dominant ideologies of the Western Enlightenment world-view,
construction of a shared memory, referred to as diaspora memory, centred on common characteristics occurs. This diasporic memory serves to unify the community based on shared ideas and myths about the home country and their history of displacement (Huyssen 2003: 150). This memory is often maintained and transmitted via media and technology. Diasporic media, as Hirji (2006) argues, connects people, maintains global networks and reminds people of their cultural heritage\(^\text{16}\) (126). It can also provide instructions on how to construct their identity as part of the imagined international community (Hirji 2006: 127). The inability of the hegemonic national discourses to respond to, and represent, the diaspora consciousness – together with the need for the diaspora to effectively transmit these identity markers to future generations – frequently leads to the development of community institutions that go beyond the institutions already established by the national states (Faist 2004: 227).

Diasporas and the Development of Transnationalism

Cultural production within the vast global networks that exist above national identities transforms the local frame of reference by re-ordering social space and everyday practice and gives rise to the creation of transnational space and identity (Satzewich and Wong 2006: 5). Faist (2004) identifies three forms of migrant transnational social spaces created by their movement and vast networks. Kinship groups represent the networks of kin that are often not just concentrated in the home country, but are dispersed among a number of distant locations\(^\text{17}\) (202). Next, transnational circuits are the constant circulation of goods, such as ideas of freedom, welfare and rights (34). The flows occurring within each scape represents one element of the migrant experience and how each merges and engenders theoretical models of migration.\(^\text{16}\) It also, according to Hirji (2006), provides alternative representations of them to the dominant media in the host country (126).\(^\text{17}\) One important factor concerning kinship ties is the significance of remittances as is a financial amount sent to family members in distant local settings on a regular basis. The total of global remittances has
people and information traversing the borders of sending and receiving states (Faist 2004: 205). Lastly, transnational communities represent the continuing connections between those who move or stay and constituted by dense and strong social and symbolic ties (Faist 2004: 208).

Individuals occupying transnational spaces are often described as having their foot in at least two cultures, by which identity becomes negotiated and re-translated (Khan 1998: 464). The cultural identity of these individuals becomes hybridized in that they occupy what Khan (1998) refers to as a ‘third space,’ where concepts of original and homogeneous culture is challenged and minimized by the shifting psychic, cultural and territorial boundaries (464). In this process, individuals appropriate new cultural forms then re-translate and re-read them as part of the construction of their culture and identity, in which they are intermeshed with elements from their original culture (Khan 1998: 464; Faist 2004: 227). Of course, this process is not without conflict or tension. In some instances, old cultural forms are more difficult to transform, or are incompatible with the new cultural setting. Thus, conflict can ensue regarding the pressures to accept and internalize new cultural forms that are incompatible or contradictory to the newcomers’ fundamental values and social practices from their home country. For example, Haddad and Smith (1996) contend that Muslim newcomers to North America often struggle to maintain the standards of Islam within a culture that is sometimes oppositional (20). These tensions are particularly pronounced within romantic, marital and sexual practices,
such as male-female interaction, revealing style of female fashion and interfaith relationships (Haddad and Smith 1996: 22, 26).

Ethnic neighbourhoods are frequently the most visible manifestation to such re-ordering of local space. Hou (2004) defines ethnic neighbourhoods as residential concentrations of ethnic group members who are well established in the new country and have the resources to choose where they want to live (2). According to Statistics Canada, ethnic neighbourhoods in Toronto, Montréal and Vancouver, where over 30 percent of the population is from a single ethnic group, increased from six in 1981 to two hundred and fifty four in 2001 (Hou 2004: 1). At the same time, these ethnic neighbourhoods experienced a decrease in the population of residence who are not part of that ethnic group by approximately 20 percent (Hou 2004: 2). These neighbourhoods incorporate material and symbolic features of the home culture via ethnic businesses and community institutions catering to the cultural needs of residents, such as restaurants and grocery stores, clothing stores and the pre-eminent use of their first language within the symbolic and physical spaces (Castles and Davidson 2000: 130). Ethnic based neighbourhoods are also sites where the production of new and hybridized cultural forms occurs via the overlapping of the communities and the larger urban setting where new cultural forms in the new country exist (Humphrey 1998: 124). These communities involve an asymmetrical triadic relationship with the home country, host state and the local community in which the home country remains more important than the host country and the local community is being transformed by new cultural forms.

Resistance and Transformation

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18 Ethnic neighbourhoods also represent a physical segregation of minority groups and newcomers that often reinforces the construction of these groups as the ‘other’ (Castles and Davidson 2000: 76).
Diaspora consciousness and a strong group identity emerge and help to resist the marginalization and discrimination that occurs within the dominant social, economic and political systems. Diasporas are, in fact, imbued with a creative power and ability that questions the configuration of power and the hegemony of the pervasive and normative nation-state (Baumann 2000: 324). Diasporic identity provides a rally point for marginalized newcomer groups to undertake subversive political and social activity that seeks to transform power relations (Baumann 2000: 323). For instance, the emergence of the re-Islamization of social spaces in non-Muslim societies, particularly Western states, is considered to be a way of re-inventing group identity and providing a rallying point for resistance to a global order that dominates them and their home countries (Castles and Davidson 2000: 137; Rosefsky-Wickham 2005: 159). In a sense, this symbolic separation of diasporas from the normative power of the nation-state gives rise to a sense of agency that enables them to actively transform the hegemonic power relations (Arat-Koc 2006: 237). There is an increasing movement towards a redefinition of national identity, in opposition to the nationalist defence of citizenship and national membership that encompasses the deterritorialization of national and cultural identity.

The collective memory and symbolic ties that constitute diasporas leads to the development of both institutional organizations and spaces where strategies of resistance, settlement and support originate, such as ethnic neighbourhoods (Safran 2004: 17; Faist 2004: 233). The lack of adequate integration and inclusion into the nation-state (referring to the dominant social, economic and political systems) means that group culture and

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19 While Islam has become a rallying point around the world, it, too, is being transformed and re-negotiated within new cultural settings by both newcomers and their children. Mandaville (2001) argues that Islam is indeed becoming a translocal dialect in that Islamic symbolic language and thought are being transformed into new forms of religious expression within a process that seeks to establish a middle ground between Islam and the West by pointing to similar values and norms (114).
identification fostered by, and within, ethnic neighbourhoods become a means for support and resistance to discrimination and marginalization (Castles and Davidson 2000: 79). These organizations are frequently constructed around a shared characteristic(s) that becomes a symbol of cultural identity and where traditions and customs are maintained, reproduced and intermeshed with cultural forms of the host country and transmitted to future generations (Sökefeld 2004: 139). More specifically, these community organizations serve, according to Castles and Davidson (2000), as a resource for settlement and community formation and at rebuilding group identity and developing resistance to discrimination (Hoeber-Rudolph 2005: 192). For example, Sökefeld (2004) points out that traditional religious practices among the Alevi community of Berlin were transformed to become cultural practices and as a means of folklorizing these practices and creating an identity around which institutional organization could occur (139). In this instance, religion was used to negotiate a space between the diaspora, the host country and the home country (Sökefeld 2004: 149).

In this thesis, I use the MESO level analysis to explain migration by examining local and global social ties, as well as the social and symbolic capital that flow through them, which help minimize costs associated with adaptation (Faist 2004: 145; Arango et al. 2006: 43). This will assist me in examining the issues that newcomers confront in their new country. Throughout this process, I address the exclusive and rigid nationalist discourse that constructs newcomers as the ‘other’ and fosters their discrimination and marginalization (Brubaker 2006: 410).

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20 Castles and Davidson (2000) also consider it a tool used by authorities for social control and the establishment of symbolic difference and exclusion (135).

21 According to An-Na’im (2005), there is an emergent global society that is motivated by religion and facilitated by globalization. This is socially constructed and embedded in socioeconomic and political power relations (23, 26).
name of national security since the attacks on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001 (Modood 2003: 100) is an issue that contributes to the process of ‘othering.’ Further, I discussed the limited access newcomers have to vital social, political and economic resources, such as employment, education and training, that acts as a barrier to successful integration and settlement into the new country (Castles and Davidson 2000: 75). Understanding how diasporas may constitute as a means of resisting and transforming their marginalization and exclusion is important to our understanding of how solidarity is developed (Huyssen 2003: 150) and how new cultural forms are produced (Satzewich and Wong 2006: 5). This literature forms the background for understanding the initial settlement experiences of newcomers to Winnipeg.
Part 3 – Methodology and Participants

Methodology

In this paper, I use secondary sources, such as academic literature, government and non-governmental publications, but primarily rely on qualitative original data and on narrative inquiry. I use narrative inquiry to compensate for the shortcomings of the existing information on immigrant and refugees who live in Winnipeg. This original research adds new knowledge to our understanding of newcomers in Winnipeg.

Social scientists continue to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of both qualitative and quantitative data (Dafinoiu 2003; Russell 1995; Blum 2002; Nobles 2002; Palys 2003; Neuman 1997). Increasingly, narrative inquiry and autobiographical research, however, are used to shed light on the complex and diverse experiences of immigrant populations (Karpiak 2003; Kouritzen 2000). The literature shows that narrative inquiry is important in understanding the theme of uprootedness, resettlement and issues related to identity and acculturation. Methods, such as life story, add depth of knowledge to our understanding of social change, which is a necessary addition to statistical data. This is also a powerful method that helps one recognize the complexity that is caused by the intersection of race, class, language, history and culture that we face when studying diaspora communities.

At the theoretical level, I recognize the importance of the relations of power within society and the manner in which power manifests itself and is exercised (Foucault 1972; Said 1978). In the context of newcomers in the inner-city of Winnipeg, I draw from different sources and methods to unfold the complex factors that contribute to the challenges that study participants confront. The method that I employ in this research
aims to reflect the experiences, concerns and voices of participants in this study. I stress the importance of ‘suppressed discourses’ (Foucault 1978) and transformative learning (Freire 1997 and 1977). The polarity between research and participant is reduced; the objective is to understanding the reality of participants and their existential experiences.

This project is based on the personal narratives of twelve Muslim participants who are newcomers in Winnipeg from regions in, and near, the Middle East. Semi-structured recorded interviews were conducted as a means of gathering the personal narratives of newcomers to inner-city Winnipeg (which remains an area where the city’s most vulnerable and marginalized people reside). An interview guide (see appendix 3) was used to lead the sequencing of questions while allowing for some opportunities to diverge from the sequence of questions. The content of the interview guide was drawn directly from a preliminary literature review while satisfying the goals of the project. Specifically, the interview guide was organized into five broad conceptual categories, including: (1) life before coming to Canada, specifically the circumstances under which they came; (2) their life in Winnipeg such as their daily activities, services and tools they have used to settle and barriers they have faced; (3) their community, including what forms the basis of their community identification, their friends and family as well as their neighbourhood; (4) their cultural identity and how they have, if at all, incorporated and transformed local cultural forms; and (5) ties to their home country, such as friends and family that remain there and whether they desire to return one day.

The goal of the research was to gather qualitative data that represented the personal experiences and life histories of the participants as a means of gaining a more

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22 Identification as a Muslim from a country in, or near, the Middle East remained open to the interpretation of the participants. Participants were selected on the basis of being able to identify with the culture and politics associated with regions in, and near, the Middle East.
in-depth understanding of their experiences settling in inner-city Winnipeg as well as evaluating the current services and supports that are being offered to newcomers. In fact, according to Habermas (as cited in Calhoun et. al. 2007), systemic deficiencies only become recognizable when personal life histories of individuals who experience these deficiencies directly are intermeshed with each other, thus becoming a sort of collective representation of histories. This, in effect, serves at providing a structure of knowledge within which systemic deficiencies are articulated (392). The personal life histories of newcomers documented within this research are essential for a better understanding of the issues that face newcomers.

The interviews were conducted from December 2007 to February 2008 in one meeting’s space of time and took on average of one hour to complete. Participants were offered an honorarium of $25 for their time. The interviews were transcribed and analyzed.

A research proposal and ethnics application was submitted to, and approved by, in advance of beginning the interviews, the University of Winnipeg Senate Committee on Ethnic and Human Research and Scholarship in November 2007.

Participants were provided with a consent form (see appendix 1), which indicated that their participation was voluntary. They were also verbally made aware of their right to refuse to answer any question and to withdraw from the interview at any time without consequences. Confidentiality and anonymity were assured by having all the data left in a secure location at the University of Winnipeg. Other ethical considerations included female participants who were not comfortable being interviewed by a male, in

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23 Some participants did not accept the honourarium.
24 All the participants signed the informed consent form
which case a female interviewer was made available. Some respondents did experience mental and emotional stresses at the time of the interview and they were provided with the contact information for organizations that could assist them.

Participants

Participants were gathered using a snowball sampling technique via networking and organizational contacts, as well as advertisements in key community locations, such as places of worship, university, ethnic neighbourhood, government and non-governmental organizations and ethnic businesses (see appendix 2). It is important to note that once strong connections were made with various individuals, participants were also solicited via their personal networks.

The participants had varied experiences as well as backgrounds and perspectives. The common characteristics among all participants were their identification as Muslims, their connection to regions in, or near, the Middle East and who have all lived in inner-city Winnipeg.

Below is a table that provides an overview of basic demographic information of the participants. This outline of some of the basic characteristics of the participants reveals the diversity of experiences engendered by the participants.

Table 1 - participant demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name*</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Immigration status</th>
<th>Marital status</th>
<th>Number of Children</th>
<th>Level of Education</th>
<th>Languages spoken</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abdullah</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Refugee</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Expecting**</td>
<td>Bachelor of Arts</td>
<td>English and Arabic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zara</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Refugee</td>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>One</td>
<td>College</td>
<td>English, Swahili</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

25 Some participants were practicing Muslims while other were not, but were raised in Muslims families.

26 All participants were born and raised in countries in, or near, the Middle East, specifically Africa the Middle East and Central Asia, except one, who was born in a European country, but whose parents were immigrants from a predominantly Muslim country near the Middle East.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Children</th>
<th>Highest Education</th>
<th>Language(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amal</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Refugee</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Two</td>
<td>High school</td>
<td>Somali, Swahili, English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muna***</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Refugee</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Some high school</td>
<td>Persian, English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hidi</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Refugee</td>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>Four</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Persian, English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bahar</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>Refugee</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Two</td>
<td>Medical Degree</td>
<td>Persian, Turkish, Russian, English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tariq</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>25-35</td>
<td>Refugee</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Bachelor of Arts</td>
<td>Arabic, English, Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khalid</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Refugee</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Some University</td>
<td>Arabic, English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatima</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Privately sponsored</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Two</td>
<td>Bachelor of Science.</td>
<td>Somali, Hindi, Urdu, English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samira</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Landed Immigrant</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>One</td>
<td>Bachelor of Arts</td>
<td>English, Urdu, French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adil</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Landed Immigrant</td>
<td>Common Law</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Master Degree</td>
<td>French, Arabic, English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fouad</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>Landed Immigrant</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Three</td>
<td>High school</td>
<td>Swahili, Bena, Haya, Urdu, Arabic, Punjabi, English</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* These are not the real names of the participants.
** Was expecting at time of writing.
*** Muna is Hidi’s daughter.

The participants ranged in age from 15 to 62 years old. In total, six participants were male and six were female, thus ensuring gender parity and equal representation. Further, while most participants arrived in Winnipeg within the past five years\(^{27}\), two have been here longer and are more established in the community. This allows for a comparative examination of integration patterns as well as discrimination. Specifically, this allows one to see how perceptions towards newcomers within the larger community have changed over time. Further, eight participants came to Canada as refugees, whereas three participants came as landed immigrants, while one came as a privately sponsored

\(^{27}\) It is important to note that because the participants have only been in Winnipeg for the past five years, their experiences are limited to the first stage of the settlement process where they learn about the new country and gain basic employment and skills relevant to the Canadian economy. Thus, it is probable that the life circumstances of the participants will change as they gain more relevant skills, perfect their English skills and gain employment more suited to their credentials.
immigrant. In general, all participants reported similar experiences in dealing with discrimination and marginalization, as well as community involvement. Their immigration status, however, did have a significant effect on their settlement experiences and their access to vital services and supports. For example, landed immigrants frequently come with more access to social, economic and political resources, while refugees, as forced migrants, often have less access to these same resources.

Next, eight of the participants had some form of higher education, namely post secondary. Lastly, many of the participants could speak, to varying levels, more than two languages. They displayed a remarkable level of knowledge of languages beyond their native language and knowledge of English.

This original research adds much needed new knowledge to our understandings of the challenges and possibilities that face newcomers in Manitoba, but with some limitations. First, most of the participants have been in Winnipeg only for a short time period and thus can only speak to certain and limited experiences here. Next, this research does not, and cannot, represent the vast experiences of newcomers in Winnipeg and across Canada owing primarily to the fact that the data was collected using very specific demographic criteria, namely only Muslim and Middle Eastern newcomers to inner-city Winnipeg who arrived in the past five years. Further, the data cannot be generalized to represent the newcomer community because this research is based on only twelve interviews. Lastly, due to a strict timeline for completion of this work, I was unable to distribute the final draft among the participants to ensure that their views and responses were accurately reported.

It should be noted that this research looks at the entire community and does not seek to examine the differences in the settlement process among these groups.
This overview of the general demographic composition of the participants will become increasingly relevant and important as the experiences of the participants are revealed and analyzed in the next section.
Part 4 – Analysis of Data

The following section provides a detailed account and analysis of the data collected from the interviews. First, circumstances under which participants made the decision to immigrate to Winnipeg are discussed, such as fleeing war and violence and family reunification. The second section addresses some of the initial feelings of loss and disappointment participants experienced upon arrival, which mostly goes undocumented within pre-existing literature. Following that, I will discuss the discriminatory responses of the state to the increasing immigration via the rigid boundaries established by immigration polices between newcomers and individuals born in Canada. Next, I discuss major barriers faced by the participants when accessing vital social, economic and political resources. The remainder of this part will examine responses from the diaspora to these forms of discrimination, exclusion and barriers as a source of strategies of resistance, settlement and support. I point to institutional community organizations as a source of alternative support, resources and resistance as well as a space where maintenance of original culture occurs. Next, my discussion moves to the transformation of identities, owing to the intermeshing of new and old cultural forms, which challenges the hegemonic identity prescribed by the state. Lastly, I examine the development of transnational identities via cultural production within global networks.

Why did they come to Winnipeg?

This section explores the varied and complex experiences and circumstances under which the participants emigrated. Many of the participants came to Canada under differing circumstances, specifically either as refugees – both government sponsored and privately
sponsored – who were fleeing war and oppression, as landed immigrants and as privately sponsored newcomers.

The literature concerning theoretical models of why people migrate often presents a rigid and hierarchical classification of migrants\textsuperscript{29}, either as those who were forced from their homes owing to structural and systemic oppression or in search of greater economic wealth and capital (Faist 2004: 30; Inter Pares 2006: 3). Only recently has the influence of social networks and ties become part of these decision-making factors. The data collected in this research, however, illustrates that the decision to migrate often includes all these overlapping factors.

Most of the participants pointed to systemic and structural issues within their home countries as the primary reason for migrating. In fact, the majority of the participants in this study came to Winnipeg as refugees – some even having lived in refugee camps most of their life. They are what Stalker (2001) refers to as forced migrants (11). So, those participants who were categorized as refugees were forced to leave their home country to escape civil war, violence and political and social oppression.

At the same time, family re-unification with spouses, children and family members was also a factor in the decision for some participants to immigrate to Canada. As Faist (2004) points out, the pre-existence of social ties in the potential host country does provide an incentive for migration (30-31). For example, Adil came to Winnipeg specifically to be with his common law partner. Further, some of the participants who had

\textsuperscript{29} Such a hierarchy acts as a means of control via the policy regime that regulates movements of people. For example, it is much easier for a member of the business class from a Western nation to travel temporarily to a developing country than it is for citizens of that developing country to travel to that Western country. In effect, the hierarchy of classifications is spaced, class, gender based and racialized in its practical application (Inter Pares 2006: 3).
come to Canada as refugees requested to be sent specifically to Winnipeg because of the presence of family members and friends.

Participants did come with an expectation of increased economic wealth and capital as well as a better life and more opportunities. Again, the dominant theoretical model places considerable emphasis on the importance of these expectations (Arango et. al. 2006: 37). These expectations, however, were not the pre-eminent reason for migrating among the participants, but were a secondary consideration. No participant cited expectation of increased wealth and capital as a primary consideration30.

Regardless of their immigrant status as a refugee or landed immigrant, all participants left something behind, such as close friends and family and a home country that they loved and came to Winnipeg with expectations of greater security, freedoms and opportunities. These experiences, however, often left interview subjects with debilitating feelings of loss, isolation and disappointment.

Undocumented Barriers: Loss and Disappointment

Many of the participants reported on a variety of experiences that have been consistently overlooked both within academic and theoretical work, as well as the research that has been produced by local organizations. All participants expressed feelings of loss from having left friends and family as well as feelings of disappointment because their expectations were not being met. These feelings acted as an additional burden on the participants, leading them to consider these feelings as prohibiting their settlement efforts31.

30 When asked if they like living in Canada, many participants reported liking the increased opportunities for employment and education as well as the independence and freedom.
31 Instead, their needs are addressed by the supports and aid received by their community rather than government services and policy.
The existing literature and research conducted by local community organizations focuses primarily on the structural deficiencies regarding access to language, employment, housing, recognition of skills, day care and issues regarding multiculturalism and maintenance of original culture (Canadian Council for Refugees 1998: 13; Canadian Community Economic Development Network 2007: 8; Social Planning Council of Winnipeg 2006: IV). Rarely are the emotional and psychological needs and issues of newcomers acknowledged as barriers to effective settlement and integration. In fact, as the data in this research illustrates, newcomers often have a diversity of backgrounds and experiences relating to loss and disappointment.

For many – both refugees and landed immigrants – leaving their home country meant that they left behind family, friends and other important sources of support. These feelings of loss and isolation are often their first memories and experiences of their arrival in Winnipeg. Further, these feeling of loss, for some participants, led to discomfort and apprehension about being in Winnipeg because their traditional sources of support were not available. Feelings of loss and sadness related to this displacement were indeed a common concern.

For those who came as refugees, these feelings of loss and isolation were further conflated by experiences and memories of war, violence and displacement. The memories of these experiences that many participants still carry with them led to difficulties related to settlement and integration owing to emotional scarring and fear. This proved to a major concern for participants after having arrived in Winnipeg. These memories created emotional and mental stress for some while for others it meant more time was needed to become fully comfortable and settled in Winnipeg. For example,
since having fled from his war-torn country of birth as a child, Khalid has spent most of his life living in destitute conditions in refugee camps. This affected his outlook on life and led him to think that there is little hope or opportunity. For him, the biggest concern was simply survival by any means.

“I literally thought that this is it. That there is nothing out there, I am looking at desert wherever I go in the world; this is it, there is no such thing as buildings; there is nothing. So I just get to this shock of my believe of what the world looks like and what the world really is … That as long as I am breathing, it is good enough. And I came to a society where no: it wasn’t good enough. You know, there is such [a thing] as health care, there is such thing as eating quality food. Ah, I lived in the street most of my [life]. I am 22 years old; I slept more on the sidewalk than under a roof. Forget that. You know, I looked, I looked in the garbage cans for food, I looked; you gotta do what ever you can. Then I came here and this whole world is …I was like wow, why, what’s going on?”

After having arrived in Winnipeg, Khalid’s worldview shifted drastically from mere survival to one of opportunity. Notwithstanding this, he is still struggling with these memories.

“… all this violent experience that I have in my life that I am still kinda struggling to get over. The thing that I remember from the Middle East was a lot of memories that I am still trying to struggle to get over. Ah, I still have nightmares about it.”
For some, however, the realities of living in Winnipeg did not necessarily meet their expectations and left them with a sense of disappointment. As has been shown, the decision to migrate is often hastily done under extreme circumstances and is based on information regarding the potential opportunities in the host country that is sometimes misleading. This leads to false or high expectations.\footnote{This is partly because they are entering a system of social and governmental services that often treats this diverse group of people with, as we have seen, varied experiences and reasons for immigrating to Winnipeg as a homogeneous group. Such practice denies and ignores the diverse needs of the immigrants and refugees.}

Consistently, participants reported feelings of disappointment not long after their arrival to Winnipeg, because the reality of living here did not meet their expectations. Many participants arrived expecting a relatively easy time integrating and settling and finding employment and housing and accessing education and learning about the local culture. For many, however, their expectations were often set too high. Tariq, as a services provider for newcomers to Winnipeg, says this about the high expectations of newcomers:

“[There are] high false expectations for people, especially young people. They come and they are very eager to do things, but they find very complicated layers of bureaucracy and the system that prevents them from doing things.”

This barrier, indeed, is what many of the participants reported facing. Adil, who has a master degree from a European university, expected that he would, based on his education, have an easier time finding work.

“I was [a] student before. I had to do some shitty job to pay my living. Now, I am going to Canada: I’ll be a permanent resident, I’ll be equal to everybody and I’ll find [a] job with my education.”
Since having arrived, he realized that he underestimated the situation in Canada:

“I am young, I am educated, I learn quick, I can improve anything in my profile really quick to be able to fill a certain task or anything. I speak French and Canada is bilingual and everyone was saying: ‘you speak French, you go to Winnipeg, or in Manitoba, since it is a bilingual province too; you will find a job easy’. So that was my expectation and I came with the highest expectations possible and they, and I, underestimated the situation.”

Adil’s experience evinces that the images and information concerning life in Canada the participants had received prior to arriving to Winnipeg, such as beauty, wealth and consumerism, were not accurate representations of Canadian life. Indeed, considering the number of other barriers participants experienced, these feelings of loss and disappointment only exacerbated the difficulty of settlement and integration and their experiences of exclusion.

Exclusion and Discrimination

This section discusses the level and forms of discrimination that participants reported, specifically focusing on racial profiling and discrimination toward Muslims. In contrast to what I found in the literature, most respondents did not report experiencing outright and direct forms of discrimination. Participants did, however, recognize the impact of the increasing racial profiling of people of Muslim and Middle Eastern backgrounds on their communities.

Rigid and hierarchical categories of membership in the nation-state establish boundaries between newcomers and individuals born in Canada from which discourses and ideologies of exclusion and discrimination emerge (Inter Pares 2006: 2; Burbaker
The focus of these boundaries becomes the characteristics upon which diasporas find unification and cohesion, such as language, place of birth and religion. These also serve as the basis of discourses that continue to exclude and marginalize members of these communities (Castles and Davidson 2000: 76). Instead, newcomers are often expected to conform to the practices, values and representations of their adopted country for fear that they will instead challenge the hegemonic national culture and unity (Faist 2004: 270; Safran 2004: 21). Thus, newcomers who do not conform to the demands of the hegemonic ideology are seen as ‘outsiders’ and ‘others.’

Since arriving in Winnipeg, participants reported experiencing incidents of discrimination that were mostly fleeting, sporadic and were primarily experienced subtly and indirectly via interactions and communication. These forms of discrimination have become buried within interactions, in that it is manifested not in the actual use of language, but in the manner with which communication is taking place, such as body language. This discrimination often takes the form of stereotyping and labelling. Tariq’s description of an experience related below, exemplifies the processes of ‘othering’ that occurs:

“I was working somewhere and somebody came and asked me about my [ethnic background]. I guess it has to do with the look and all that. And she said, when she knew my background, she said: “you are lucky because you look different, otherwise you” … like, she tried to say that [for] some people, their look can be deceiving … they don’t know where you put them … in which category. Because you can be labelled, people forget about your name and they run after the label and you will be viewed as a problem.”
Indeed, these latent forms of discrimination are also present in, and sustained by, various institutional social, economic and political organizations and discourses. For example, participants pointed to the educational system and the workplace as a source of discrimination and specifically a location where cultural awareness or sensitivity is not being taught and encouraged. This situation is exacerbated by a lack of representation of other cultures and leads to discrimination, or outright exclusion, by schoolmates and co-workers.

Most of the respondents acknowledged increasing stereotyping since the attacks on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, as an additional barrier and a concern regarding the integration and settlement process. Indeed, discrimination toward people of Muslim and Middle Eastern backgrounds is shown to be a major issue within the pre-existing literature. The increasing construction of people of Muslim and Middle Eastern backgrounds as potential ‘terrorists’ has made them targets of exclusionary nationalist discourses and discrimination from the public. All participants regarded the nature of representation and construction of Muslims and Islam in the North America and Europe as a growing concern for their communities. Participants that carried a visible marker of their Muslims faith particularly felt this discrimination. For example, the *hijab* (the headscarf worn by Muslims women) becomes a visible marker of difference. Samira, as a woman who wears a *hijab*, describes a constant awareness of her scarf and how people’s perceptions toward, and their treatment of, her during interactions are affected by the *hijab*. She says wearing a *hijab* after the attacks of September 11, 2001 is even more precarious.

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33 It is important to note that not all Muslims are Middle Eastern and that not all Middle Easterners are Muslims.
“I think you are always conscious of the fact that you are a different colour when you wear a hijab, and post 9/11 you are always conscious of the fact that people might have stereotypes … and even in social situations I find that I am even more conscious of it. It is really interesting, like, if people talk to me, are they seeing the hijab or are they listening to what I am saying? And it is really funny. I think little things like having a sense of humour; people don’t think that you will have a sense of humour if you wear a hijab, or things like that.”

While participants did not report having experienced much outright and direct discrimination and racism, these forms of marginalization are still present within the social, economic and political systems that direct their daily lives and social relations. In fact, Jakubowski (1997) contends that these exclusionary ideologies inform the formation of immigration law and policies, which “assists in the reproduction, legitimation and naturalization of unequal social relations” (43).

The next section follows this discussion by addressing the limited access that newcomers have to vital resources, such as employment, housing and education, that participants reported having.

Barriers to Accessing Social and Economic Resources

This section examines some of the primary barriers participants faced when accessing social and economic resources, such as employment and education. First, I discuss some links between what has already been identified in the literature and the experiences of participants. This will be followed by a discussion of some of the barriers that the participants identified, namely financial and language barriers, a general lack of knowledge about life in Winnipeg and limited recognition of foreign credentials and
I attempt to show how the experiences of some participants do not lead to their successful integration and settlement. Indeed, the current trend in immigration policy reflects discriminatory and exclusionary ideologies that focus on systemic and institutional controls and containment policies, rather than effective integration policies achieved via institutional and structural practices (Inter pares 2006: 5; Castles and Davidson 2000: 63). This marginalization of newcomers, which rests, in part, on their ethno-cultural minority status, regulates access to resources and services (Brubaker 2006: 412). This access is further regulated by their status as refugee and landed immigrant. While all participants reported limited access to these resources, those who came as refugees had less access, relative to the participants who were landed immigrants.

Participants reported a number of barriers, which were primarily structural and institutional, when looking for employment, education, housing and just generally completing daily tasks in Winnipeg, such as going to the grocery store. In fact, much of the work and research undertaken in the area of newcomer integration and access to resources by community and service organizations in Winnipeg and Canada has consistently demonstrated that the primary barriers to successful integration and settlement are, specifically, lack of recognition of credentials, difficulty finding affordable and adequate housing, difficulty with English, cultural orientation and having to balance paid work with domestic duties and childcare, which is primarily among women (MacKinnon et. al. 2007: NA; Social Planning Council of Winnipeg 2006: IV; Canadian Community Economic Development Network 2007: 8; Canadian Council for

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34 It is important to note that participants came with a variety of skills, which were gained through formal (such as education and employment) and informal (such as domestic labour and other non-paid work) channels. These skills are typically not recognized within the Canadian economy.

35 Seemingly, while French is an official language, English is a more desired language to know among newcomers, as well as employers, service providers and others who work with newcomers.
Refugees 1998: 13). The data from this research does, for the most part, match what has been revealed in other projects. The most significant barriers that participants reported in this study were: financial barriers, language barriers and a lack of recognition of credentials and skills. What I found, however, and which is not reflected in the literature, is that of a general lack of information about living in Winnipeg was also a barrier for participants. Each of these barriers had a significant impact on accessing employment, housing and education for the participants.

Participants had varying levels of knowledge of English language, with some having come to Winnipeg speaking fluent English, while most came with very little knowledge of English. Participants had to learn English in order to go to school, to be able to use their training and credentials, or just generally being able to function within the social, economic and political systems.

The experience of some participants, however, shows that the process of learning English can sometime be difficult and demanding. First, some considered learning English to be an additional burden that was, at times, a long, arduous and debilitating process. For example, Khalid, who was immediately placed into secondary education upon arrival, describes the process as follows:

“I used to translate everything in Arabic and put [it] in the computer. I had never seen a computer in my life before, so I used to look for the letters. Writing a sentence would take me at least ten minutes – just to look for the letters and then translate the whole thing in Arabic and then try to match the Arabic and the English word and then memorize all these words and then write the answer in Arabic [and] put it into the computer to translate it to
English and re-memorize all these words then write is down, ha! There was, there was no way out. I wanted to be successful.”

Newcomers are often required to take English as an additional language classes depending on their prior knowledge of the language. The experiences of the participants in these classes were not always positive. Participants were placed into classes made of students with mixed levels of ability where some students are illiterate in their mother tongue, while others have advanced education without regard for prior skills and education. For example, Bahar, who has a medical degree and was a practicing family physician prior coming to Winnipeg, eventually became bored in class and unmotivated to learn English because of the varying levels of ability and knowledge of those in his class.

The second commonly cited barrier was financial, referring to the inadequate level or lack of financial assistance that they received from the provincial or federal government and the difficulties they faced in finding adequate employment. The Canadian Community Economic Development Network (2007) describes the newcomer experience as having lower earnings primarily owing to lower rates of employment and an increased probability of having part-time and temporary employment (8), which all affects the level of financial resources one has. This was particularly problematic for mothers who, while balancing the needs of domestic life and child-care, often did not work for pay – either by choice, or lack of employment opportunity. For Zara, working and being a single mother was the most difficult part of life in Winnipeg. Balancing

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36 This speaks to the assumption that the newcomer community is a relatively homogeneous group, which, in effect, ignores the actual experiences of newcomers.
irregular work schedules with the demands of taking care of her son was the most difficult for her:\textsuperscript{37}

“…looking for a job and taking care of a child, like, … when you get a job and it’s, like, maybe an evening job, and besides, you have to, you know, take care of a child, … and sometimes when you get up, even you don’t have a choice. Its, like, you have to take care of the baby; no body else is here, so, it was very, very frustrating … That was the worst; and I had to start looking for a job; I had to take care of the child … It was, like, oh my God, that was the worst time.”

Because newcomers are often disadvantaged in terms of employment, there are often very little options available to ameliorate their financial situation. Pressures such as childcare, domestic work, having to earn income to send to family in their home country\textsuperscript{38} and a general lack of related skills often prevent newcomers from improving their situation. This is particularly true when they want to return to school or concentrate on language training.

Participants consistently identified a severe lack of knowledge about Canadian culture as well as institutional and social practices as barriers. The difficulties they identified ranged from issues related to where and how to find employment and housing, to simple everyday activities such as riding public transportation and navigating the geography of Winnipeg. Additionally, some participants identified a lack of awareness about rules, laws and individual rights regarding various institutions and systems, such as

\textsuperscript{37} This difficulty has been alleviated since her son is now old enough to be more independent and able to stay alone for short periods of time.

\textsuperscript{38} Many participants reported sending money regularly to family members in their home country and in other locations. For some, it does become a financial burden some months.
justice and tenancy rights, as primary barriers. For example, Fatima experienced a long-standing issue with her landlord regarding compensation after an incident in her home. Fatima described how she struggled to represent herself and enforce her rights during that conflict without knowing (until nearing the end of the resolution of the conflict) that she could have accessed the advocacy services of the Residential Tenancies Agency of the Government of Manitoba. Because life in Canada is so different from life in their home country, they have little awareness of the basic activities and tasks that those born and raised in Canada take for granted. Amal refers to how priorities in Winnipeg differ greatly from the priorities in her home country, so much so that she does not necessarily know how to accomplish basic tasks.

“… Your priorities changes when you [come] here. Like, there, like, what our need there was different than needs here. At least here you have house to sleep, at least if you have some money or food to eat. But there, the problem, back there we had, it’s not the same here. It’s more, like, different. So I didn’t know this …”

Lastly, despite having some form of advanced education and training, many of the participants reported that their skills and education were not recognized within the Canadian economy, which proved to be a significant barrier. Consequently, many participants could not work in their area of expertise in which they were trained and educated. Instead, they remained economically marginalized by either being in low-paid employment or not being employed at all\(^{39}\). For example, Bahar is a medical doctor with

\(^{39}\) Some participants were forced to return to school as a means of updating or reorienting their education and their skills in order to find employment in their field or in other areas. This places additional burden and stress on newcomers as they are required to carry the multiple pressures of school, family and work.
years of practice. His degree and experience, however, is not recognized in Canada and he is prohibited from practicing medicine. For Bahar, the lack of recognition of his skills and credentials essentially reproduces the cycle of economic and social marginalization that fuels negative social stereotyping toward newcomers. Newcomer communities, however, have emerged as important space where strategies of resistance, settlement and support originate in response to their social, economic and political marginalization.

Community as a Source of Support, Resistance and Transformation

This section examines how newcomers’ involvement in institutional community organizations has served as a source of support and resistance in respect of providing accesses to social networks and ties – giving newcomers the opportunity to gain valuable knowledge and skills concerning life in Winnipeg and providing a space for the maintenance of their home, or original, culture and the negotiation of the new culture.

Newcomers often develop a strong sense of agency and actively work to transform and shape their experiences into something positive by recognizing the barriers and difficulties and by formulating strategies for actively working to overcome them (Ralston 2006: 184). The results of this research certainly reflect this. Many of the participants have transformed their experiences here into something positive by returning to school, actively learning English and being extremely involved in their community and other organizations. In effect, this sense of agency means that newcomers are conscious addition, this made some of the participants feel degraded and as if they were regressing in their life in a time when they were hoping to move forward.

Community was not defined for participants but was left to their own interpretation. In most cases, participants interpreted community to mean primarily their ethnic community and then their actual physical neighbourhood, followed by their general community of co-workers and other individuals with whom they interact.
actors in situations where they resist discrimination and become agents in their movement towards empowerment (Ralston 2006: 184, 185).

Community organizations and associations – based on shared characteristics – often serve as a primary location where this active resistance and community empowerment takes place. As has been pointed out in the literature review, which is consistent with the data gathered by this research, these organizations and associations become symbolic replications of their home country where customs and their original culture are practiced and transmitted to future generations and serve as a source of support, whether it be financial, emotional or material (Safran 2004: 17; Faist 2004: 233).

Participation in the community emerged as a common thread among participants in the form of volunteer work, attending community meetings and events and just being involved in sports and other activities. Community involvement, as a primary conduit for the active transformation of newcomers’ experiences and integration into Winnipeg, served various purposes for participants. All saw their communities as a valuable and integral part of the newcomers’ experience. The resources and supports received by their community facilitated their integration and settlement by providing services and supports not provided by governmental and community organizations. As demonstrated in the literature review, these ties perform an important adaptive function by providing increased information and access to the resources of others (Arango et. al. 2006: 43). Specifically, participants indicated that community involvement was a way of developing strong community ties and establishing networks from which they could draw potential employment, information about life in Winnipeg, access to vital material resources and
supports, as well as a means of practicing and maintaining their cultural and ethnic identities.

Many participants were instrumental in organizing people in their own communities and forming institutionalized associations and groups, primarily based on ethno-cultural identification. The programming, activities and resources provided by these associations – ranging from translation help, childcare and help completing forms and other bureaucratic processes – have been instrumental in filling the gaps left by governmental services. These networks generally provide a space where community members can gather to discuss issues confronting them and their community, the facility to devise solutions and strategies for overcoming these issues and simply a pause from the pressures of life.

Reciprocity exists within these associations in that the networks of community members constituting these associations frequently receive mutual support from each other on a reciprocal basis. According to Faist (2004), it is indeed within these networks of social ties that shared interests, obligations, expectations and norms arise. In this regard, many of the participants acknowledge a system of obligation and reciprocity within their community where an individual, after having received help themselves as a recent newcomer, becomes obliged to assist a newcomer in the future.

Community associations have also served as a location where the maintenance and transmission of original culture takes place. Transmission and maintenance of their

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41 Ethnicity was not the only basis for community formation or the only source of community support. Participants also found significant community support among their co-workers and sporting activities and sports teams.

42 Some of the gaps and deficiencies in governmental services identified by participants include a general lack of trust and faith in the competence of the service agencies and the councillors, the short time that they offer services and a lack of female counsellors and support workers.
original culture is a process that involves them, their community, and, most importantly, their children. Many participants expressed concern that their children will grow up disconnected from their culture. In response to these fears, many participants have developed a variety of strategies to instil elements of their original culture in their children – most of which are centred on the language of their home country. In fact, this is primarily undertaken at the community level via group activities and events, such as community dinners and language classes.

For most participants, a strong community was not only the basis of social support and integration, but was also a means of negotiating, navigating and translating their new cultural and social environment.

Resistance and Transformation

For many of the respondents, learning about the culture in Winnipeg and navigating the new context of their daily life presented many challenges. New ideals and practices were introduced into their lives and participants developed techniques for translating and incorporating these new cultural elements into their identity. This section describes how participants have transformed their cultural identity by negotiating and translating new cultural forms from their new cultural context. I also address how this transformation represents a transcendence of, and challenge to, the hegemonic culture and nationalist ideology.

Life in the diaspora is strongly characterized by the negotiation of local spaces and the translation of local cultural forms. The maintenance of their original culture within the new cultural setting often results in the production of new and hybridized cultural forms (Humphrey 1998: 151). Participants described this process as one where
they actively compared Winnipeg’s culture with their culture of origin and pick-and-chose features from both, thus creating new cultural elements. Most participants described the end result as having a blended cultural identity comprised of elements from their original culture and Winnipeg’s culture. Fatima, by describing a conversation she had with her son, articulated this process of comparing and selecting as follows:

“… there is something you have to compare with the culture. You can’t just adopt the new culture. … you cannot become Canadian within one year, it is just, maybe you can say, adopting this culture it is very hard, but compare. So that tradition, it is not something to wash off, … because you have to compare and say what is good … This culture has so many good things and this culture have so many good things.”

This process is important because, as Fatima points out, the new culture cannot be fully adopted because old traditions do not disappear completely. Instead, one must actively examine and compare cultures and choose and adopt positive elements from them. At length, one’s culture becomes composed of a number of new elements and external features, creating a hybridized cultural identity.

In fact, when asked about their identity now, most participants responded as identifying partly with their original culture and partly with Canadian culture, with the original culture being more significant, such as African-Canadian. Placing their original culture first reflects the importance of that culture in the formation of their identity. For

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43 Indeed, these new cultural forms are manifested in the transformation of social spaces by their incorporation into the physical landscape and the rise of ethnic neighbourhoods, which becomes a source of resistance and transformation (Castles and Davidson 2000: 130). Despite the pre-eminence ethnic neighbourhoods had in the literature, however, they did not factor significantly into the lives in the participants.
many participants, their original culture remained predominant because it is precisely within this context in which they have spent their youth and formative years

This cultural identity goes beyond the hegemonic values and identity demanded by the hegemonic and fixed national identity (Castles and Davidson, 2000: 45). It recognizes that identification with the nation, loyalty to the state and membership in the nation-state is no longer singular or fixed. Instead, diasporas place pressure to re-define fixed national identity and membership in the nation-state – this, owing to the awareness that “people are not disconnected from their home country and that there is a difference between political loyalty to the host country and the cultural identification that goes beyond it” (Safran 2004: 21). In fact, some participants remained committed to their home country in terms of expressing the desire to one-day return and contribute to their country’s political, economic and social development and success.

For some participants, their hybridized cultural identity became evident when they returned to their home country to visit friends and family. They felt as if they were strangers in their home country in that they could no longer identify solely with their home country. For example, Adil felt different because he had been exposed to new situations and experiences since leaving his country of origin, which he could not share with friends and family in his home country because they would not be able to relate to them. Indeed, the inverse of this is true as well. Physical and symbolic spaces newcomers were once familiar with in their home country change over time as well, such as new buildings that replaced the old ones and friends that have left, making their home country seems strange. Indeed, newcomers became culturally disconnected from their home

\footnote{Two participants were extremely hesitant to identify as Canadian. They felt they are outside of the Canadian identity.}
country while never being able to fully integrate into the cultural context of their host
country. Their identity thus becomes sustained and negotiated within the vast global
networks and ties that are sustained by newcomers in the diaspora.

Global Networks as a source of Support and Identity

For many newcomers, the maintenance of ties to their home country and global networks
of friends and family provides additional supports, such as cultural maintenance via the
cultural production and allocation of resources that occurs within deterritorialized and
global networks (Ember et. al. 2005: 559). These ties often serve as the location where
newcomers can acquire a certain level of support and cultural elements that are not
readily available in their new locale. These global ties and networks serve as a pre-
eminent stimulus for the development of transnational social spaces. This final section
will examine the importance these global networks plays in the daily life of participants,
specifically in connecting them to friends and family and as a reminder about their
cultural heritage and identity. Also to be addressed will be the importance of diasporic
media as a connection to their home country.

It is evident that the creation of transnational social spaces and identities is
occurring in Winnipeg owing to the transformation of local spaces with the introduction
of new cultures45. Diaspora identity and consciousness is produced and maintained by the
vast global ties and networks, within which cultural forms are traversing distant and vast
borders only to be integrated and, in the process, transformed into the local, thus giving
rise to transnational social spaces (Khan 1998: 464; Faist 2004: 290). In fact, the
production of new cultural identities within these vast networks exists above local

45 The process is, however, much slower and the end result less pervasive and significant than larger urban
centres with more qualities of a ‘global city’ such as London or Toronto.
identities and instead re-orders local space and practices (Satzewich and Wong 2006: 5). Within the data gathered in this study, all participants reported having friends and family, with whom they have regular contact, remaining in their home country as well as other countries around the world\textsuperscript{46}. Indeed, for many participants, these networks serve as a means of reinforcing their original cultural identity by reminding them about their shared history and memory. For example, Samira said that staying in contact with friends and family has meant maintaining a connection with her home country and original culture:

“That has a big impact on maintaining my culture and my heritage… I think if I was dislocated from that, it would be very easy to loose that, because every time you talk to your family it always brings back shared history, shared memory, shared cultural; those kinds of things.”

Within these global networks, diasporic media and global flows of information becomes increasingly important as a reminder of cultural heritage and identity and as symbolic connection to those in their home country and aboard (Hirij 2006: 126). Indeed, news and pop culture from their home country did provide significant support and information. For example, Samira reported that the popular culture of her home country has become more important now\textsuperscript{47} because it provides a means of maintaining her cultural identity by reminding her of her original culture and shared history and memory.

\textsuperscript{46} Participants acknowledge that technological advances have meant that communication is becoming more easy and frequent, with many participants now communicating with friends and family around the world everyday using email and, increasingly, on-line networking sites such as Facebook.

\textsuperscript{47} She observes that she took many of these elements of her home country and cultural identity for granted when living in her European home country. But she now recognizes, after having lived here, the importance of these elements in the formation of her identity.
The maintenance of cultural identity and the production of new cultural forms at an international level via the global ties further challenges the hegemonic and exclusive discourse of membership in the nation-state by going beyond its boundaries.
Part 6 – Conclusion

Future immigration to Manitoba, with most newcomers settling in Winnipeg, will increase due to the recruitment efforts of the Manitoba Government (Government of Manitoba 2006: 2). Considering this expected growth in immigration in the near future, there is a need to better understand the experiences of newcomers and how services and policies can be improved to facilitate the integration and settlement process. This paper attempts to outline the vital role that diaspora communities have in the integration and settlement process of newcomers as a source of support and access to resources, as well as a site of resistance and transformation in the face of marginalization and discrimination. The aim of this paper is to point out that the diaspora and community organizations compliment the existing government and community services by filling the gaps left by those services. Ergo, governments must pay more attention and provide more resources to these community organizations as a means of providing alternative services and supports that only these communities can provide.

First, I outlined the circumstances under which participants made the decision to emigrate from their home country and then to immigrate to Winnipeg. The literature places more emphasis on expectations of increased wealth and capital using a neo-classical economic cost-benefit analysis (Arango et. al. 2006: 36; Faist 2004: 30-31). Most participants in this study, however, came to Winnipeg as refugees, having fled war, violence and political oppression in their home country. While they did expect increased wealth and opportunities, these considerations were not the primary reason for migrating. In fact, as refugees, most of the participants were forced to flee their home country after having, in some cases, experienced traumatic events owing to war and political
oppression – this leaving them with difficult and scarring memories. Further, all participants expressed sadness and loss from having left their close friends and family, who now reside either in their home country or in other countries around the world. These feelings of loss, isolation and sadness – which are rarely addressed in economic and sociological research pertaining to migration – were, for many participants, debilitating barriers to successful settlement in the inner-city of Winnipeg.

I also examined forms of discrimination and marginalization that participants experienced since arriving in Winnipeg, which was certainly in line with what is revealed in the literature review. Nation-states have responded to increased immigration by reinvigorating nationalist discourses of exclusion and difference by focusing on systemic and institutional controls and containment policies rather than on effective integration policies (Inter pares 2006: 5; Papademetriou 2003: 43). Most newcomers are expected to become members of the nation-state, adhering to a sense of belonging by learning its hegemonic values and practices (Faist 2004: 270). In the process, nationalist discourses of a singular national identity establish rigid boundaries between newcomers and Canadian-born individuals that maintain and reproduce social and class hierarchies (Inter Pares 2006: 3). Rather than experiencing discrimination directly, most participants expressed concerns about latent forms of discrimination manifested during interactions. They all acknowledged the increasing racial and ethnic profiling towards individuals of Muslim and Middle Eastern backgrounds – this characterized by shifting government policy towards one of increased national security that comes to the detriment of immigration – since the attacks on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001 as a growing concern for their communities (Arat-Koc 2006: 216). While participants did not
experience these forms of exclusion first-hand, these ideologies do, as Jakubowski (1997) points out, influence the dominant social, economic and political systems of the new country (43).

In this research, I examined the level of access newcomers have to vital resources, such as education, housing and adequate employment as well as the barriers they confront when accessing resources. In fact, the marginalization experienced by newcomers in respect of accessing these resources rests, in part, in their status as ethno-cultural minorities48 (Brubaker 2006: 412). In fact, participants cited four main barriers to accessing these social, economic and political resources – namely a lack of financial resources, weak knowledge of English, little general knowledge about life in Winnipeg and a lack of recognition of their skills and credentials. In line with the findings of this research, longitudinal study of immigrants to Canada evinces that employment issues, particularly foreign credential recognition, remains as the most significant problem that immigrants face (Chui and Tan 2005 and 2006). Many participants were forced to work low-paying and low-status jobs upon arrival, while others did not have knowledge of life in Winnipeg and were not informed about local practices and systems, such as using public transportation. Yet, despite these barriers, newcomers have developed strategies for alternative support as well as resistance to and transformation for marginalization and discrimination.

Indeed, newcomer communities and organizations have become places where strategies to overcome these experiences of marginalization and discrimination are devised and implemented. Diaspora communities serve as a source of support for

48 This is the basis of nationalist exclusion from the nation-state.
newcomers (Huyssen 2003: 149). In fact, many participants reported being active in the community as a means of developing social networks, gaining more information about life in Winnipeg and acquiring access to the resources of others. Further, these organizations and associations have become symbolic spaces that provide a replication of the home country where their original culture and customs are practiced and transmitted to future generations (Safran 2004: 17; Faist 2004: 233). The maintenance and transmission of their original culture within community organizations becomes important since it leads to the development of diasporic identity and transnational spaces.

Verily, negotiations occurring within the diaspora between local cultural forms and those from their original culture are often located in the very space where these new cultural forms are transformed and re-introduced into the local (Humphrey 1998: 124; Faist 2004: 290). The development of hybrid cultural forms, as reported by participants, occurs via a process of comparing the new local culture with their original culture and from which they select desirable elements, thus challenging the hegemonic national identity of the nation-state (Ember et. al. 2003: 276). These new identities provide a rallying point for diasporas to undertake political action and social activity that transforms these power relations (Baumann 2000: 322). In other words, these new identities exist beyond the local and national frame of reference and are, instead, produced and maintained within the global networks sustained by diasporas.

In general, cultural forms are traversing distant and vast borders only to be integrated and, in the process, transformed into the local, thus giving rise to transnational social spaces by transforming local spaces (Faist 2004: 290). These global ties and transnational spaces become a source of support for newcomers as well as resistance to
the hegemonic and exclusionary demands of the nation-state. Regular communication with friends and family in the newcomers’ home country and around the world becomes a reminder of their cultural heritage and shared history that exists beyond the boundaries of the nation-state. In fact, the development of transnational identities and global networks has lead to a movement toward a re-definition of inclusion and membership in the nation-state (Safran 2004: 21).

This research shows that culture is not fixed, but is changing around the world owing to the increased flow of people and cultural elements. That said, this research has examined only some of the effects of this movement within the host country and local community. I have discussed how the development of newcomer communities, transnational spaces and diasporic identities has transformed local spaces as well as resisted nationalist discourses of exclusion and marginalization. Based on this, I would suggest further research examining the transformation of local and global identities of individuals born in the host country. The introduction of new cultural forms into the local setting also transforms the cultural identity of its residents because they, too, are being exposed to new cultural forms from newcomers.
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Appendix 1 – Consent Form

You are invited to participate in a study looking at the Middle Eastern Diaspora in Inner-city Winnipeg. The study is being conducted to satisfy my required honours research paper at the University of Winnipeg and is linked to a larger project that examines the potential of community development for solving the complex problems that Manitoba’s multi-ethnic Inner-city communities face. The research is being led by the Canadian Centre for Policy alternative- Manitoba (CCPA-MB) and involves academic form the University of Winnipeg and the University of Manitoba, the Institute of Urban Studies, as well as a wide range of community organizations. The goal of this project is to develop a deeper understanding of the experiences of the Middle Eastern Diaspora in Winnipeg. This research relies on the lived experiences of those who agree to participate in the project. Data collection will be done using interviews. The interviews will be recorded, transcribed, and then compiled into a report to be released to the public.

Please note that anonymity and confidentiality will be ensured as all recordings will be securely under lock to which only my research advisor, Dr. Parvin Ghorayshi, and I will have access. In fact, Your real name will not be used at any point of information collection, or in the written case report. Further, the identity of participants will be kept anonymous and will not be included in the final report. Lastly, if interested, you will have the option of reviewing the final report before it is submitted to ensure that your opinions and experiences are accurate. If you are interested, please include your contact information below. The study will be conducted from November 2007 to March 2008.

Please note that your participation is voluntary and you are encouraged to ask any questions at any time regarding the nature of the study and the methods that are being used. Further, you have the right to refuse to answer any questions and may withdraw at any time without consequence. Should you have any questions or concern at any point, please feel free to contact me, Mathew Gagne, at gagnem10@gmail.com or 786-9992. You can also contact my advisor, Professor Parvin Ghorayshi at
Appendix 2 – Newcomer Research Advertisement

**Newcomers to Winnipeg**

If you are an immigrant in Winnipeg, newcomer (less than 5 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. In some cases, compensation for your time will be provided up to $25 per one-hour interview.

Please contact:
Appendix 3 – Interview Guide

Name:_____________________________________ (optional)

Demographic Questions

What is your sex?     Male         Female            Other

What is your age?

Country of Origin:___________________________________

Level of Education and where it was completed:
A) Elementary
B) Some high school
C) High school diploma or equivalent
D) Some university / college
E) University Undergraduate degree or college diploma
F) Masters Degree
G) Doctoral Degree
H) Professional and other training

Where?___________________________________

Languages:
1. What is your first language?
2. What other languages do you know and to what level can you speak it?
What is your employment, if any?: __________________________________________

How long have you been working at this for?
What was your occupation before?

Place and Type of Residence:
  Area:________________________________
  Type:    House     Apartment      Other:_________
          Owned              Rented

Who lives in your household?

What is your marital status?

What is your estimated total annual household income?
  a)0-9,999 b) 10,000-24,999 c) 25,000-39,999 d) 40,000-54,999 e) 55,000 and up

1. Please tell me how and why you came to Canada, and specifically Winnipeg.

  ▪ Did you stop anywhere first?
  ▪ Did you experience any barriers and difficulties entering Canada?
  ▪ What expectations and goals did you come with, if any?
  ▪ Did the aftermath of the events of September 11, 2001 play a part in your decision to come here?

2. What were your first experiences in and impressions of Winnipeg?

  ▪ Were your experiences and impressions positive or negative?
  ▪ Did you feel welcomed?
  ▪ Did you experience any barriers? If so, how?
  ▪ What social services did you use and how? Were the services useful?
  ▪ What kind of supports did you use and how? How were they useful?
  ▪ What did you do when you got here?

3. What are your impressions of Winnipeg now? In other words, what do you think of life in Winnipeg?

  ▪ What are the major barriers you have faced?
  ▪ What kind of community life are you involved in?
  ▪ What kind of community and social services do you use?
  ▪ Have some of your goals been realized?
  ▪ Have things gotten better for you?

4. Please describe to me your daily activities.
- Do you go to work, school, etc?
- Please describe your home life.
- How are your activities here different from your activities in your country of origin?
- What supports do you have and use on a daily basis?

5. Please tell me about your community.

- Please describe your experiences of your neighbourhood.
- Do you participate in the religious activities of your community? If not, why? If so, how has that had an effect on their experiences?
- Have you changed your religious practices to accommodate new your new socio-political cultural context? If so, how?
- Please describe your experiences at your employment. Do you experience any challenges?
- Do you think that the middle-eastern community in Winnipeg is united? What do you think is the basis of these loyalties and/or divisions?
- What community activities are you involved in?
- What is the relationship between first and second generation?
- Has gender, sexuality, class, etc effected in your involvement in your community and integration into your new environment?

6. Is life in Winnipeg different than life in your home country? If so, how?

- Have you experienced changes in home and gender relations?
- Have you made any significant changes to their lifestyle? Are these positive of negative changes?
- How do you identify yourself? Canadian? Other?
- Do you think you have lost any part of your cultural identity, and what have you done to try to protect it?
- What type of Canadian cultural elements have you incorporated into your life?
- Has the aftermath of the events of September 11, 2001 had an affect on this difference?

7. Please tell me about what you think about your homeland?

- Do you plan or hope to return to your country of origin permanently?
- What do you think of events in their country of origin?

8. Do you have any ties to your homeland or to others from your homeland? If so, please describe them.

- Do you have family there?
- Do you have family and friends elsewhere in the world?
- How often are you in contact with these folks? What form does this contact take? Is it monetary, telephone, visits, etc?
9. Were community organizations and resources of any help to you? Which one’s and how?

10. In your experience, how do you think that these organizations and support resources can be improved?

11. What are the major barriers, if any, that you have faced or are facing?

12. How do you think that these barriers can be minimized and made less difficult?

  - What is their opinion of Canadian and Manitoban immigration policies?
  - Do they know of any other models that may serve Canada better?