



DIVERSE VOICES

Understanding the Experience of Immigration in the Region of Durham (Ontario)

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**Durham Local Diversity &
Immigration Partnership Council**

Diverse Voices: Understanding the Experience of Immigration in Durham

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Executive Summary

BACKGROUND

In recognition of rapidly changing demographics in the region of Durham due to a marked increase in immigration to the area, the Regional Municipality of Durham, along with community partners – the Durham Region Local Training Board (DRLTB) and the Community Development Council Durham (CDCD) – formed the Interim Local Diversity and Immigration Partnership Council (LDIPC) with funding from Citizenship and Immigration Canada. The LDIPC is a community advisory body lending direction and providing leadership, coordination and support to existing diversity and immigration initiatives and developing new initiatives in partnership with local businesses, voluntary sector organizations, educational institutions, public sector organizations, and the community at large. To move towards two of their goals – to foster a culture of inclusion in the Region of Durham and to enhance Durham's settlement capacity – CDCD undertook community research, in the form of individual interviews, to find out about perceptions of and experiences with immigration by immigrants, non-immigrants and local service delivery organizations. A brief discussion of the findings is provided below.

FINDINGS

From the conversations of 49 in-depth interviews, the research team identified four broad themes of interest on the topics of immigration, integration and inclusion. They are a) the influential nature of the process of socialization on community integration and inclusion, b) the existence of a variety of forms of discrimination in the Durham Region community, c) perceptions of inclusion in the community, and d) perceptions of immigration and integration in the community.

Socialization

Socialization is a social process that involves interaction and exchange in order to learn what is normative within a given society. This presents a great challenge to newcomers in our community who are moving from one social and cultural milieu into another while attempting to settle and integrate into the community. A few of the findings in this area included the following:

- Socialization around identity – Canadian or otherwise – influences the ways in which individuals feel included in the community or feel about others being included in the community (See page 15).
- Having representation of diverse groups in local government, education institutions and organizations can go a long way in socializing newcomers from diverse groups to feel like a valued part of the community (See page 16).

Differences in socialized ideas about community life in an individual's country of origin and those in Durham Region can be stark and unsettling for newcomers, and a lack of understanding of these differences on the part of the community can impact its ability to create a culture of inclusion (See page 17).

Discrimination

The interview process exposed the fact that experiencing discrimination in Durham, as an immigrant or non-immigrant, is not uncommon. There were instances of *explicit discrimination* (involving direct comments relating to a person's ethnic background or appearance), *internalized discrimination* (not initially recognized as discrimination by the person relaying their experience but nevertheless influencing the level of inclusiveness felt by the individual in their day-to-day life), and *implicit discrimination* (systemic discrimination in the form of policies and procedures that systematically prevent certain people from accessing the services or resources they require).

The examples below are from the perspectives of both immigrant and non-immigrant interview participants.

- Explicit discrimination was exhibited through generalized and assumed characteristics of people from certain backgrounds (see pages 20 and 21) as well as unwelcoming comments from people whose intentions were to hurt or embarrass those who are different from them (see page 20). It was also very prevalent in discussions around employment (see page 23).
- Internalized discrimination, also referred to as subconscious discrimination, came up in relation to everyday situations such as taking public transit, doing personal banking, and finding employment (see pages 21 and 22).

Evidence of implicit discrimination came to surface primarily in discussions about the immigration process and foreign credential recognition (see pages 24 and 26).

Perceptions of the Community

Participants identified a number of things they liked about the Durham Region community, as well as some things they were concerned about and would value an improvement on. Some of these are listed below:

Likes:

- Closeness to urban centre of Toronto, but not in Toronto
- Nearness to conservation areas and access to recreation opportunities
- Increase in diversity over the last generation (see page 27)

Concerns:

- Reliability of transit system
- Impacts of poverty
- Lack of social night life activities
- Exclusionary costs of some recreational activities
- Exclusionary attitudes of some residents
- Lack of connectivity between service organizations and agencies

Perceptions of Immigration

As Durham Region's immigrant population increases, it is important for everyone in the community to gain an understanding of why people are coming to Canada – and Durham in particular – what are some of their struggles in getting here, and how do they interpret the value of immigration (what are the benefits to the region, in their opinions, of welcoming newcomers?). Some examples of what was heard are listed below.

- Immigrants to Canada reported coming primarily for better opportunities in quality of life and education. Immigrants chose to settle in Durham specifically due to job offers and the presence of family and friends already in the area (see page 29).
- The immigration process was reportedly too long and too expensive for many newcomers and it lacked important information and access to that information. Some participants also felt it was discriminatory towards people from certain regions of the world or in unusual circumstances (see page 30).

Some benefits of immigration that were noted were the potential for immigrants to use their knowledge and experience to help other immigrants in the area as well as the ability of people from various backgrounds to help to bring communities together to understand difference and how the world works (see page 30).

Most concerns with immigration were voiced in relation to job security of long-time Canadians; however, concerns about newcomers getting into trouble and making a bad name for all immigrants was also mentioned (see page 32).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the literature review and interview findings for this research, recommendations for moving forward are offered in the following areas:

Cultural Competency

Cultural competency may be viewed as “a *set of congruent behaviours, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency, or among professionals that enables effective work in cross-cultural situations*” (1).

- It is recommended that efforts be made to develop and support processes of organizational, systemic and social change that improve the cultural competence of the regional community and the government, organizations, institutions, and businesses that serve the community. This needs to occur at the individual level, organizational level and a systemic level.

The removal of barriers to full participation in the community

- It is recommended that the community develop and support processes for the assessment and removal of physical and systemic barriers to inclusion that exist within our community so that all of the Region's communities may participate in the life of the community.

Encouraging community interaction in order to promote integration

- It is recommended that the larger Durham community continue to develop and support processes, activities and initiatives that promote engagement and interaction between diverse communities in Durham.

Continued engagement and ongoing assessment to promote understanding of the changing needs of our community

- It is recommended that in order to understand and respond to the constant change in the social, economic, political and cultural landscapes of Durham, all communities and service providers should continue to develop and support processes for ongoing community engagement, assessment and research that will allow for the development of detailed and up-to-date knowledge about our community.

Please see full report for more details.



INTRODUCTION

In our contemporary world of global connections, flows, and interactions, more people in more places around the globe are now able to consider a wider set of possible lives than ever before in history. The forces of globalization have provided us with unprecedented access to the world on a global scale. We can travel more freely, we can access information more rapidly, and we can imagine lives for our families and ourselves more broadly. However, access to the benefits of these forces is not equitable, and somewhat ironically, it is often the effects of these same forces of globalization that set people in motion, as they are either forced to migrate, or choose to do so to access opportunities not currently available to them. At the same time, many Western nations, including Canada, have experienced a demographic shift due to low-birth rates that, combined with transitions from manufacturing to service-based economies, has resulted in an increased demand for a highly skilled labour force. To meet these demands, Western nations have, to varying degrees, supported global migration through active immigration programs. Therefore, a major result of contemporary globalization has been the global flow of people at a scale not seen before in the history of humanity.

As human migration has become an increasingly prevalent characteristic of the contemporary global landscape, many nations in the developed world have been forced to adapt to the growing diversity of their populations. In Canada, in order to meet the demands caused by decreasing birth rates and an aging population, immigration has been on the rise for several decades. In the 25-year period between 1980 and 1995, an average of 192,000 immigrants were admitted to Canada each year. This number increased in the 1990s, with an annual average of 224,000 new immigrants being admitted to Canada between 1990 and 2001 (2). These trends have continued in the early years of the 21st century, and immigrants now account for 20% of the total population in Canada, numbering roughly 6 million in 2006, and they accounted for nearly 70% of the nation's population growth between 2001 and 2006 (3). Today, Canada admits over 250,000 new immigrants into the country each year.

Roughly 55% of immigrants to Canada live in the province of Ontario, and increases in the immigrant population in this province account for 77% of the overall population growth that occurred between 2001 and 2006 (4). Although a significant proportion (36%) of Ontario's immigrant population live in the City of Toronto, smaller cities and regions in the Greater Toronto Area, and the rest of Ontario, have started to see increases in the number of immigrants living in their communities. The Regional Municipality of Durham is no exception to this trend. In fact, Durham is well on its way to experiencing significant changes to its demography and economy.

The Local Diversity and Immigration Partnership Council

With these dynamic trends in mind, in 2008, Durham Regional Council in Durham mandated the formation of a Local Diversity and Immigration Partnership Council (LDIPC). The LDIPC is a community advisory body lending direction and providing leadership, coordination and support to existing diversity and immigration initiatives and developing new initiatives in partnership with local businesses, voluntary sector organizations, educational institutions, public sector organizations, and the community at large.

The council was formed in partnership with the Community Development Council of Durham, the Durham Region Local Training Board and the Region of Durham. The council is funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

The Council was given the task of developing and providing stewardship to a local diversity and immigration strategy. The strategy has four primary goals. They are to foster a culture of inclusion in the Region of Durham, improve labour market outcomes for newcomers, attract and retain newcomers and enhance Durham's settlement capacity.

To facilitate the establishment of the LDIPC and the development of the diversity and immigration strategy, an advisory group was formed, with representatives of 17 organizations, agencies, sectors and stakeholders. The advisory group was tasked with overseeing the development of a process of community consultation and engagement that would inform the development of the Council and strategic plan. After consultations throughout 2008 and 2009 an interim council was established and a draft strategic plan was developed. The final document will be informed by the results of this research, which examines the needs, desire and experiences of the Durham community.

PURPOSE AND RATIONALE

As a social planning organization, the Community Development Council Durham (CDCD) is primarily concerned with understanding (through research) and improving (through policy processes and community development) the social experiences and quality of life of members of the community. This work is approached from a social justice perspective, believing that all members of our community have a right to participation in the social, economic, cultural and political life of our community. We further believe that this process begins with the development of a welcoming and inclusive community that is devoid of explicit and implicit barriers to integration and engagement. Integration, like other social processes, is not a passive endeavour. It involves the on-going interaction of communities, albeit communities with various levels of social, cultural, economic, and political power. Through these interactions, new cultural and social forms are developed, resulting in changes to all communities involved. Although popular discourse on integration may promote conformity and a one-way process of change, in reality, the long-term process of immigrant integration in Canada leads to changes in both immigrant communities and Canadian society. Thus, we must shift our focus away from the experience of immigrant communities toward the experiences of immigration in the community as a whole. This expands our perspective to include both immigrant and non-immigrant communities in our work to develop local immigration strategies.

The purpose of this research was to develop an understanding of the social experiences of our community as they related to immigration and diversity. As such, we set out to engage members of the community in Durham in dialogue on their experiences with, and perceptions of immigration. Building from our belief that immigration is a Canadian experience that shapes the social lives and identities of both new and native-born Canadians, we designed a research project that would engage both individuals from diverse immigration backgrounds as well as those who were native born Canadians. Through this approach we were able to gain detailed insight into how immigration is experienced – by both immigrants themselves and by members of the whole community – providing us with a diverse and accurate picture of the reality of immigration as a social phenomenon in our community.

METHODOLOGY

The vast majority of research on immigrants in Canada is quantitative, based on surveys and large, statistical data sets. Even when the data is qualitative in nature, focusing on the subjective experience of newcomers in Canadian communities, it excludes other members of the community who are influenced by, and influence newcomers through daily social interactions and experiences. As we have already discussed, we believe that a true understanding of the social experience of immigration comes from understanding how immigration and the subsequent increase in diversity impacts on the entire community. Thus, we designed this project to engage both members of immigrant and non-immigrant communities in Durham. We used a qualitative methodology, as we are interested in how immigration was experienced and perceived by

members of the Durham community. Through this approach, we may better understand the ways in which inclusion, or lack of inclusion, are felt, addressed, and enacted in our community and gain real insight into the needs of the area that go beyond shifting demographic statistics.

Participants were recruited in one of three broadly defined categories: (1) members of local immigrant communities, (2) members of local non-immigrant communities, (3) representatives from local service organizations that work with newcomers directly or indirectly. Efforts were taken to ensure diversity in the participant pool to help us gain a dynamic perspective. Recruitment occurred through posters, local networks and word of mouth and participants received a \$50 gift card upon completing the interview. Each interview lasted between 30 and 60 minutes with a few lasting longer than an hour.

We completed a total of 49 in-depth interviews using a semi-structured interview approach. Of the 49 participants we interviewed:

- 18 identified as Canadian born or as naturalized Canadian citizens who had lived in Canada for more than 25 years:
 - ◊ 6 were employed at the time of the interview, in jobs such as education, business management, technology and healthcare;
 - ◊ 7 were students (4 in senior grades of secondary school – 2 of which were young mothers and/or pregnant – and 3 in post-secondary education);
 - ◊ Of the 5 unemployed participants, 2 had post-secondary training (childcare, computers and addictions) and were looking for work, 1 person was physically disabled which prevented them from working, 1 had devoted their time to eldercare, taking care of an aging parent and 1 was retired.
- 15 identified as immigrants to Canada:
 - ◊ 7 were employed at the time of the interview, in jobs such as administration, not-for-profit work, personal esthetics, hospitality, custodial work and childcare – the latter three being positions unrelated to previous employment outside of Canada;
 - ◊ A couple of immigrants were students in post-secondary school;
 - ◊ A couple were retired;
 - ◊ Others were looking for work, volunteering and/or relying on a spouse for family income.
- 7 identified as immigrant youth or second-generation immigrant youth (attending secondary school).
- 9 were representatives of local community service organizations in the areas of health care, education, immigrant support, faith/religion and culture.

Participants lived and worked in Ajax, Pickering, Whitby, Oshawa, Bowmanville and Cannington.

Immigrants came from countries including Tanzania, United States, Democratic Republic of Congo, Mexico, Guyana, Morocco, Colombia, Peru, Afghanistan, Great Britain, Granada, Jamaica and another Caribbean country that was not specified. Some had migrated from the country of their birth to another country before migrating to Canada.

Participants with immigration backgrounds who identified as non-immigrant Canadians when interviewed for this study were born in the countries of Italy and Pakistan.

Prior to living in Durham, participants lived in other cities in Canada, including Scarborough, Toronto, Woodbridge, Vancouver, BC and Gatineau, Quebec.

IMMIGRATION IN DURHAM

Situated just east of Toronto along the shore of Lake Ontario, the Region of Durham has experienced an unprecedented rate of growth and development over the past decade that has resulted in substantial changes to the social, cultural, economic, and political landscape of the region and its municipalities (5). According to the Ontario Ministry of Finance the population of Durham will reach 624,250 in 2010, and in the decade between 2000 and 2009, the population in the region increased by approximately 29% (6). The overwhelming majority of this growth occurred in the semi-urban lakeshore municipalities of Pickering, Ajax, Whitby, Oshawa, and Clarington (Table 1). This trend is expected to continue, with the population projected to increase at an average annual rate of 2% over the next 25 years to a total population in 2036 of 1,028,780 (7) (Chart 1).



Chart 1: Population Growth (projected) in the Region of Durham, 2006 – 2036 (Ontario Ministry of Finance Projections, 2009)

Municipality	1991	1996	2001	2006
Pickering	68631	78989	87139	87800
Ajax	57350	64430	73753	90220
Whitby	61281	73794	87413	111190
Oshawa	129344	134364	139051	141580
Clarington	49479	60615	69834	77800
Scugog	17810	18837	20224	21440
Brock	11057	11705	12110	11990
Uxbridge	14092	15882	17377	19170

Table 1: Population in Durham's Municipalities, 1991 – 2006 (Statistics Canada, Census 1991, 1996, 2001, 2006)

Currently, immigrants make up 20% of Durham's overall population (113,390 persons), with the majority of these individuals living in the municipalities of Pickering, Ajax, and Whitby (Chart 2). Between 2001 and 2006, the immigrant population in Durham increased by 19% and foreign-born Canadians accounted for 34% of the overall population growth in Durham. 53.5% of this group were recent immigrants, having arrived in Canada during the previous 5 years (8). The majority of this growth has occurred in the suburban communities of Pickering, Ajax, and Whitby. In fact, between 2001 and 2006 the immigrant population in Ajax increased by nearly 50%, resulting in a proportional increase of 5% (25% - 30%) of the population being immigrants in this community (9) (Chart 3). In Whitby, the immigrant population grew by almost 40% during this time period (10).

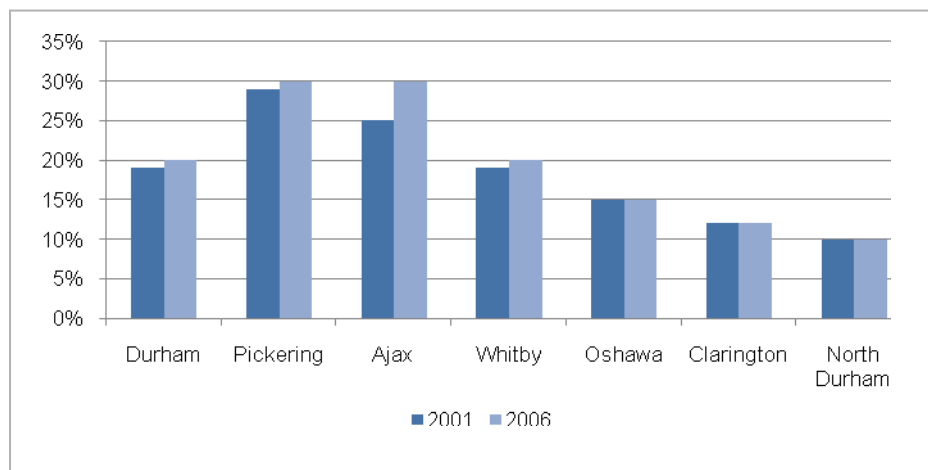


Chart 2: Immigrant Population in Durham municipalities as a proportion of the total population, 2001 and 2006 (Statistics Canada, Census 2001 and 2006)

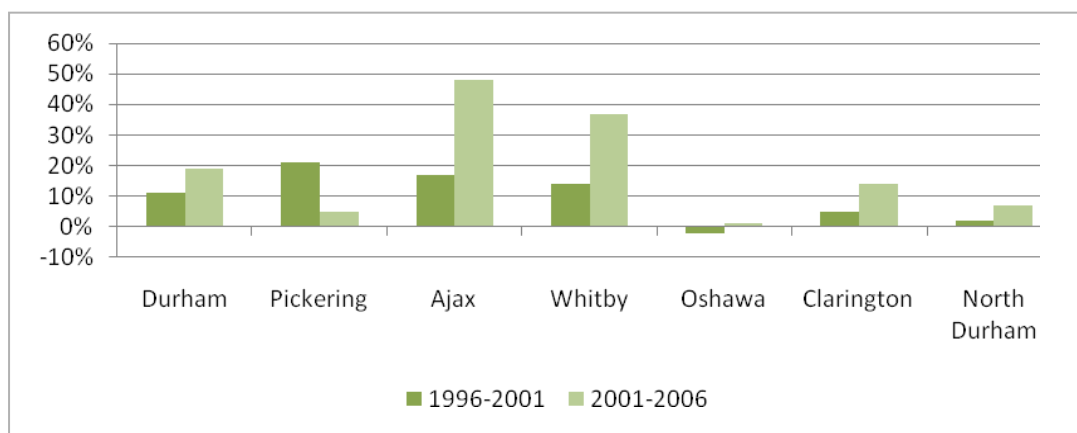


Chart 3: Growth in the immigrant population in Durham municipalities in selected periods (Statistics Canada, Census 1996, 2001, and 2006)

This growth has led to an increasingly diverse immigrant population living in Durham, manifested in the growth of several ethnic communities. For example, the Latin American community in Durham grew by nearly 700% between 2001 and 2006 (11). This was followed by significant growth in ethnic populations coming from South Asia, Africa and Eastern Europe (12). These trends are also evident in the fact that the population of visible minorities in the Region increased by nearly 50% between 2001 and 2006 (13). Further, visible minorities accounted for 57% of the overall population growth in Durham over the same five-year period (14).

These trends will continue. A conservative estimate predicts that the immigrant population in Durham will increase at an annual rate of 3% in the period between 2008 and 2036 (Chart 4). This growth will result in an increase of 17% of the immigrant population in Durham over the next 5 years (2010-2015) to 153,574 persons or 22% of the total population.

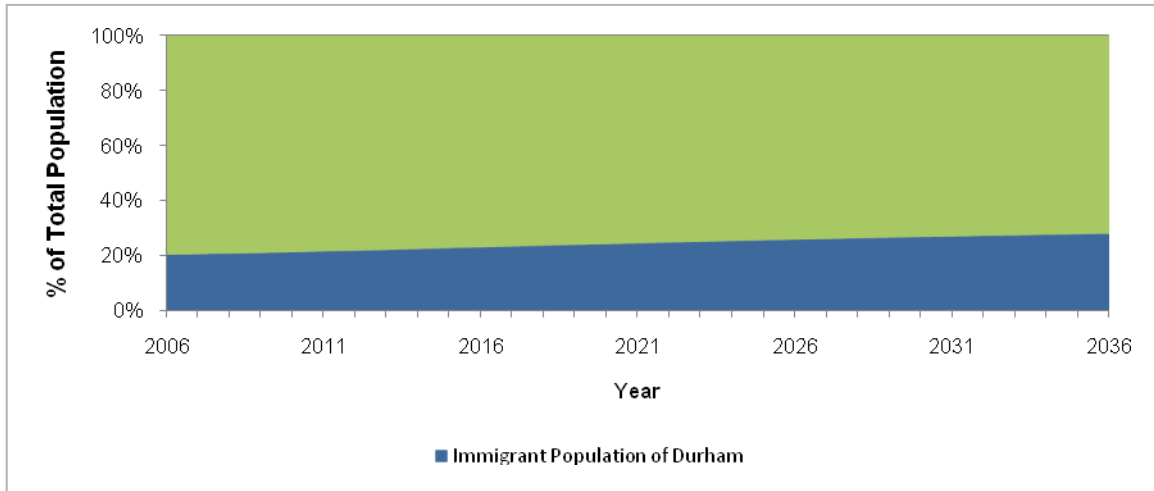


Chart4: Projected growth of the proportion of the population in Durham that is foreign born, 2006 – 2036 (Data source: Statistics Canada, Census 2006 and the Ontario Ministry of Finance, 2009)

With these demographic shifts – increases in the immigrant population and the growth of ethnocultural diversity – Durham, like many other Canadian communities, has increasingly faced the challenges of integration and social cohesion that are part of the experience of immigration in Canada, and internationally. Local government, health and social service organizations, and businesses have been given the difficult task of addressing the needs and desires of an incredibly diverse and dynamic population, and of working to ensure that local policies, programs, services and practices promote and facilitate the development of a culture of inclusion in our community. In order to meet these demands, we need to develop several understandings of the contemporary experience of immigration in the Canadian context and at the community level.

IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION

“Integration is about incorporating newcomers to a democratic process of participation and negotiation that shapes the future, and not about conforming and confining people to pre-established outcomes based on the status quo” (15)



The Region of Durham is well on its way to experiencing significant changes to its demography and economy. Between 2001 and 2006, the overall population grew 11% to 561,258. 20% of this population was foreign born, while 17% identified as visible minorities (an increase of 5% since 2001) (16). While the economic recession—when defined as negative economic growth on a national level—has been declared over, its effects on local communities are expected to continue for a number of years. With a projected shift away from higher-paying jobs in the manufacturing sector to low-waged jobs in the service industry, Durham Region is far from immune to changes in employment patterns and community service needs (17). How we handle these changes, as a community, is up to us.

Experts in community development, Michael and Judie Bopp (2006), encourage communities to reflect on their goals and embrace the chance to recreate themselves. Their argument is as follows: we, as humans, created our current systems over time, in order to reach certain goals. If these goals are changing, it is necessary to create new systems and ways of doing things, at personal, family, community, and larger levels (18). In the context of the demographic changes cited above, it would be logical that these systems in Durham should recognize the value of diversity beyond its convenient symbolism. According to Martin Papillon (2002), cities that are able to access diversity are put in a very advantageous position for social and economic growth because, as a space where differences meet and negotiate, a diverse city is “highly conducive to creativity and innovation” (19).

Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing describes similar opportunity through her theory of friction. While observing different groups working towards similar goals, Tsing found that misunderstandings between the groups did not result in conflict, as might be expected. Instead, they offered various perspectives and knowledge that helped them to work together (20). When differences come into contact, they produce interactions that Tsing refers to as friction, and it is out of this friction that new ideas and insights can emerge. Tsing asks us to embrace the “awkward, unequal, unstable and creative qualities of interconnection across difference” (21) because they “*can lead to new arrangements of culture and power*” (22) that are more representative of all parties involved.

For the benefits of diversity to exist, however, there needs to be a *source* of new and different ideas and ways of doing things, as well as a climate of inclusion, so these ideas are acknowledged and used to the community’s advantage. While the sources of diversity and creativity are not limited to new residents to an area, this group often faces large challenges when it comes to inclusion and acceptance. These challenges are amplified according to the degree of

difference that is associated with an individual, as compared to the local population (23). It is no surprise that immigrants, especially those from non-European countries and those identified as visible minorities, come up against some of the largest barriers when attempting to settle into a predominantly Caucasian, Anglophone community (24), such as Durham. Given this reality, as well as evidence of swift changes to the demography and economy in the Region of Durham, this research project focuses on social inclusion and the integration of immigrants on the part of communities and individuals in Durham. While many studies have examined factors such as socioeconomic achievement through an objective lens to measure integration, it has been suggested that gathering the subjective realities of immigrants' quality of life in host countries, from the immigrants themselves, can be a very effective way of studying integration (25). For example, in a study in Europe, Mirna Safi (2009) found that dissatisfaction with life was more heavily influenced by the discrimination faced by certain immigrant groups in their community than by the level of their objectively measured assimilation (26). Before describing our research methods and findings, it is important to discuss the theory of *Social Inclusion* and its relation to integration.

SOCIAL INCLUSION AND IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION

Social Inclusion has been defined in numerous ways. Schultz and Sankaran (2007) provide an overarching description of inclusion as a collection of people and processes that “*creates both the feeling and reality of belonging and helps each of us reach our full potential*” (27). Scott, Selbee and Reed (2006), feel it can be quantitatively measured by many specific factors, including how often one volunteers, votes, donates money or time, joins social groups or clubs, and engages oneself in economic or political activities (28). Omidvar and Richmond (2003) argue that inclusion is about closing physical, social and economic distances separating people, and not just about eliminating barriers to service access (29). In other words, when an information pamphlet is offered in someone's native language, the barrier to accessing the information is eliminated. However, social inclusion is not occurring until the person has had the chance to discuss what kind of information should go into the pamphlet in the first place. Viswanathan, Shakir, Tang and Ramos (2003) underscore the importance of recognizing the power imbalance that exists in such negotiations, where ‘diversity’ is a socially constructed concept, created in relation to the perceived dominant norm in a community. The presence of these relationship dynamics means that ideas of ‘difference’, and of *who* should be included and *how* they should be included, are created and controlled by those with power (30).

This last point is particularly salient when we consider the integration of immigrants into the community. Traditional views of integration imply an expectation that newcomers must conform to the normative standards of the dominant, Canadian-born population—and thrive nearly as well as them—if they are to be recognized as successful by the receiving society (31). Many scholars of integration theory and policy have voiced the inaccuracy and uselessness of this traditional view due to its implication that only the immigrants must take on the responsibility of adapting to



change (32). According to Li (2003), this perspective makes it difficult to see differences as beneficial – that they can complement what Canada has, and fulfill what Canada is missing (33). Jenson (2002) expands on this notion of community building with the suggestion that concepts of *unity* and *diversity* within the Canadian multicultural model, do not have to be mutually exclusive. Perhaps Canada needs to move away from Trudeau’s ‘cultures of origin’ approach and instead, embrace the possibilities of encouraging “*a creative public dialogue*” that equally combines “*the progressive values imported by our newcomer communities along with the democratic traditions of the host society*” (34). In other words, inclusion and integration are multidirectional processes (35). They require the effort and responsibility of both host and newcomer populations, and they effect these populations in different ways.

Acculturation is a term commonly used to describe the degree of integration between cultural groups. According to Berry (2001), the view of acculturation differs between host and newcomer populations, but is by no means the same for every host community or every newcomer group. Berry measures the extent of acculturation using two variables: how much a group maintains its cultural heritage and identity, and how often a group seeks relationships with groups that do not share its cultural heritage and identity—see Figure 1, below. This approach provides a clear illustration of various levels of cultural interaction and enhances our understanding of host/newcomer relationship dynamics. In addition, it moves away from one-dimensional, linear models of integration used to illustrate the unidirectional nature of the traditional view of integration, as discussed above. However, this model falls short of capturing one of the largest influences on integration in any direction: power differentials between host and newcomer groups (36).

Figure 1 – Berry’s Acculturation Model (37)

	Maintenance of Heritage Culture and Identity							
Relationships Sought Among Groups		+	>	-		+	>	-
	+	Integration		Assimilation		Multiculturalism		Melting Pot
	I							
	I							
	-	Separation		Marginalization		Segregation		Exclusion
		<i>Strategies of Ethnocultural Groups</i>				<i>Strategies of Larger Society</i>		

As Sakamoto (2007) explains, overlooking the role that power dynamics play in integration processes means that structural issues that impact a person’s ability to integrate are also not being acknowledged. Sakamoto’s concern is that this will result in categorizing immigrants based only on the degree of acculturation they have achieved, which could mean seeing a group or individual as lazy or of lesser value than others, because systemic impediments have not been considered. This inaccurate categorization could in turn lead to treatment of the immigrant (for example, in a customer service setting) that is inadvertently harmful or punishing (38). For this reason, it is important to understand both individual and societal level influences when engaging in integration research.

On a practical level, building a society based on the inclusion of the diversity it houses and produces means that multidirectional integration must be institutionalized in public policies, recognized as legitimate by local residents—both immigrants and non-immigrants—and internalized by the entire community. While federal and provincial involvement is necessary, the patterns of inclusion differ from neighbourhood to neighbourhood, making local level efforts at welcoming, appreciating, and sustaining diversity absolutely imperative (39).

Community engagement and participation are also extremely integral to the success of building an inclusive community. In a study by Van der Velde, Williamson and Ogilvie (2009), the participatory action research (PAR) approach produced a cycle of increasingly positive results. By inviting participants to take an active role in the beginning stages of a project, they were able to gain the knowledge and accompanying empowerment that motivated their continued involvement (40). Sandercock strongly supports this view and encourages researchers and policy makers to actively listen to “voices of difference” in all inclusion planning processes (41). This is an important goal of the Local Diversity and Immigration Partnership Council, and as such, is reflected in the research methods employed for this study. By gathering opinions and hearing the experiences of a wide variety of Durham Region residents, the research team was able to identify issues of concern with more accuracy while improving resident involvement in, and awareness of, community planning.



THE EXPERIENCE OF IMMIGRATION IN DURHAM

Through the interview process we were able to define four major themes in the ways in which individuals in Durham discussed immigration, the experience of being an immigrant, and perceptions of and experiences with diversity. These themes are (not in order of significance):

- A. Socialization
- B. Discrimination
- C. Perceptions of the Durham region community
- D. Opinions and perceptions of immigration

The results of the interviews are presented according to these defined thematic categories.

A: SOCIALIZATION

Socialization may be defined as the process whereby an individual's standards, skills, motives, attitudes, and behaviors change to conform to those regarded as desirable and appropriate for his or her present and future role in any particular society. Many agents and agencies play a role in the socialization process, including family, peers,

“The assessment [of immigrant integration] is often based on a narrow understanding and a rigid expectation that treat integration solely in terms of the degree to which immigrants converge to the average performance of native-born Canadians and their normative and behavioural standards” (42).

schools, the community and the media. Thus, socialization requires that individuals and communities adopt specific patterns of behaviour that include the language, customs, beliefs and values which correlate with the culture or social context in which they reside. To be ‘socialized’ is a life-long, cumulative process of learning, relearning, and unlearning the existing (and changing) knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours of cultural and social contexts. Thus, socialization is a situated social process that involves interaction and exchange in order to learn what is normative within a given society. This presents a great challenge to newcomers in our

community who are moving from one social and cultural milieu into another while attempting to settle and integrate into the community. Becoming socialized to the cultural and social norms and values of Canada, and our community in Durham, is an important part of the integration process, to the point where Peter S. Li argues, *“the assessment [of immigrant integration] is often based on a narrow understanding and a rigid expectation that treat integration solely in terms of the degree to which immigrants converge to the average performance of native-born Canadians and their normative and behavioural standards”* (42). Participants in this project discussed this challenge at length.

Identity and Socialization

Canada has adopted a paradigm of multiculturalism to promote and support the integration of diversity into Canadian society. Multiculturalism is purported to ensure that all citizens may maintain their identities, may take pride in their ancestry, and may have a sense of belonging in Canadian society (Department of Canadian Heritage, 2007). The way that many participants identified themselves ethnically demonstrates how ingrained this concept is to the Canadian psyche. As is expected, all of the immigrant participants identified primarily with their native cultural or national heritage in identifying themselves (e.g. as Jamaican, Indian, Afghan), with a few also identifying as Canadian. Interestingly however, out of the 18 interviews with non-immigrant members of the community, only three identified themselves as solely Canadian, with seven identifying by ancestral heritage first and Canadian second (e.g. German-Canadian, Scottish-Canadian), three identified only with their heritage or ancestral background, and the remainder identified with various religions or other abilities or race identities. We must note that none of this precluded a lack of attachment to Canada, life in Canada, or to the dominating ideals of Canadian society. In fact, a majority of respondents, both immigrant and non-immigrant described Canada with terms like *multicultural*, *diverse*, and *open to difference*. This being said, the concept of multiple cultural identities did raise some issues and concerns around socialization of newcomers to the Durham community. The concept may bring up concerns over allegiance that, returning to the statement by Li above, preclude acceptance of newcomers as full members of the community.

This concern is particularly salient with immigrant and second generation immigrant (i.e. those who have immigrant parents but were born in Canada) youth. The youth interviewed for this project identified themselves in a variety of ways, generally using a hyphenated Canadian identity (e.g. Afghan-Canadian) that reflected, to them, their heritage and roots but also their position and privilege as Canadian members of the community. For these youth, being born in Canada has a heavy influence on feeling Canadian; however, for one youth, her Chinese cultural background was much stronger, heavily influenced by her home life, so she did not identify as Canadian at all. According to the youth interviewed, this is not an uncommon experience for young people in immigrant communities. For youth, cultural identity was not always the first thing to come to mind, which indicates other factors are important in making them feel included. For example, some participants identified as 'Muslim' or 'teenager' before any specific ethnicity. However, they did identify that they feel pressure to "identify" in Canada, which they attributed to Canada's position of multiculturalism. For example, one youth participant stated:

Like, when you ask me [about my identity], then I have to give you something, an answer that's unique, that will actually define me a little more [than 'Canadian']... You want to know what is it about them that's different from you. That's why I think people will answer with those labels...without saying the Canadian part, because it depends on who you're talking to.

In a similar way, people that live in Canada but share the cultural identity of the youth's parents will not accept that the youth could have a hybrid identity. They have been socialized to understand 'Canadian' as one thing and their own culture as another, separate thing – so if the youth is acting in any way similar to the accepted Canadian 'norm', they might be labeled as not belonging to their parents' cultural group. As one youth informed us, "As a joke, my siblings always tease me, 'you're not Afghan, you're Canadian'." This reflects the feelings of many of the youth participants that, despite rhetoric on multiculturalism, there is a perception that it is not acceptable to be both part of an immigrant community and Canadian. As in the example stated above, acting Canadian seems to mean that one is acting un-Afghani. This can complicate feelings of belonging for some second generation youth.

When it comes to opinions about immigration in Canada, the unique socialization processes through which second generation immigrant youth are going (growing up in Canada with strong additional cultural influences) can result in some very interesting viewpoints. One youth expressed a sentiment that illustrated their recognition of the struggles faced by their immigrant parents: "I think everyone should have a chance for a change and to live a better life."

Conversely, another youth voiced an opinion on policy that is often heard from individuals that have a misunderstanding of immigration and immigrants, due to a lack of exposure to them: "[We] probably need a greater open door policy, but I like the point system still because it...makes sure that we do bring people who will contribute and not just live off of social welfare, for example...we need people who are productive and are willing to make a living." This example illustrates how differences in socialization can influence peoples' opinions and behavior regardless of the common experience of having immigrant parents.



Recognizing the impact that socialization has on a community is important. It speaks to the subconscious thinking within society, and its power to influence ideas and behavior. In Canada, it may be especially helpful to recognize this impact, as we negotiate significant differences between individuals, groups, and communities on a daily basis. A youth participant commented on this reality and her method of dealing with it:

"I know I can appreciate from my own struggle that it took a lot to kind of accept both worlds and find the perfect fit for me and not really care what each and every person's individual opinion is. Because part of living in Canada means you're going to face diversity and opinions and thoughts as well. So it's kind of like the general concept of you can't make everyone happy, right?"

Feelings of inclusion, community institutions and socialization

The process of socialization of newcomers to the norms and values of daily life in Canada begins with welcoming communities and feelings of inclusion, representation and acceptance. This begins with the immediate perception of diversity that greets a newcomer to the community and how this is reflected in public institutions, business and service settings. If newcomers do not see themselves in the community it may create barriers to their socialization and ultimately the integration process. One participant representing a local ethno-cultural organization made the following comment:

Government...and organizations in our [community are] not that reflective of the makeup of the community. If we want to make everybody welcome to our city and our region, we have to have those people on the front lines, the people who speak those languages, not just translation services ...this will show that we welcome people and make them feel at home, we have to have this sense that this is my country, my region, my town.



Many respondents agreed with this point, arguing that community recognition and systematic representation of cultural diversity in government, organizations, and institutions will allow the initial socialization process to progress more smoothly. This will improve the immigration experience for everyone. Immigrants and newcomers will not be so easily 'othered' if they are represented in positions of community advancement or power, and non-immigrants will be encouraged to recognize the social, economic and political advantage that accompanies diversity in our community. One non-immigrant community member elaborated enthusiastically on this point by saying that:

It should be common for people to be welcoming. I know there are people who aren't but I know that is just personality. But start them young! Just talking about diversity all throughout the school system, I think is important...if you can get speakers of all different backgrounds, and not necessarily speaking about their culture, just speaking about anything, like get a scientist in but make it a scientist [with an African ethnic background], rather than an old white guy. Get someone of a different culture, and maybe not even make a big deal about it, but let the students get used to it, realizing that everyone can do anything...there are still tensions between races, which is ridiculous, people getting in fights and what not, and I think this comes from a lack of understanding between different cultural backgrounds...there is a need to promote tolerance and equality, and especially teenagers tend to be afraid of what is new or different, you have to show them that you don't have to like [everyone] but you do need to respect them.

The importance of cultural socialization in school curriculums as brought up by this participant was a common recommendation within our research. The belief is that an education on the value of diversity would create a more accepting community and more positive attachment and reaction to multicultural identities within the community. One of our 20 year old native-born Canadian participants made a comment that relates to the fact that the current educational system does not incorporate cross cultural sensitivity into the curriculum, stating that, "[i]n elementary school everyone integrated with one another and were more of a group, as they got older and went to high school people separated...perhaps this is because when people get older they notice 'difference' more, the older they got the more judgmental they got." Extending from this comment, we can see the importance of the socialization process as it impacts on the host community. That is, if youth are not better educated about the value of diversity and become socialized into a community based on narrow minded ideologies of acceptance and inclusion of what is different, the community is further distanced from potentially being an inclusive community. Respondents expressed concern that as generations of youth get older they would manifest these assumptions of who is believed to be included and who is excluded within their daily lives and continue this complicated cycle of intolerance. There is a great importance behind educating youth so that government programs and services do not have to address attitudinal issues of integration and inclusion of difference in the future. As one respondent stated, "starting with

Issues of culture, family and socialization

The ways in which a person has been socialized can have a large impact on how they interact with other individuals, groups, and the community at large. People begin the process of socialization at a young age; they are highly influenced by family values and beliefs which are often formed through their families' history and position in society, such as their race, class, or political affiliation. One respondent summed it up quite nicely when they said, "*some people are nice and some people are rude. Some people come from different families, and have different manners and situations.*" In other words, the way one person has been socialized may be very different to the way their neighbour has been socialized. Not surprisingly, this can lead to differences of opinion that impact the relationship between those people and even their families. While this can occur between individuals with the same language and cultural background who have been socialized within a Canadian context, it is even more apparent when one of the individuals does not speak the dominant language very well, is from a different cultural background, and is new to life in Canada. This is the type of friction that we, as people who live in Canada, face every day in a multitude of ways. However, it is the person who has not been socialized within the dominant Canadian context that is more likely to find that integrating into their new community is a significant challenge because of it. Many, many instances of this challenge were communicated in the interviews by the immigrant participants.

For an individual who had been socialized within a Caribbean cultural context, one challenge was navigating the Durham Region community, which was, by this participant's measure, more disconnected and isolated than they were accustomed to. This individual shared the following insight: "*Specifically for Caribbean migrants, socializing is a lot different...We're coming by your house...it was almost like an open house, that's how we lived. You went for food wherever you smelled food.*" Another participant, this time from a central African nation, had a similar challenge:

I am from a society where people interact easily. [Here in Durham,] I happen to communicate with people only when I come to [a] place like this [the library]. But out there...people are like isolated, so it is a challenge...I'm not used to that, so if it was like in Africa for the ten, eleven months that I've stayed, I will have known almost everyone in my neighbourhood by names...so that's the challenge.

To individuals, who are inclined to reach out to people in their community, in casual ways and on a daily basis, their new neighbourhoods may feel cold initially as no one is reaching out to them in the way they are accustomed to. This unintentionally unwelcoming atmosphere could easily dissuade individuals from getting involved in other aspects of the community. Even individuals who attempt to get involved can be discouraged by the effects of different socialization processes, such as a respondent that was turned down for a volunteer position in the community:

I had been accustomed to volunteering back home. It may not be as structured just because we're living in an island setting, but you basically help where you can. This is actually new to me here in Canada, being structured and having to do applications where you can volunteer your time and the volunteer organizations have the opportunity to say no. I just think they probably need your help. So that's quite different.

Another respondent illustrated how the nuances of culture could prevent individuals from feeling like they deserve to belong in their new community:

If you have no job...what will you say [to people from your original country]? You go to Canada and you find no jobs – people will laugh at you [back] in Morocco...We have a proverb in Morocco: It's not [a] problem that you will move... [the concern] is when you... move to another town you [need to] have a job there, so it [feels like] your town.

In this individual's culture, there is a general sentiment that if you do not have a job, you are not able to contribute to your community, and therefore, you are not a part of it. Because this respondent was unemployed at the time of the interview, he not only felt excluded from the community of 'those who can contribute', but he was discriminated against by others from his culture that knew about the situation.

The fear of being ostracized by an individual's own cultural community appears to be common to many immigrant experiences of integration. One woman expressed her delight at being introduced to a local thrift clothing store by a Canadian friend, because it helped her to provide for her family without worsening her financial situation. However, she was initially hesitant to pass the tip on to other women from her own culture because buying used items was quite frowned upon, and she knew her friends would not want to shop there due to pride. This pride, a result of socialization within this woman's culture, could prevent individuals from engaging in certain forms of integration of themselves or their families into their new community. For instance, shopping at a thrift store might mean someone's child has more clothing to choose from and is less likely to be singled out at school.

One participant uses this example of children's clothing itself as factor in integration and feelings of inclusion. Socialized ideas about clothing in Canadian communities like Durham Region are often quite different than those in other areas of the world. In many countries, children wear school uniforms. When they come to public school in Canada, this is not the case, and many issues can arise. Staying in fashion, keeping up with costs, and adhering to what parents deem appropriate can all influence the ability of a child to feel included at school and to integrate with their classmates.

Experiences of transnationalism also play a large role in both socialization and feelings of inclusion. Many immigrants are living between two cultures and often even two locations, where one family member has come to Canada and is waiting to be joined by others. This poses a challenge to newcomers who are trying to become more invested in their Canadian community, but whose families keep their focus on 'back home'. For example, a woman from Mexico said she was happy to be in Canada because it is better for her immediate family; however, her extended family in Mexico is always trying to get her to come back home. Although they may miss the country they came from, many immigrants now call Canada 'home' and their new communities need to help make them feel that it is ok to belong to more than one place.

On the other side of the transnationalism coin, there are people that have to sever their connections with their home country. These people may be more desperate to form an attachment to their new community and feel more like they belong a lot sooner. A young man from a Middle Eastern country explained that he did not feel he could go back, because people there do not like it when their citizens go to other countries to study. While he does get homesick, his parents dream of joining him in Canada, so there could be even more pressure to get involved in his new community.

From the above examples of transnationalism, it is evident that leaving a place behind does not mean you forget it; however, each new place you find yourself in will leave a mark as well. Similarly, the process of socialization does not stop once a newcomer lands in Canada – immigrants and Canadians alike pick up new ideas about behavior and society, and may adjust themselves accordingly. A common – but by no means universal – change in behavior that was heard in this study is related to the language acquisition of newcomers. Individuals who are new to Canada and are struggling to learn English are often faced with impatience by native English- speakers. For example, *"In the grocery store...when I have to pay, maybe I don't understand some words and I have to say 'sorry'. There are more people behind me, so the people behind me say 'ughhh'."*



This treatment can be internalized in a process of socialization so that these individuals end up being embarrassed to attempt speaking English with Canadians, *"Sometimes I want to talk with somebody, I feel... a little embarrass [ed] because maybe these people don't understand me."* This participant explained that she meets Canadians that are her husband's friends, but still does not feel comfortable conversing with them. Even in this case, when her family situation could make social integration easier than for others, language remains a barrier. While other factors may also be at play in these situations, shying away from conversation or even contact with English-speakers could become a learned behavior, which has obvious implications on an individual's ability to improve their language skills and further involve themselves in the larger community.

Another large influence over an individual's feeling of belonging and desire to be part of the community is an individual's socialized attitude towards challenges such as those faced by immigrants to Canada and Durham Region. With a good attitude towards change and differences of opinion, anyone in a community is more likely to feel included. We spoke with a number of immigrants that fit this description. One man said he is open to talk to anyone and make friends with anyone. Another respondent indicated a desire to be part of the process of multiculturalism that exists in Canada. She wanted to extend herself to others and have a sense of purpose, ownership and pride in her community. Even when it is not easy, some individuals refuse to let it get them down. One such person was a woman who faced racial and sexual discrimination from a man, but chose not to take offence or buy into it, *"Sometimes I realize it's happening and I don't buy into it...I don't encourage it. Especially when people are really nasty, that's when I try to be very nice."* People with this type of attitude will have more luck integrating in a positive way, and feel comfortable in maintaining a lot of their own Self. This could even work to re-socialize other members of the community to recognize that differences between people do not have to result in disagreements and exclusion – they could be used to strengthen the community. This was illustrated in one participant's story about her daughter being the only black child in class and being teased and called names. Her mom told her to keep being nice. The girls that teased her later ended up needing her help in math, and now they are good friends.

These perceptions of difference and otherness can be internalized by non-immigrants as well and may lead to a lack of understanding or even concern for the experience of the immigrant themselves. For example, when a non-immigrant participant was asked what she thought were the risks or consequences of immigration she stated:

People in different cultures are raised differently and have different traditions and beliefs and I don't agree with some of the beliefs of some/certain cultures, and I don't want that brought here and I don't want that influenced on my children, and I don't want terrorism, not to say that somebody couldn't come from Durham that is a terrorist, but I think that you know, living differently and experiencing violence, and war, and death, changes a person and I think that immigrating to Canada or coming as a refugee and bringing different cultures here has its pros and cons.

Although certainly not the norm among participants in this project, this comment belies a disturbing attitude that may be pervasive in Canadian communities. It is one premised in our own processes of socialization and understanding of difference and the needs, desires and beliefs of newcomers to Canada. This takes us to the next major theme identified in this work.

B: DISCRIMINATION

“Discrimination is an assault on the very notion of human rights. Discrimination is the systematic denial of certain peoples' or groups' full human rights because of who they are or what they believe. It is all too easy to deny a person's human rights if you consider them as “less than human” (43).

The interview process exposed the fact that experiencing discrimination in Durham, as an immigrant or non-immigrant, is not uncommon. While there were a number of instances of *explicit discrimination*, involving direct comments relating to a person's ethnic background or appearance, it was also common to hear examples of *internalized discrimination*. It became evident that many instances of discrimination were not initially recognized as such by the person relaying their experience. However, these encounters would nevertheless have a large influence on the level of inclusiveness felt by the individual in their day-to-day life in Durham Region. A third type of discrimination that came up consistently throughout the interview process, is *implicit discrimination*. This includes systemic discrimination in the form of policies that systematically prevent certain people from accessing the services or resources they require. Examples of each type of discrimination are described below.

Explicit discrimination

Instances of explicit discrimination experienced by immigrants were exclusively in relation to ethnic background. In one situation, a participant – who is originally from the Caribbean – felt she was spoken down to by a white co-worker while they were working on the phrasing of an important document. When the co-worker told the immigrant participant, “*I know you people don't quite get this,*” the participant felt she was referring to her Caribbean background and the difference in education. The participant took the opportunity to remind the co-worker that both of their countries had been colonized by the British, making any differences in their understanding of English phrasing very slight.

This example above can be interpreted in different ways. While English language in a Canadian context is likely to differ in small ways from its use in the context of other countries, the element of discrimination in the form of an assumed lack of knowledge and the language used to convey it is undeniable, even if it may not have been intentional. This is a good example of the way that explicit discrimination can occur without it being recognized as such.

However, explicit discrimination is often intentional, as is evident in one participant's story of their experience moving into a neighbourhood in Durham. Recognizing that they were the only family of colour in the area was likely influencing their feelings of belonging to begin with. Being told that they were moving “*into the wrong neighbourhood*” as they unpacked would have done nothing to make them feel more welcome. As well as this anti-immigrant sentiment, the interview process exposed the possibility that there could be an atmosphere of ‘tolerance’ in some parts of the Durham community, but not necessarily ‘acceptance’. As one non-immigrant interviewee stated, “*Durham region can be seen as a very egocentric community, where [people who already live here] look at people coming in as opposed to sharing*”.

Discrimination towards immigrants not only creates unnecessary challenges in integration for the receiver; it can also prevent integration for the perpetrator by putting up barriers. An example of this, from one of the immigrant participants, was a situation in which a white man refused literacy help from a black woman. Not only does this impact the woman's feelings of inclusion as a contributing member of society in her role as an educator, but it prevents the man from furthering his skills in reading and writing, which would open many doors to his own feelings of inclusion in the community.

It is important to note that some discriminatory comments were heard from immigrant participants themselves, and it is by no means a one-way phenomenon. For example, during a discussion of Canada's immigration practices, one immigrant respondent identified that there was a *"need to ensure that people are screened properly when coming from countries where there is war,"* pointing to *"Arabs in particular."* Another immigrant participant expressed their views on the dangers of accepting refugees from the south: *"Mexican refugees are the worst of the worst."* While these sentiments may speak to the issue of media influences on perceptions of immigration and diversity in Canada, they are also an important reminder of the discrimination that can occur between different cultural communities within Canada, whether their members are immigrant or Canadian-born.

The data collected from the interview process illustrated that the majority of non-immigrant community members rarely experienced discrimination. Only four of the 18 'non-immigrant' participants acknowledged that they had experienced overt discrimination based on their visual appearance. Three of these attribute the incidence to skin colour and one participant due to a physical disability.

A young Caucasian woman who we interviewed was hired at a Harvey's restaurant that was owned and staffed by people of East Indian descent. She felt that her experience in the workplace was affected by discrimination based on her nationality and that she was only hired because of a lack of cultural difference within the establishment's staff roster. In another instance, a native born Canadian woman was discriminated against while working as a nurse; she once had a patient who would not accept her services because she is white. She said this happens in reverse as well:

There will sometimes be white patients that for some reason, they don't want to have a black nurse, and a lot of these patients are old and because they are elderly they are set in their ways.

This example of discrimination relates back to the discussion around community inclusion and the importance of socializing and educating people to be cross-culturally sensitive. Only in doing so, will the level of discrimination experienced by people in the Durham community decrease.

Internalized discrimination

There were many instances where, when asked if they had ever experienced discrimination in Canada or Durham Region, the immigrant participant said no, and that people were friendly. However, instances of discrimination, sometimes extreme ones, came up in other ways throughout the interview. This indicates that oppression is being internalized, or that immigrants expect certain forms of discrimination (e.g. racism) as part of the immigration process; it's 'just the way it is'. Some examples of this internalized discrimination are explained below. The first comments are responses to the question, *Have you ever experienced discrimination?* The following comments are situations that came up later in the interview.

- One participant expressed his feelings of inclusion in Durham Region: *"People are welcoming and accepting."* Later in the interview he commented on how important success is to Canadians, using that as an excuse for being ignored by friends that had immigrated earlier and had found employment before him.
- A respondent who indicated she felt generally accepted in Durham Region went on to explain a recurring incident of a bus driver being rude to her upon hearing her accent. She also mentioned that when people find out where she is from, they do not seem very happy.
- An immigrant from Jamaica says he encounters nice people and comments that he feels a part of the community. He later tells the story of being denied money for a business loan from a bank where he was told *"they don't give Jamaicans money."*

Responses from youth regarding discrimination were very similar to those heard from immigrant adults. The experiences were slightly different, however, as the youth identified as second generation immigrants, meaning they were born in Canada to immigrant parents or moved to Canada at a young age. The new perspective these youth bring to an exploration of discrimination is in their challenge of negotiating multiple cultural identities. Similar to an example mentioned earlier in relation to socialization, second generation immigrant youth sometimes experience discrimination from members of their parents' cultural community. One youth said she had faced discrimination in this way because she *"talks like a white girl."* This illustrates the complexity of discrimination issues in Canada, and in Durham Region itself.

Another interesting finding was the lack of comfort shown by the youth participants for the term 'visible minority.' The question, *Do you identify with the term 'visible minority'?* was met with a variety of responses; some inferring that there was more to the term than visual appearances (*"Physically speaking, we fit into that group"*), and others having nothing to do with what a person actually looks like. As one youth said: *"I don't identify myself as a visible minority. I would say that visible minority is [for] people just coming into the country, who don't know what the standard of living is here yet."* Another youth explained that his acceptance of use of the term, by others, to describe him, would depend on the way they said it: *"If I'm applying for a job, they can't say visible minority in that case. But if I'm in a protest or something, that's ok because I'm part of an ethnic group then."* Each of these responses indicate that the term 'visible minority' carries with it a deeper and broader meaning than its original purpose as a way to articulate information about members of the population that are not Caucasian in ethnicity or white in colour. This deeper meaning needs to be explored further to ensure that use of the term by organizations, local government, and community members does not result in unintentional feelings of being discriminated against.

Similar to the discussion of the internalized discrimination of immigrants, non-immigrant participants described situations wherein they participated in or experienced discrimination but did not initially recognize it as such. For example, when one non-immigrant participant was asked initially, she said that she had not experienced discrimination; however, later in the interview, she mentioned that people at her school would call her group of friends the *'The Brown Group'*. Once she heard that, she and the members of the group made an extra effort to become friends with people of all different backgrounds, and integrated themselves more into the school setting. It can be theorized that the participant blamed herself for not interacting more with others. She said that she had friends of the same ethnic background because they had common interests, and spoke the same language, making it easier to become friends with them. They had not intended to appear exclusive to friendships of their own ethnic background, and were uncomfortable with the title that had been given to them. They made it their responsibility to make friends with the people that had excluded them initially, and whom they had also excluded unintentionally. This illustrates the variety of ways in which discrimination can occur subconsciously, and the importance of addressing the issue once it becomes apparent.

Discrimination and employment

Because discrimination relating to issues of employment was mentioned so often – by both immigrant and non-immigrant participants – it was necessary to designate this discussion to a sub-section of its own. Within this section is a sizable discussion of *implicit discrimination*, as experienced by immigrant participants. However, a combination of *explicit* and *internalized* or unconscious discrimination is also present, primarily as it applies to non-immigrant sentiments towards immigrants and employment.

From a historical perspective, the relationship between labour shortages and anti-immigrant sentiment is far from being a modern-day phenomenon:

In the 1920s, hostility to immigrants was pronounced in urban areas, where they were employed in expanding the urban infrastructure or became part of a new industrial workforce. But it was particularly strong against immigrants who did not 'know their place.' When these immigrants successfully competed with non-immigrant workers, tradesmen, and small businessmen, or when their children leapfrogged assumptions about their racial inferiority by excelling in the public educational system and demanding access to the political arena, universities, and the professions, anti-immigrant sentiment grew (44).

During the interview process, each individual was asked what they believed to be the benefits and/or disadvantages to immigration in Durham Region. Within the context of an economic recession, a trend in anti-immigrant sentiment began to form in that the non-immigrant community feels as though newcomers are 'taking their jobs'.

When asked what the CDCD could do in order to help facilitate interaction, a participant responded by saying *"I don't know because there again you need to get people who are interested and sincerely want to get to know that type of people. There is a lot of negativity, at least in my experience to immigrants, because everyone that I know is saying 'they get everything and we get nothing, they are taking over and where are we left? They are taking all the benefits, they are getting all the jobs' and this is a negative stereotype because we don't know where they came from."*

In addition to this comment, a focus group consisting of women who work at a branch of the Public Library in Durham said that they have heard this sort of sentiment in the community. Comments like, *"we are bringing new immigrants here and they are taking away our jobs."* One woman in the group went on to say, *"We have heard that for 40 years; even 140 years! Whatever [immigration] wave it is!"* The group went on to acknowledge that the recession is really affecting the area and is therefore highly influencing this negative sentiment against newcomers. To support this assumption, when asked what he thought were the economic benefits of immigration, one non-immigrant participant commented: *"With the way the economy is now, there are not many jobs going out right now, so I am not sure how they are helping the economy, they would be bringing it down if anything."* Another participant made a comment that paralleled this response and reflected her concern with the potential effects that newcomers may have on the economic integrity of the region. She said, *"I think most of our people are losing their jobs. Like, the people from GM just got released; now nobody has jobs here, and then we have people from different countries coming and they are doctors, lawyers...and they come and take positions we could be taking."* The participant relayed the issue of immigrants getting jobs that Canadians could otherwise have, by using a fractional image: *"like 5 come down, three of us lose our job, and then another 10 come down and then 5 of us lose our job."*

However, throughout our research, we also discovered that there is a nuanced perspective to this issue.

Some non-immigrants notice the discrepancy in employment opportunities for immigrants and their skills, and can see their coming to Canada as a benefit because we can utilize their skills. Others see immigration as a challenge, but not such a detriment to the community: *"there are two sides to the story."* In response to the question about negative aspects of immigration to a community, one participant diligently addressed the issue of employment opportunities:

It's not really a negative. Like, it could be taken up by anybody, but if more people move to a community that you are living in, and there is more demand for the jobs, and then the jobs are taken away pretty quickly...but that could be taken up by somebody that is a non-immigrant, so it has no bearing on [immigrants in particular], but that is the only thing I can see as a possible negative.

The larger community can learn from the negative attitudes and misinformed assumptions that have been listed above, and make a strong effort to better educate the community – perhaps with information regarding the number of immigrants coming to the community and how job allocation has been (not) affecting those who are permanent residents. With more education, these opinions and anti-immigration sentiment would be less pervasive and would allow for the better integration of both communities. The community at large needs to be informed about the value of immigration and diversity within the workforce, and how newcomers bring their talents and skills to the service of the Canadian economy.

While many of the non-immigrant participants expressed concern (see above), many others expressed gratitude towards the skills and abilities that immigrants and newcomers bring to the community. As one non-immigrant participant explained, immigration *"brings in a highly educated work force. We can start building businesses which will bring wealth to Canada."* Another participant went on to state that *"the ones that are skilled can bring those skills that they have from back home. It gives like a different view on things. Where I work, I work with people from different cultures and it is beneficial to hear about their experiences."*

A representative of one of Durham's ethno-cultural organizations offered a valuable insight into what the larger community or the government can do, and continue to do, to improve the level of economic integration for newcomers and alleviate the concerns of the non-immigrant community:

I think there are excellent programs. This immigration portal, [for example]. I do hope that it has easy access [for] the newcomers... and that accessibility is available overseas in other countries as well. I think that the immigration department has made that kind of networking connection with countries such as India and China and other countries as well, where the students who have just graduated from the universities can come here and have respective jobs that are or will be available, because many immigrants come here on a points system. For example, if they are professional and speak English they can come here but when they come to Canada, they realize that there are not enough jobs for them and they become a burden...we are happy to accommodate and incorporate newcomers into the Canadian fabric...but in this way, if the Canadian Government already had a system set in place where people in their respected countries know what jobs are available and what is needed and required to get that job, and what courses and upgrading need to be done, they would rather do it there then come to Canada and do it.



With programs such as this, newcomers may not be as relentlessly perceived as burdens on the community and ‘taking the jobs of non-immigrants’. These programs would also benefit newcomers because they will know what to expect upon coming to Canada. To further this discussion, our research findings mirrored what Dr. Alvi and Dr. Fernando found in their research report, *The Impact of Immigration To Durham Region: A Preliminary, Qualitative Analysis* (2009). Their research consisted of speaking with eight immigrants to the Durham region who talked about their experiences and perceptions of the impact of immigration on the regional economy. They state that:

The main problem faced by about half of those interviewed was an unrealistic view of what Canada was and what opportunities were offered in terms of jobs. Several interview subjects said that for them and other immigrants that they had met, a critical issue is that they ‘didn’t know what to expect [and] didn’t realize the difficulties [in] credential recognition’. Several interviewees believed that ‘the picture of opportunity in Canada was overstated’ by consultants and immigration officials. This has meant that newcomers are often unprepared for the challenges that they face (45).

This is one of the issues at the centre of the problem of *Implicit Discrimination*, which the following section describes in more detail.

Implicit: Systemic discrimination as part of employment discourse

Through our research, we saw that the anti-immigrant sentiment expressed by a number of non-immigrant participants was also manifested at the systemic level, where its impact on newcomer employment experiences is most severe. This section will describe examples of these experiences, as discussed by interview participants, as well as academic support, in order to clarify the concept of *implicit/systemic discrimination*.

According to Iris Marion Young (1992), the phrase ‘systemic oppression’ refers to universal constraints on groups, and it is structural rather than the result of a few peoples’ choices or policies: *“Its causes are embedded in unquestioned norms, habits, and symbols, in the assumptions underlying institutional rules”* (46). Within her article, Young also refers to Marilyn Frye’s work in which she refers to systemic oppression as *“an enclosing structure of forces and barriers which tends to the immobilization and reduction of a group or category of people”* (47).

Systemic oppression – what we are referring to in this report as *implicit discrimination* – includes discourses of ‘powerlessness’ and relates to the ways in which newcomers are valued in comparison to Canadian citizens within the workforce. *“It remains the case [as it has for years] that the labour of most peoples in society augments the power of relatively few”* (48). Immigrants are socially situated to be powerless; their positions in society are such that they must take orders, so to speak, and rarely have the chance to give them. Those who have high levels of education in their home countries are often belittled upon arrival, in contrast to members of the Canadian-born population, who hold prestigious positions here in Canada, based on those same levels of education, or less. This powerlessness of immigrants is a huge loss for their new Canadian communities. One non-immigrant participant described the conundrum:

*We don’t know – where they came from, he might have held a bachelors degree, he might have been a doctor, she may have been a psychiatrist. Coming here they can’t have those positions because their education does not [match Canada’s] format of education so they are working in a restaurant or at McDonalds. We have to appreciate that they **do** have a high level of intelligence and education and when they come here, they are sort of stripped of that and have to start over. If they are coming to our country with that type education, we need that; we are losing a lot of doctors and professional people and our young kids are not going in that direction, and that worries me, especially within our health care system.*

As a result of oppressive policies and procedures, immigrants are often forced into low-income or low-skilled jobs where they are not exercising their full potential as citizens of their community. For social inclusion and immigrant integration to be successful, Schultz and Sankaran (2007) would posit that the community needs to create a feeling and a reality of belonging which helps each individual reach their full potential (49) . As shown through the research, due to the current exclusionary employment policies, the experience of immigration to Durham for newcomers has been rather negative. Similar to data collected by Statistics Canada in their *Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada* in 2007, immigrants within our study cited the following as difficulties in seeking employment: lack of recognition of foreign qualifications and experience, lack of Canadian work experience, and language barriers (50). One participant explained her difficulty and frustration at re-certifying in her field in Canada:

I came here as a skilled worker. I had to present all these qualifications to be able to come here as a skilled worker – I did the training [in my profession] for three years – and when I came here, I had to go and get my [Canadian] license. Fair enough, so I go to do the test. I do the test...and I went back home thinking ...my son, who was maybe two at the time, would have passed that test because it was just so easy. But I failed. So I’m like, ok, I’m not going to let it keep me down, I’m going to go back again...I went back, I failed again. So I realized what’s going on. I have to go to school in the Canadian system...I don’t think it’s fair.

Another participant spoke of her husband’s struggle as an aircraft worker, being turned away from jobs at the same airline in Canada as he worked on at home. The reason, he was told, was a lack of Canadian experience.

Implications of discrimination

The previous examples are good illustrations of the possible drivers behind increasing levels of poverty among racialized groups in Canada (51). Many immigrants worry about the effects of such a situation on their ability to successfully integrate on a social level with Canadian-born residents. As one participant put it, newcomers often end up having to live in the cheapest place possible because they have not been able to find employment. If these areas are subject to social problems, their bad reputations can be transferred to encompass all residents of the area and perhaps all immigrants by extension. Another participant made this comment about the fallout that can occur for all newcomers when one immigrant behaves inappropriately: *“[Canadians] just think about bad things. The Canadian people don’t like it at all...They’re thinking why did you come to this country ...may not respect [any] body”*.

Another participant was concerned about the cycle of poverty that many newcomers get stuck in – not because they're not able to contribute to their new society, but because they're not given a fair chance to do so. In these ways, the economic discrimination of some immigration policies are also adding to discrimination related to ethnocultural background and citizenship status. The beginnings of a solution could be quite simple. As one respondent put it, *"immigrating to Canada should not be something only wealthy people can do."*

In addition to this example, a representative from one of Durham's Community Health Centres acknowledged that those who are identified as 'undesirables' are often ignored in the community; one example being seasonal workers. The participant explained that because of the nature and status of seasonal work, workers are willing to accommodate the community's discriminatory attitudes. For example, because they are subject to annual contract renewal, there is no sense of job security and therefore, no platform on which to build a sense of belonging or even of deserving to belong. As the participant explained, they are in a very precarious position; they would probably not bring up an issue.

It has been made clear that immigrants are being marginalized. Young (1992) suggests that marginalization is perhaps the most dangerous form of oppression: *"A whole category of people is expelled from useful participation in social life and thus potentially subjected to severe material deprivation and even extermination"* (52). Therefore, at the government level, change needs to occur and society needs to recognize the power imbalances that exist and how they negatively affect newcomers.



C: PERCEPTIONS OF THE DURHAM COMMUNITY

Perceptions of, and relationships with, the place in which one lives, works, plays, or attends school, speak volumes about one's level of interest in becoming (more) involved in any and all aspects of community life (53). Logically, it can be assumed that if something makes someone uncomfortable about participating in community activities, there is less of a chance that they will involve themselves. The less that they involve themselves, the more isolated they become, posing an ever-growing challenge to building a community that is truly inclusive to all. On the other hand, the more a person enjoys about their community, the more likely they are to put effort into being a part of it. This is the reasoning behind the decision to ask immigrants and non-immigrants living in Durham Region, what were their perceptions of the community.

As can be expected, the responses were varied. However, some overall statements can be made. Opinions on positive aspects of Durham's *geographic position* included that it was close to Toronto, but not as busy as Toronto. Immigrant participants liked living close to nature, in areas that were less urbanized, but slowly developing into places where families could feel comfortable.

Negative comments related to geography, from immigrant respondents, included complaints about the weather, development occurring too quickly, and the lack of night life in the region. The lack of night life is affecting at least one participant's ability to get engaged in the community in a way in which she is comfortable. She commented that Canadian people prefer to socialize by sitting and drinking coffee. She does not enjoy that and would rather go to a bar or club at night and dance with friends. Because there is nowhere in Durham to do this, it hampers her desire to meet new people and actively include herself in the community.

A large majority of non-immigrant participants commented on how their close proximity to urban centers allowed for interaction with others. In addition, the recreational and social opportunities within and around their community affected their positive sense of attachment to the region. Some immigrant participants reported being very happy with recreation services in Durham as well, saying they are affordable and easy to get to. Others felt that some programs were exclusionary due to their costs and the attitudes of the people that attend them. For example, one person described a situation at a mother-and-child program where the majority of participants were white families of higher economic status. Their discomfort with people of colour and with young/teenage mothers was obvious by the way these participants were ignored.

In another interview, one participant – who identified as a non-immigrant and comes from a family who immigrated to Canada – stated that she feels included in the community because of its increasing multiculturalism and diverse backgrounds. When asked about her feelings of inclusion she said the following:

When I went to schools and stuff before 6 years, everybody questioned me. Why do you not know English? How come you do that? Why are you different? Why are you quiet? Why do you wear hijab? And I did have to answer some of the questions and I liked the teachers because they were actually helping to answer questions because I was nervous to answer...now because I give them enough information they know more. My dad told me that before 12 years when they would ask 'where are you from?' and we say 'Pakistan', they would say, 'Pakistan, where is that?' Now when we say Pakistan they say, 'ok.' They know more, and understand more, and I am not the only person who wears a hijab; there are other people too and people have probably questioned them too, so now no one questions me and I feel more included in the community.

The presence of diversity was also an important aspect of the community for youth from immigrant families, growing up in Durham Region. All youth felt that diversity in the region was increasing; however, two youth felt that it was not very diverse right now, while the other five perceived it to be quite diverse. These differences in opinion could be due to the specific area in which the youth are living – one youth explained that the further east and north one goes in Durham, the less diverse it becomes – or they could be reflections of how integrated and included the youth feel in general. Every youth but one stated that they felt they belonged to the community. While it took some time to get used to things, if they were not born here, it became 'home' fairly easily: "*Home is whatever grows onto you and what you get used to.*" However, not all youth participants felt they were seen as 'Canadian' by others. Skin colour and/or accents were the main reasons reported, but were not issues for all youth. One respondent said people see her as Canadian because her views are quite westernized. This statement lends evidence to the argument that interaction and integration between cultural groups is important, because it helps people to understand each other beyond surface characteristics such as skin colour and accent.

The social concerns that immigrant respondents spoke about included discomfort with prostitutes and drugs in the downtown core of one municipality, as well as a fear of walking in the area at night. Conversely, one participant commented that they were reassured of their safety in the community when they saw police officers driving around. Visual discomforts also included people littering and people impacted by poverty to the point of pan-handling. It is important to note that these issues all have to do with perceptions of others, which can have a large impact on the attempt to create an inclusive community. Not only do such perceptions influence how the perceivers feel about belonging to an area, they can also damage the attempts at integration and feelings of inclusion of the residents involved in the actions in question. The value of these comments is that they shed light on the larger issues of poverty, safety, and drug culture, which are not exclusive to Durham Region by any means. This indicates the need for a wider-scope approach to integration and inclusion, wherein provincial and federal players are involved alongside those at the municipal and regional levels.

The state of infrastructure and availability of services in Durham Region was another topic touched on by immigrant and non-immigrant participants during the interview process. The ability for newcomers to get in touch with people of their cultural background already living in or close to Durham Region, or to access services, was hampered by the transit system. One immigrant had trouble returning home after 10pm due to operation times for the Durham transit system. Another respondent commented that they found signage very unclear and were frustrated with the irregularity of the buses themselves. Not all comments were negative, however; one immigrant participant said they liked the state of cleanliness on the transit system and added that this was not the case in their home country.

Non-immigrants commented that the region does not host or provide enough information about multicultural events. They agreed that there has been progress in terms of how the Durham community is working towards interaction and integration of cultural traditions; however, there needs to be more of it and more information about when it occurs. One participant made the following suggestion:

Different organizations that are around the community ... could help to better inform people about the things that are going on. I don't really hear a lot of things that are going on and that is why I am not really involved with a lot of community events – or I find out about them too late...[also,] I have a child and certain community things that are for children I don't really hear about them until after the fact, so...promoting them would need to be a bit better.

Another participant made a recommendation that addressed an infrastructural barrier that young newcomers may face:

This community should have a special Muslim school. Before, it was ok because there were not a lot of Muslim people, but now there are a lot of different people moving here and people from Toronto are even coming here, so there should be at least one school for the Muslim community. Like for my sister, who was very small when she came – she was like 5 years old – so she doesn't know a lot about our culture because she did not live there for very long. We were thinking that she should go to a Muslim school to adopt our culture and so she knows who we are and then when she is more mature, like [age] 10, she can go to a regular school.

Having an institution of this nature available to newcomers and their children would affect the sense of attachment and feeling of inclusion to the region, it would reaffirm to the immigrant population that their presence and their culture is valued and respected within the community.

Another key concern was the lack of affordable daycare. It was noted that this is especially crucial for newcomer families that are facing strict financial constraints, because they often have to choose between working and leaving the children alone, or going on welfare to ensure they can be home with their children. While this sentiment was not heard from non-immigrants in this set of interviews, it must be understood that these difficult choices are faced by large numbers of people in the Durham Region community, regardless of their citizenship status.

The school system was an area that received positive feedback. One immigrant mother was ecstatic about her daughter not having to share a textbook at school because it made it so much easier for her to focus and do well. This situation was also a reaction to differences between circumstances in her home country and those in Canada. This is a good example of the potential of a small detail to greatly influence a newcomer's perception of belonging in the community and its ability to create a more welcoming environment.

D: OPINIONS AND PERCEPTIONS OF IMMIGRATION

Part of building an inclusive community is making sure its residents have regular opportunities to have their opinions heard, understood, and incorporated into the growth of the community (See Sandercock, 2003, and Van der Velde *et al*, 2009). As Durham Region's immigrant population increases, it is important for everyone in the community to gain an understanding of why people are coming to Canada – and Durham in particular – what are some of their struggles in getting here, and how do they interpret the value of immigration (what are the benefits to the region, in their opinions, of welcoming newcomers?). It is also valuable to hear ideas around inclusion and integration, as these perspectives can help to inform municipal-level policies and strategies on these topics.

When immigrants were asked their reasons for coming to Canada and settling in Durham Region, the majority of respondents spoke of more opportunity and a better future. A high number of participants mentioned loved ones as the inspiration for their choice. For five immigrant respondents, it was their spouse and their spouse's employment situation that brought them to Durham Region. Others are here because they were forced to leave their country. Still others found themselves outside their country with little hope or little desire to return:

Time was changing all the time...then something happened; something forced me not to go back to my country. Lots of things were going on in my mind and I didn't know what to do...then I decided to come to Canada

It is important to note that Durham Region was not the original location choice for settlement except in cases where newcomers had friends and family already living in the community.

In discussions about the process of migrating to Canada, two comments came up repeatedly: that it is too expensive for newcomers, and that it is too lengthy and slow. There were also concerns with language. As one participant put it,

I'm in administration, so I was able to go through all the paperwork. It really made me aware of people that are in dire straits financially, or can't read English and don't have anyone to help them with the forms. I thought, several times throughout the process, that I don't know how those people get through it.

The immigration process took between 8 months and 2 ½ years for the immigrant participants in this study, although many factors were mentioned that could impact this time frame. Having a job in place in Canada at the time of application for immigration seems to make for a quicker process, as does being from the right country, according to one respondent, who reported that “*certain islands [in the Caribbean] are treated differently*” when it comes to approving the applications. Another participant described the struggles she had experienced also, trying to apply for immigration once authorities found out that her husband was Canadian. She explained that the process was prolonged a great deal in order to be sure she was not ‘using’ her husband to get into Canada. However, it must be noted that once *in* Canada, authorities were very polite to her.

It is apparent that, as a whole, the immigration process is too expensive for many newcomers. It is slow and lacks appropriate information and access to that information. Moving forward in Durham Region with an integrated approach to immigrant and settlement services might go far to alleviate some of these sources of stress. (Please see CDCD Report on an Integrated Service Delivery Model for Settlement Services in Durham Region, 2010).

Benefits of immigration are often put in economic terms: immigrants bring much-needed skills that can be applied to jobs in Canada that are becoming hard to fill due to declining birthrates (54). While the declining birthrates in Canada warrant a need for people with appropriate skills, the benefits of welcoming people from all over the world and having access to information that, as a community, you otherwise would not, reach far beyond dollars and cents. Immigration is nothing new to Canada, or to Durham Region. With an increasing number of new people settling here every year, it can be a great benefit to have professionals – such as teachers, bankers, and doctors – who are also immigrants and have experienced similar struggles and challenges. One participant mentioned that immigrants are more likely to have sensitivity to certain issues and experiences of other immigrants than someone who has lived in the area their entire life. Another participant commented that people from various backgrounds can help to bring communities together to understand difference and how the world works. These perspectives illustrate how immigration itself can create more inclusion and integration within communities and between communities – or even countries – than can policies and strategies aimed at segregation or assimilation.

Discussions of the concept of integration yielded a variety of responses and represented inclusive opinions as often as exclusionary ones. Inclusive responses that mentioned integration by name described it as a process of finding common interests, and a key to survival in society. It was viewed as a good thing compared to its alternative (maintaining ignorance), because when one has insight into different cultures, one understands more and is more open-minded. In the words of another respondent, no one is the same; everyone needs to get to know people in order to break down the myths.

One participant made a connection between getting involved and feeling more of a sense of belonging:

You're going to face challenges everyday; you're going to face differences...In order to survive in this society, you have to integrate. It's very important. For work, for school, for everything that you are going to be a part of. It's also good to show that you're connected. To know that this is home...You want to have that feeling that I can walk down the street and feel that I'm welcome.

Another participant felt that everyone should have a sense of belonging wherever they go, because every culture has its attractive and unattractive qualities. One culture should not be favoured over others; especially when people can learn so much from each other. Speaking about Canada as a whole, one participant discussed our responsibility to be one people, to live together, to be happy together and be friendly here, because there is no room for racism – just because a person looks different from you does not mean he is not also Canadian.

Exclusionary responses from immigrants were directed more towards the dangers of immigration in general than the concept of integration. There were concerns about immigrants getting in trouble with the law or coming to Canada for the wrong reasons and giving a bad reputation to all immigrants. One participant indicated her frustration with seeing immigrants come to Canada and becoming a statistic. She feels that there are many opportunities for education, loans are easy to obtain, and welfare is available. If this has been her experience, it is good that she feels supported; however, there are barriers for some people that she may not have experienced. This perspective sheds light on the reality that pre-conceived notions of *the other* are not an issue for the Canadian-born population alone. This provides further support for policies and strategies aimed at improving intercultural interaction and integration at the local level. As well, public education in the form of cultural competency might go a long way to address these perceptions.

When asked whose responsibility it was to ensure satisfactory integration of newcomers – the newcomer, the government, or members of the community – a number of possibilities were mentioned. There was evidence of viewing immigration as a one-way process:

I have to look at the way things are done here, and then integrate myself, squeeze myself, do things the way they are doing them here. Become part of the community, bringing my input or my contribution to the community. They have their vision, they're going in a direction, so I have to come and help them get where they're going. This is how I understand what integration means.

However, no one stated that integration was solely the responsibility of the immigrant. The majority reported that a balance between two or more parties was necessary; in other words, a multi-directional approach, by which both the receiving society and the newcomer adjust themselves to account for the other. One participant explained it this way: *"Everyone is doing his thing...If I am doing [my thing] and you are doing [your thing], we will move forward. But if I am doing my stuff and you don't, we won't move forward...The government will [get] better, the immigration will [get] better and the citizenship will [get] better and we will move forward."*



When non-immigrant participants were asked what the term integration meant in the context of immigration to Durham Region they had mixed views, some positive and some negative:

Main difficulties [to integration] would be language and cultural barriers and just getting them situated as Canadians...licenses, bus schedules, bank accounts, just day to day necessities, basically start up, getting them started as Canadians. [That is what he would identify as the successful integration of immigrants.] It is the responsibility of the Government and the person and/or persons coming to Canada, it takes two to dance. [Integration is important because] you have to break down all types of barriers without these barriers they get to become Canadian, whether it be Afghan-Canadian or Korean-Canadian, these barriers should be broken down so they can integrate with the rest of the community and become productive citizens.

Integration would mean that anyone of any background, any culture can live as one community and interact in such a way where their values, cultures, and opinions are being respected as much as someone who has been here forever. [In order for an immigrant to be 'integrated' newcomers need to be] employed or actively seeking employment, contributing to the community in a positive way whether that be, if not employed it could be volunteer work. I assume there should be an education process provided by the Government as an entity, to educate the immigrant on what integration is and what it takes to be a citizen of the community and of the country and what some of the key aspects to that are and what their responsibilities are. It's not just a right it takes work and it takes respect and an open mind, it takes time as well. The larger community could take a role in the integration process, but in that respect I think there needs to be structure. There would have to be programs set up to allow the greater community to come in and volunteer some time to help integrate the immigrant.

Once immigrants come into Canada you want to integrate them into the area that they are relocating to, which would mean familiarizing them with the community and how everything takes place in this area as opposed to where they used to live. Maybe help them out with jobs, directing them around the community, putting them in contact with people in the community that would help them when their assistance is gone. The Government, Township or City would be responsible for this. It is more the immigrant's responsibility, but if they had trouble doing it themselves, the larger community would be responsible.

Below is a statement made by a disabled woman who was interviewed. Her perception of what integration means is important because it can be directly related to the some of the negative experiences immigrants would face in the Durham region when trying to adapt.

To be integrated into a society means to be treated like everybody else. [The government] do not tell you all the things that are available to you, [like ODSP] information about accessible trailers etc. You have to pass information on to the next person; it is word of mouth. They don't tell you what's out there to help you and when you need something it is like pulling teeth, coming out of their pocket.

While immigrant participants mentioned many different challenges in immigrating to Canada and integrating into a community, the largest source of stress, by far, was that of finding employment. Out of the fifteen working-age immigrants that were interviewed, only seven were employed at the time of the interview. As explained earlier, using the example of the man from Morocco who was ignored by his former friends because of his unemployment status, having a job is an important factor in how included one feels in one's community. The following discussion complements the points of interest brought to light in the earlier section, *Discrimination and Employment*.

A number of participants identified their transferable skills and spoke of the value they knew they possessed, regardless of whether or not Canadian employers recognized it. Others described their attempts to get proper qualifications, only to be failed by the system. In two cases this resulted in the participants taking jobs 'under the table,' which opens them up to potential exploitation and further excludes them from the community. One participant, mentioned earlier, talked about her experience applying for a Canadian license in a very hands-on profession. As a successful business woman with a license from Great Britain and plenty of years of experience, she did not expect that minor differences in terminology between Great Britain and Canada would be enough to cause her to fail the equivalency test two times in a row. She felt that she was being discriminated against due to her Caribbean background, regardless of her schooling and experience in Britain, and that the system was purposely failing her. She did not believe she was being tested in a way through which she could display her true skills, since the test was written and not applied. She finally tired of paying for license tests and found work without a Canadian license. While she does not feel as though she is working illegally, it is unlikely that any aspect of this experience helped to make her feel valued and included in her new home.

Respondents voiced other concerns with the immigration process as it relates to employment. There is an impression of a shifting standard of employability between the time one is accepted as a skilled immigrant and the time one arrives in Canada actually looking to be employed. A small number of participants remarked that, while the Canadian government made them provide official documents about their work qualifications in order to enter Canada, these same documents were useless in getting them a job (and in some cases, in getting them more useful documents). This is a major discrepancy in the system and gives newcomers misdirected hope, causing the fallout to be even more devastating. There was also a comment about different agencies asking for copies of important documents that the newcomer had already provided to the federal government. The individual felt it put unnecessary stress on the immigrant, to go about providing the same documents everywhere they go once they are already let into the country.

Newcomers appear to be trying very hard and applying numerous times to get work – especially if that work matches their skills and qualifications – but they are still not getting the jobs. This situation likely makes a deep impact on how a newcomer feels about his/her new community, and how the newcomer thinks his/her new community feels about him/her. If an individual does not feel valued, they may become less open to interaction, which will impede the integration process. This seems to be one of the most significant barriers to building an inclusive community in Durham Region because it impacts so many new people coming to live here. On the other side of things, if immigrants' skills and experience were shown more respect and put to use in proper employment, there is a multitude of ways the community could benefit, not the least of which could include a decrease in levels of poverty – taking pressure off the housing and social assistance systems – and an increase in innovation in a variety of fields.

Benefits of Immigration

The benefits of immigration cited by youth participants were focused on their position as part of two realities – Canadian reality and the reality of their parents' experiences coming to Canada from elsewhere. For example, one youth commented that their experience with negotiating multiple identities could help the rest of the country grapple with its multiculturalism: *“Second generation Canadians can show the rest of the country how to balance more than one cultural identity, because they are experts on this!”*

It is also helpful in broadening the overall perspective of Canadian society. One youth explained this using the example of collectivist thinking versus individualist thinking:

Immigrants coming from a more collectivist background can help to remind individualist thinkers that ‘you shouldn’t be selfish and only be making yourself happy...you appreciate community, the meaning of community,’ and I want to try to bring that back in my identity of being a Canadian Muslim [by combining both perspectives].

The value of education and the appreciation of hard work were also mentioned as benefits:

Appreciating the struggle(s) your parents went through makes you want to try harder because you know somebody sacrificed a lot for you to have this opportunity... [also] immigrant parents often put a huge emphasis on the importance of education, so you might see a trend of children of immigrants performing better in school and doing really well later in life. This is very good for Canada’s economy and communities.

While youth did not state any disadvantages to immigration when asked that specifically, not all youth participants were enthusiastic about having immigrated. The two youth in particular who spoke of their struggles with this were also the two youth that had the strongest connections to their parents' primary cultures. More opinions on immigration surfaced later in the interviews, and included some very inclusive perspectives.

A couple of youth described the importance of keeping in mind the unknown factors: *"You can't know what [immigrants] will bring in the future, or what they won't...it's very subjective and it's a case by case situation."*

Another youth was concerned over the number of people already homeless and living in poverty in Canada, and what more immigration means to them:

[Immigration] is good, up to a certain point. But you shouldn't allow immigrants into the country if you cannot support the citizens you already have here.

One youth participant identified immigration as integral to the core of Canada as a country: *"Immigration gives Canada meaning. It's what Canada is, you know?...it's a little more respect [than in the US]...it's what makes Canada Canada."*

Another spoke about how immigration helps people feel a sense of belonging: *"There's a lot of Tamil kids and Asians, everyone's out there...it's not like an odd thing, it's just Canada and everyone's here."*

On the subject of integration, the largest issue for youth participants was how it impacts their identity formation process. The youth who spoke of collectivism and individualism explains it further:

We're in an individualistic society [here in Canada] so you tend to see the people who have families from collectivist societies [Eastern, generally] who come here and everything's individualistic and you're supposed to make something of yourself...then suddenly you have this identity struggle or this conflict...

Another youth looks at it a bit differently:

I know I can appreciate from my own struggle that it took a lot to kind of accept both worlds and find the perfect fit for me and not really care what each and every person's individual opinion is. Because part of living in Canada means you're going to face diversity and opinions and thoughts as well. So it's kind of like the general concept of you can't make everyone happy, right?

Frame of mind is important for this youth as he/she navigates the integration process. Two other youth share their perspectives: *"To be from a certain place, you don't have to be born there, it's just how well do you fit in with their people,"* and *"sometimes you just have two of something [like identities] and you don't have to pick between them because they're both so good."*

Another youth would disagree with this latter statement. For them, the most valuable aspect of the integration experience is that it is freeing. They are not forced to believe certain things from their parents' culture because there are other options and other ways to be involved in the community. Were they living in their parents' country of origin, this would not be possible.

Yet another youth participant finds him/herself caught between this 'freeing' factor and the importance of acknowledging his/her parents' culture as part of his/her own: *"If you want to be strict on your culture, you should stay back where you are. You should know how it is here."* At the same time, *"you shouldn't totally forget about your culture, but you should always adapt to where you are."*

For the most part, non-immigrant participants saw immigration as having a positive impact on their community. Diversity and multiculturalism were mentioned the most as a benefit to immigrants settling within the Durham region. From strictly a social perspective, immigration allows for learning about other people's traditions and styles of food, for example. Participants commented on how newcomers bring skills that offer variety to the community dynamic. In terms of cultural expansion, immigrants offer a variety of opinions and different ideas that enhance the social fabric of the region. With the exception of a few concerns that non-immigrants raised during their interviews, such as political factors affecting national security and concerns regarding the working conditions of settlement workers with an influx of newcomers – plus the economic implications as discussed elsewhere in the report – the non-immigrant population of Durham Region did not express strong opposition to people immigrating to Canada. For example, a non-immigrant community member made the following comments:

I think it is them escaping from their home countries trying to get a better perspective on how life is... face poverty they come here to escape. In Canada they have a right to speech, to vote and eventually they have a right to free health care...I was in grade four when someone came from Afghanistan and didn't know a word of English, and when he started learning English he was like ya I've held a gun, I've seen my brother shoot somebody...poor people like that, slavery too, he made rugs every day. People come here and get a good job.

Stress of Adaptation for the Immigrant

As with any community, for the successful integration of immigrants and newcomers in the Durham region, it is important that they be able to speak English and have an understanding of the culture and its customs. The inability to speak English is directly related to how they are accepted in the community and would obviously affect whether or not they feel included. As seen throughout our research, language barriers create complex challenges to the experience of immigration. In regards to justifying any apprehension that may exist between the immigrant and non-immigrant communities, a representative from a volunteer immigrant support group stated that, *"A large majority of the tension comes from the language barriers and that includes miscommunication and misunderstandings."* Many others expressed similar opinions and stated that language barriers are a challenge to immigration. Another participant commented by saying:

The language barrier is what I've seen as the biggest barrier to immigrant and non-immigrant integration, because it's frustrating to not be able to communicate with each other. Not really about being different, per se, more about not being able to understand each other.

Other people in the community need to be patient...

A lot of them don't speak English so you need someone like them to let them know. With those people it's who they know, and that is how they find out things most often. I'm speaking about older people; the younger people can just go to the computer and find out what they want, even if they are immigrants. There are more barriers the older you are. Need to target both older or younger generations so they get the information – [there is a need to make the advertising accessible considering the language barrier].



STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the literature review and interview findings for this research, recommendations for moving forward are offered in the following areas:

- A. Cultural competency;
- B. The removal of barriers to full participation in the community;
- C. Encouraging community interaction in order to promote integration;
- D. Continued engagement and ongoing assessment to promote understanding of the changing needs of our community

A. Cultural Competency

Cultural competency may be viewed as:

A set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency, or among professionals that enables effective work in cross-cultural situations (55).

The need for improving cultural competency on all levels (individual, organizational, and systemic) throughout the Durham community became apparent very early on in the research process and continued to be supported throughout. There is an overwhelming lack of understanding of the various cultural, physical, social and environmental factors and processes that influence the attitudes and actions of individuals and groups. This can cause discrimination on a number of levels, and contributes to feelings of exclusion and a community atmosphere that is unwelcoming.

Based on the findings of this report, it is recommended that efforts to develop and support processes of organizational, systemic and social change that improve the cultural competence of the Regional community and the government, organizations, institutions, and businesses that serve the community.

This needs to occur at multiple levels:

- I. The **individual level** emphasises self-awareness and reflection on the part of the community member, service practitioner, business owner, educator, or government official.
- II. The **organizational level** centres on organizational change and must in turn be achieved at multiple levels within the organization.
 - a. The *operational level* of organizational change involves adaptation to those cultural processes that may affect the direct service interaction between staff and client/customer. For example, mandatory sensitivity/ cultural competency training similar to health and safety requirements provided by employers to all employees.
 - b. The *policy level* of organizational change involves the assessment and adaptation of the organizational structure, governance, policies and overall programming mandate. For example, the creation of opportunities to increase cross-cultural education in the school system.
- III. The **systemic level** is that level that includes broader social perspectives that influence the service and institutional paradigms guiding individual organizations, practitioners and community attitudes and perceptions of diversity and immigration (for example, local government lobbying provincial and federal government levels for changes to the current foreign credential assessment process).

In order to achieve true cultural competency, at all levels, a discourse must be established between the systemic, organizational and individual levels.

B. The removal of barriers to full participation in the community

Participants in the research discussed and alluded to significant barriers present within Durham that prevent their full participation in the economic, social, cultural and political life of the Region. The exclusion of members of our community from these areas of community life in Durham represents a significant detriment to the entire community.

Based on this, it is recommended that the community develop and support processes for the assessment and removal of physical and systemic barriers to inclusion that exist within our community so that all of the Region's communities may participate in the life of the community.

This may be focused in multiple areas, including, but not limited to:

I. Local barriers to employment and labour market access need to be assessed and locally driven solutions need to be developed to allow the Region to take advantage of the skilled labour force.

- For example, implementation of orientation sessions for newcomers with international professional qualifications, with a focus on credential assessment, recognition of foreign credentials, documentation, and career and educational pathways.

II. Support and leadership for the development of inclusive and accessible practices in the local health and social services sectors need to be provided.

- For example, the creation and implementation of diversity and employee/client engagement strategies.

III. An assessment of local infrastructural services – such as transportation – needs to be completed with a focus on accessibility and cultural inclusion in the service.

IV. Opportunities for civic participation need to be developed that are inclusive and understand the multiple and dynamic perspectives of Durham's communities. Individuals and communities need to be provided with opportunities to participate in ways that are meaningful to them.

C. Encouraging community interaction in order to promote integration

Many participants, from both immigrant and non-immigrant communities expressed a desire for more community interaction and engagement. They argued that this would provide more opportunities for further understanding and inclusion.

Based on this, it is recommended that the larger Durham community continue to develop and support processes, activities and initiatives that promote engagement and interaction between diverse communities in Durham.

This may include, but is not limited to:

I. Development of targeted outreach and engagement strategies to encourage the engagement of marginalized communities in the planning, development and implementation of community events.

II. Focus event and program planning around the goal of cultural exchange in all directions (immigrants and non-immigrants; able-bodied and non-able-bodied; Spanish speakers and Urdu speakers, etc.).

- For example, developing a media campaign that focuses on systemic discrimination and the real-life experiences (positive and negative) of immigrants who have navigated or are currently navigating the system.

III. Provide opportunities for casual socialization between individuals and groups.

- For example, the provision of free community space for events that include more than one association, organization, cultural group, etc., to foster integration.

IV. Improved support for neighbourhood and local community events that promote community integration and engagement.

D. Continued engagement and ongoing assessment to promote understanding of the changing needs of our community

As this research indicates, our community is in a process of great change. As such, the social, economic, political and cultural landscapes of Durham are not static and are in as state of flux.

Therefore, it is recommended that in order to understand and respond to this constant change, all communities and service providers should continue to develop and support processes for ongoing community engagement, assessment and research that will allow for the development of detailed and up-to-date knowledge about our community.

Areas of specific focus should be:

- I. The engagement of other diverse communities who are often marginalized from the planning process, including those with different abilities, the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered, Queer (LGBTQ) community, visible minority groups, people living on low incomes, and women.
- II. Developing a more detailed understanding of the findings presented in this report, especially around the topics of socialization and discrimination that exist in the community.
- III. Developing a process of ongoing consultation and community input that exists outside of a formal research process, allowing for the ongoing engagement and the identification of trends and concerns that arise in the community

Appendix A: Interview Guides

Interview Schedule I: LDIPC Research *Experiences and Perceptions of Immigration in Durham*

Welcome, and introduce purpose of study:

We are conducting a study of people's experiences and perceptions of immigration in Durham region. We are interested in your thoughts and opinions with respect to a range of issues such as personal experiences with immigration or settlement, the values or challenges of immigration, and your opinions and ideas about immigration and integration of newcomers.

Your name will not appear in any report and all the data we collect will be kept securely in our office. This interview is completely voluntary. You do not have to participate if you do not want to. With your permission, we would like to record our interview today so that we have an accurate understanding of your views.

Is it OK for us to tape the interview? If you understand the instructions may we proceed with the interview?

Start Tape: State Date and Time of Interview: Begin Questions

Complete question 1 for both immigrants and non-immigrants

1. Can you tell me a little about yourself?

- When were you born? (*decade*)
- Where were you born? (*where did you grow up? Was it very diverse?*)
- What is your highest level of Education? (*completed in Canada?*)
- What do you do (occupation)?
- Where do you live currently? (*where in Durham region?*)

1.1 How would you identify yourself?

How would you define your ethnocultural identity?

1.2 What does being Canadian mean to you?

What images or words come to mind when you think about Canada/Canadian identity?

Complete question 2 for immigrants only

2. When did you immigrate to Canada?

Where did you first live when you came to Canada?

2.1 Can you tell me about your journey to Canada?

- Why did you choose to come to Canada?
- How did you find information about the immigration process?
- How long did the process take?
- Did your family come with you?

2.2 How would you describe this experience?

- How did you feel while making this trip?
- What effects did this trip have on you?
- If family came too, how did this experience impact on your family (children, spouse, parents), how did this experience impact on family relationships?

2.3 Do you miss home?

- Do you still have family back home?
- Do you still have regular contact with them?

2.4 Do you ever think about going back?

- When do you feel this way?
- Why do you sometimes feel this way?

Complete question 3 for both immigrants and non-immigrants

3. How long have you lived in Durham Region?

Why did you move to Durham Region? **OR** if they have lived here whole life, why have you stayed in Durham Region?

3.1 What do you like about this community?

Specific characteristics about the community?

3.2 What are some of the things that you dislike about this community?

3.3 Do you feel included in the community? Why or Why Not?

3.4 What influences your feeling of belonging or not belonging?

Complete question 4 for both

4. Do you feel as though other members of this community generally accept you as part of the community? Why or Why Not?

4.1 Have you ever experienced any discrimination in this community?

- Have you been treated poorly because of your ethnicity?
- Do you feel that others have ever looked down upon you because you are an immigrant?

Complete question 5 for both immigrants and non-immigrants

5. What do you see as the benefits of immigration (to Durham Region or Canada as a whole)?

- What do immigrants bring to the community?
- What are the economic benefits of immigration?
- What are the social benefits of immigration?

5.1 What do you see as the detriments of immigration?

- What are some of the risks or consequences of immigration in your community?

Complete question 6 for non-immigrants only

6. What do you think about immigrants in your community?

- How do they identify immigrants?
- What is their opinion of them?

6.1 What experiences have you had with immigrants in your community?

6.2 Do you have friends that identify as immigrants? Do you want to get to know more immigrants? What stops you/would help you? What might help others?

Complete question 6B for immigrants only

6.B. What is your opinion of Canadians in your community?

- What experiences have you had with Canadians in your community?
- Do you have Canadian friends? Do you want to meet Canadians and other community members? What would help you to do that more/better? What might help others to meet new people?

Complete question 7 for both immigrants and non-immigrants

7. What does integration mean to you? (*aka: becoming part of the community*)

7.1 Whose responsibility is it?

- What role does the immigrant have?
- What role does the larger community have?
- What role does government/human services sector have?

7.2 In your view, why is integration important?

7.3 What are some of the things that could be done to better promote immigrant integration in our community?

- What do immigrants need to do to succeed in our community?
- What supports do immigrants need to succeed in our community?
- What does the larger community need to do to help immigrants succeed in our community?

7.4 Are there any specific strategies, actions or activities that you would suggest to help promote the integration of immigrants in our community?

7.5 What could be done to help immigrants and non-immigrants to get along better?

Complete question 8 for both immigrants and non-immigrants

8. Is there anything that we have not talked about that you would like to add to this discussion?

Thank participant for their time; Have them sign for Gift Card

LDIP Council Research Questions for Organizations

Immigrant-Community Integration; Building an Inclusive Community

The Community Development Council Durham (CDCD) is working in partnership with the Regional Municipality of Durham (ROD) and the Durham Region Local Training Board (DRLTB), on a research project to better address immigrant integration and inclusion issues in Durham Region. We are doing interviews with representatives from community service organizations, as well as immigrant and non-immigrant members of the community.

We would like to get a better idea of the various viewpoints related to immigrant integration and inclusion in the region. As well, we will be asking questions about what opportunities exist for cultivating a culture of inclusion in Durham, and about the issues that you are aware of that may prevent collective action on addressing immigrant integration. This will help us identify ways to better address integration and inclusion in Durham Region.

1. In your work with your organization, how often do you come into contact with immigrants or newcomers to Canada, and in what capacity?

What about non-immigrant community members?

How do their needs differ? How does your service approach differ?

2. In your community as a whole, do people tend to get along?

Probe: Are there any points of tension you're aware of?

3. Generally speaking, how do people in your community feel about new people coming to the area?

i. How do they feel about immigrants?

4. How would you describe the *level* of interaction between immigrants and non-immigrants at your place of work, or in the community near your place of work? (eg. High interaction, low interaction)

Probe: do they avoid each other; do they attend similar social events?

i. Explanation for this?

5. How would you describe the *nature* of the interaction? (eg. Positive, negative, indifferent, segregated; mutual feelings between groups; conflicting feelings between groups, etc.)

Probe: what roles are played? (equal? Second vs first class citizens?)

i. Explanation for this?

6. What is your organization doing, if anything, to improve immigrant-community integration and to build an inclusive community?

7. How does your *organization* view *integration*? (one-way vs. two-way; economic vs. social, etc.) – (*may be answered in first interview definitions*)

i. Definition of *Inclusion/ inclusive community*?

8. What views/opinions of *integration* do you see/hear in your day to day work, from...

i. Clients?

ii. Community Members?

iii. Other Organizations?

9. What views/opinions of *inclusion/inclusive community* do you see/hear in your day to day work, from...

i. Clients?

ii. Community Members?

iii. Other Organizations?

10. In your opinion, what needs to happen in the region of Durham around integration and inclusion in the next 3 years?

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