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Welcoming communities and immigrant integration in Newfoundland and Labrador

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WELCOMING COMMUNITIES & IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION IN NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

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ABSTRACT

The term 'welcoming community' has arisen within the field of immigration studies as a concept that seeks to address ways in which communities welcome and integrate immigrants. This paper explores the concept of a welcoming community and its impact on the social integration of immigrants to smaller centres, specifically to the City of St. John's in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, using a social inclusion framework. Through an examination of the integration policies and programs undertaken in the Province and how immigrants interact with these services, I find that elements of a welcoming community exist in St. John's and that immigrants' frequency and intensity of contact with institutions that directly support settlement is high in St. John's. However, it is premature to conclude, given the recent implementation of the immigration policy in the Province and the low numbers of contacts made with other institutions, that St. John's is a welcoming community and that this translates into successful social integration.

Key words: Newfoundland and Labrador; St. John's; welcoming community; social inclusion; small centres; immigration; social integration.

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Introduction

The term 'welcoming community' has arisen within the field of immigration studies as a concept that seeks to address ways in which communities welcome and integrate immigrants (National Metropolis, 2009; Belkhodja, 2009; Kunz, 2005). How communities welcome immigrants has implications on a region's ability to attract, integrate and retain newcomers. This paper will look at the concept of a 'welcoming community' and its impact on the social inclusion and integration of immigrants to smaller centres, specifically to the City of St. John's in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. The research project addresses how welcoming communities can impact the integration of immigrants in Newfoundland and Labrador by examining the policies and programs that exist regarding immigrant integration, how immigrants interact with these services, and how these policies and programs support the claim that St. John's is a 'welcoming community'. It assesses the perspectives of policy makers and service providers in comparison to immigrants to determine how each conceptualizes the concept of a welcoming community. The exploration of this issue will bring knowledge and assistance to small immigrant receiving centres and governments to better understand their roles in the integration of immigrants.

The focus of this paper is on the social integration of immigrants. Frideres' definition of social integration is "the process by which newcomers become part of the social, cultural and institutional fabric of the host community or society while at the same time retaining their own cultural identity" (Frideres, 2008, p. 80). Social integration can be measured based on the frequency and intensity of contact with institutions of the receiving society (Frideres, 2008). Frequency refers to "the number of ties (contacts) with their surroundings that an individual maintains over time" (Frideres, 2008, p. 81). Intensity refers to "the nature and quality of the

contacts" (Frideres, 2008, p. 81). As Frideres suggests, determining how open institutions are to immigrants and how welcoming communities are of immigrants is key to assessing successful integration (Frideres, 2008).

My research is guided by the following research question; what is the impact of a 'welcoming community' on immigrant integration and inclusion in smaller centres, particularly in the City of St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador? Within this broader research question, I will seek to answer; In what ways is St. John's, NL a 'welcoming community'? What policies and practices support this claim? How do immigrants experience these policies and practices? I hypothesize that if communities and the institutions that support them are welcoming, then frequency and intensity of contact with these institutions will be high thus resulting in successful social integration. By first determining if St. John's is a welcoming community, I will then be able to gauge the impact of this on social integration.

A 'welcoming community' suggests a region has a responsibility to receive and integrate newcomers and it should do so based on principles of inclusion and togetherness (Belkhodja, 2009; National Metropolis, 2009). 'Welcoming community' is a term that is widely used in policy documents but is lacking in academic application. Expanding on the idea of inclusion as a principle of a 'welcoming community', I propose a new definition of the term which forms the basis of this paper; a 'welcoming community' is defined as a social inclusion approach to the reception of immigrants. In taking this approach, I apply the established theoretical framework of social inclusion to the concept of a 'welcoming community' which grounds the term in theory and provides a standard against which to determine if a community is welcoming. Immigrants are defined as permanent residents in Canada, either through the economic, family, business or

refugee class (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2007). Smaller centres are defined as low immigrant receiving cities (Carter, 2008). Many small centres self-identify as such and frequently use the labels of second or third tier city or rural community. All three are considered for the purposes of this paper. Integration is defined as the social, cultural, political and economic incorporation of a newcomer's life into the receiving society (Frideres, 2008). Integration is viewed as a two-way street in which immigrants adapt to the receiving society and the receiving society adapts to immigrants (Frideres, 2008).

While it is important to note that many immigration strategies in small centres focus on attracting and retaining international students and temporary foreign workers, the focus is on those policies and programs that seek to integrate and retain immigrants. This paper will not address the policies and programs designed to attract and recruit immigrants to small centres, therefore regionalization strategies are beyond the scope of this paper. The paper will also not consider the impacts of welcoming communities on temporary immigrants.

This paper is organized in this manner: It begins with a background section on immigration in Newfoundland and Labrador, detailing the changing policy framework, its imperatives and program implications. Contextual information is presented about immigration to Newfoundland and Labrador in comparison with the national picture and other communities. This is followed by a literature review of the concept of 'welcoming communities', integration and social inclusion, particularly as applied to the analysis of comparative studies conducted in small centres. Research findings from interviews with practitioners and immigrants discussing immigrant integration in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador are presented. An analysis and discussion of the findings using a social inclusion framework follows and a conclusion is provided.

Immigration in Newfoundland and Labrador

Newfoundland and Labrador receives a relatively small proportion of immigrants to Canada. In 2007, Newfoundland and Labrador welcomed 545 of Canada's 236,758 permanent residents which is equivalent to about 0.2 percent of the total (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2007). Of those 545 newcomers, 336 were destined for St. John's (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2007). These numbers have remained around this level for the last decade (Goss Gilroy, 2005) with slight increases over the last four years (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2008). The majority of immigrants to the Province come from Asia and Europe (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2008). Less than half of the immigrants arriving in Newfoundland and Labrador identify as visible minorities (Goss Gilroy, 2005). Approximately half possess English language ability upon arrival while the other half speaks neither of the official languages (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2007). In looking at statistics released by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, it is difficult to determine exactly how many immigrants of each permanent class Newfoundland and Labrador received, as the numbers are lumped together with Prince Edward Island. Based on the calculations presented in Figure 1, it is estimated that 56 people immigrated to Newfoundland and Labrador under the family class, 383 under the economic class, 90 refugees and 9 other. The percentage of immigrants under each of these classes of the total immigrant population to Newfoundland and Labrador is below the national equivalent with the exception of refugees, specifically government assisted refugees whose destination is determined by the federal government (Goss Gilroy, 2005).

These statistics represent the number of immigrants who arrive in the Province, however, it does not signify the number of immigrants retained. According to the 2006 census, 8,380 immigrants

Figure 1: Permanent Residents to Newfoundland and Labrador by Category

Given the total number of permanent residents to each province in 2007, percentage of total is calculated:

	# *	%
NL	545	35
PEI	992	65
Total	1,537	100

These percentages are then applied to the total number of permanent residents under each class as an estimate of the number of permanent residents under each class per province in 2007:

	Total *	NL (35% of)	PEI (65% of)
Family	160	56	104
Economic	1,094	383	711
Refugees	256	90	166
Other	27	9	18
Total	1,537	545	992

* (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2007)

resided in Newfoundland and Labrador which is only 2% of the total population of 500,605 (Statistics Canada, 2006). The majority of those immigrants resided in the Census Metropolitan Area of St. John's. In 2006, 5,255 immigrants resided in the City which is equal to 3% of the total population of 179,270 (Statistics Canada, 2006). According to a report that looked at the retention and integration of immigrants to Newfoundland and Labrador, the Province faces a problem of both attracting and retaining immigrants (Goss Gilroy, 2005). This is a problem faced by many small centres in light of an overall trend towards urbanization. That is, the concentration of immigrants in large cities specifically in the MTV area- Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver. According to Goss Gilroy, it is estimated that Newfoundland and Labrador only retains 36% of its immigrants every year as many leave to work in these large cities (Goss Gilroy, 2005; Department of Human Resources Labour and Employment, 2005). This retention rate is the lowest of all provinces in Canada (Goss Gilroy, 2005). Another report puts Newfoundland and Labrador's retention rate at a higher percentage of 52.5% in 2006 (Immigrants in Newfoundland and Labrador: A Profile, 2008). Regardless of the correct figure, the rate is still low in

comparison to most Canadian centres and is the lowest in Atlantic Canada (Immigrants in Newfoundland and Labrador: A Profile, 2008).

Based on survey results and interviews with immigrants, Goss Gilroy found that desirable employment opportunities outside of the Province was the primary reason for immigrants choosing to leave (Goss Gilroy, 2005). In several instances, immigrants left in order to pursue employment opportunities for both partners in the case where one spouse was adequately employed but the other faced difficulties in finding suitable employment (Goss Gilroy, 2005). After employment, family was the second most common reason for outmigration from Newfoundland and Labrador (Goss Gilroy, 2005). For some immigrants, this meant moving to be closer to family members in other parts of Canada as well as to be closer to a large ethno-cultural community (Goss Gilroy, 2005). A problem with outmigration would seem to suggest that the Province is not successful in attracting immigrants. This report was done prior to the launch of a provincial immigration strategy in 2007 and the new strategy attempts to address this issue. At the time this study was done in 2005, Newfoundland and Labrador received 497 immigrants (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2008). In 2008, that number increased steadily to 627(Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2008). This slight increase in population would suggest the policy is having a positive impact on immigration to the Province.

Newfoundland and Labrador faces specific demographic and economic challenges that it is seeking to address through immigration to the Province. The Province is dealing with skilled labour shortages, outmigration, an aging population and a declining birth rate (Burke, 2008; Goss Gilroy, 2005; Office of Immigration and Multiculturalism, 2007). Labour shortages are confined to a few sectors; namely health care, academia, marine transportation, oil and gas, so there is still

the problem of newcomers not finding employment in their field of expertise or interest (Goss Gilroy, 2005). In comparison to the rest of Canada, immigrants to Newfoundland and Labrador have lower labour market participation rates but have higher earnings on average (Goss Gilroy, 2005). Such economic integration challenges are often the result of problems with foreign credential recognition and inadequate language training (Multicultural Women's Organization, 2004). Outside of labour market challenges, immigrants to Newfoundland and Labrador face specific barriers to integration in their communities. These include access to counselling for newcomer refugees, access to health care, access to housing near schools with English as a second language (ESL) instruction as not all schools offer this service, low levels of ethnic diversity (especially in rural areas), and lack of amenities to meet diverse needs (ex. ethnic foods, clothing) (Goss Gilroy, 2005; Multicultural Women's Organization, 2004). At the same time, the Province has many strengths in the area of immigration. In St. John's, there is a well established settlement service, the cost of living is low in comparison to other Canadian cities and crime rates are low (Burke, 2008; Goss Gilroy, 2005; Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment, 2005). Some immigrants benefit from the absence of ethnic concentrations as it allows them to be immersed in English and Canadian culture (Goss Gilroy, 2005). Furthermore, according to the Goss Gilroy report, Newfoundland and Labrador offers "safe and supportive communities" (Goss Gilroy, 2005, p. ii).

The supportive nature of communities in Newfoundland and Labrador suggests that these communities are open to immigration (National Working Group on Small Centres, 2007). However, reports such as the Goss Gilroy report and a conference report from a meeting of practitioners in the field, suggest that not enough is being done to educate native Newfoundlanders and Labradorians about the immigration process (Harris Centre, 2008;

Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment, 2005b), to extend a helping hand to newcomers (Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment, 2005) and to encourage multicultural partnerships and leadership (Goss Gilroy, 2005). According to Goss Gilroy, immigrants have "observed that the broader community is not all that aware of immigration or connected with immigrants" (Goss Gilroy, 2005, p. 36). As the report indicates, this implies that "immigration and multiculturalism have a relatively low profile in the province" (Goss Gilroy, 2005, p. ii). Initiatives and programs within the Province that seek to raise awareness and facilitate cultural understandings do exist through cultural fairs and host programs. But according to the results from the Goss Gilroy report, these are "low-key approaches" that are not doing much to build community (Goss Gilroy, 2005). The report advocates for a "more active and visible approach to building a welcoming community" (Goss Gilroy, 2005, p. 37). With the launch of its immigration strategy in 2007, the Province is attempting to facilitate such approaches with an objective towards fostering welcoming communities.

The approach to immigration in the Province has changed considerably with the launch of a provincial immigration strategy in 2007, a multiculturalism policy in 2008 and the establishment of a provincial Office of Immigration and Multiculturalism in 2007. The concept of a welcoming community is identified as a guiding principle and goal of the provincial immigration strategy (Office of Immigration and Multiculturalism, 2007). Within the strategy, being a welcoming community is defined as going "beyond being friendly or hospitable. It means welcoming immigrants into our communities, our workplaces, our homes, and our lives. This will involve awareness building throughout the province of the contributions immigrants make and the value of a more diverse society" (Office of Immigration and Multiculturalism, 2007, pp. 3-4). Part of achieving its goal to foster welcoming communities is the establishment of a multiculturalism

policy. As stated in the vision statement of this policy, welcoming communities and social inclusion form the basis of the document. The vision statement is that:

> "Newfoundland and Labrador is a dynamic and vibrant Province, with welcoming communities where the cultural diversity of all its residents is valued and enhanced in the spirit of inclusiveness and harmony, to collectively build a self-reliant, prosperous Province" (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2008).

Through policies such as Newfoundland and Labrador's policies on immigration and multiculturalism, governments play a major role in promoting social inclusion and supporting communities. Both the federal government and the Province carry out settlement initiatives by funding non-governmental organizations to administer programs that meet their policy objectives. The Association for New Canadians is the primary settlement agency in St. John's and receives funding from both the federal and provincial government to manage language programs, employment assistance programs, translation and interpretative services, settlement assistance and social programming (Association for New Canadians, 2009; Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment, 2005). The Association is the only federally funded settlement agency in the Province (Foster, 2008). However, there are other organizations that provide settlement support in one form or another. The Refugee and Immigrant Advisory Council Inc. provides settlement services to both immigrants and refugees (Refugee and Immigrant Advisory Council, 2009). Services include language training, employment assistance, application support, advocacy, orientation and educational outreach (Refugee and Immigrant Advisory Council, 2009). The Newfoundland and Labrador Multicultural and Folk Arts Council acts as an umbrella organization that promotes multiculturalism through art and creative expression (Newfoundland and Labrador Multicultural and Folk Arts Council, 2009). The council runs a scholarship program and hosts various social events (Newfoundland and Labrador Multicultural and Folk Arts Council, 2009). The Coalition on Richer Diversity is another St. John's based

umbrella organization of groups working with immigrants that provides opportunities to network and access resources (Coalition on Richer Diversity, 2009). The Multicultural Women's Organization of Newfoundland and Labrador is an advocacy organization for immigrant women. Their primary projects include research and social programming (Multicultural Women's Organization, 2009). Other immigrant serving or advocacy organizations include the Friends of India Association, the Hebrew Congregation of Newfoundland and Labrador, the Muslim Association of Newfoundland and Labrador, the Newfoundland Sikh Society and the Philippine Association.

These organizations are all based out of St. John's and provide services within the city. The municipality of St. John's does not itself play a role in immigrant integration. According to the Goss Gilroy report, the role of the City is not clear but there are plans by the City to assess how to get involved (Goss Gilroy, 2005). The 2007 provincial immigration strategy also identified the need for municipalities to play a part in fostering welcoming communities (Office of Immigration and Multiculturalism, 2007). According to the strategy, the Province plans to collaborate with municipalities to encourage them to get involved and provide settlement information to immigrants (Office of Immigration and Multiculturalism, 2007).

Welcoming Communities and Social Inclusion

The term 'welcoming community' in the context of immigration implies that a city has a role to play in attracting, integrating and retaining immigrants (Belkhodja, 2009; Kunz, 2005). According to the National Working Group on Small Centre Strategies in their Tool Box of Ideas for Smaller Centres, establishing a welcoming community is key to a receiving society's ability to attract and retain immigrants (National Working Group on Small Centres, 2007). The

significance of this topic to immigration and settlement studies is further captured by the National Metropolis Project that has identified Welcoming Communities as a research policy domain in an attempt to understand how receiving societies promote acceptance and inclusion (National Metropolis, 2009). It is also a term that is widely used by organizations and government bodies in their immigration strategies (Belkhodja, 2009). As we have seen is the case in the Newfoundland and Labrador Immigration Strategy and Multiculturalism Policy.

In defining what is a 'welcoming community', researchers with the National Metropolis Project have identified guidelines for planning for a welcoming community that centre on being proactive planners, engaging members of the community, ensuring leadership, developing partnerships and utilizing research (Agrawal, 2009). Researchers under this project have overwhelmingly taken an approach to creating a welcoming community that focuses on building awareness of diversity and fostering inclusion (White, 2009; Pruegger, 2009; Garcea, 2009; Poitras, 2009). According to Belkhodja, "the principle underlying the welcoming community is the requirement to foster the creation of a democratic space where human beings can make contact and communicate at the grassroots level, to devise means to bring together stakeholders of different origins, and to hear different and even discordant voices" (Belkhodja, 2009, p.98).

As identified by researchers, the National Metropolis Project, the National Working Group on Small Centre Strategies and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador in their immigration strategy, the concept of a welcoming community is tied to ideas of social inclusion and the receiving society. A receiving society is the collection of members and institutions that make up a community or city. Institutions include businesses, educational institutions, faith-based institutions, community service institutions, recreation organizations and law enforcement

agencies (National Working Group on Small Centres, 2007). These institutions that make up communities are seen as playing a role in fostering a socially inclusive environment. As Saloojee states, "community involvement and engagement is an essential component of building inclusive communities and societies" (Saloojee, 2003, p.17).

In our understanding of how individuals and institutions within a community work together to achieve social inclusion it is important to consider the role of government in shaping communities and promoting social inclusion. As Duncan states, "governments have the key role in defining social inclusion" but "it leaves the management of a great many aspects of our society to individuals, to non-governmental organizations, and to the business community" (Duncan, 2003, p.31). In Canada, both the federal and provincial governments play a role in immigrant settlement. Municipal governments do not share part of this responsibility but are increasingly being asked to play a role (Papillon, 2002). Priorities for policy and programs are set by the federal and provincial governments who fund non-governmental organizations to carry out settlement and integration initiatives. As Duncan states, "this approach transfers ownership of the social inclusion effort to the people and their communities" (Duncan, 2003, p.31). Given this, it is important to examine the policies of government and the initiatives of non-government organizations to determine how they help communities achieve social inclusion and integrate immigrants into society.

In addition to the notion of a receiving society, the concept of a welcoming community is tied to the idea of social inclusion. Omidvar and Richmond present the Laidlaw Foundation's theoretical framework of social inclusion in their report entitled *Immigrant Settlement and Social Inclusion in Canada* (2003). Social inclusion is defined as a "proactive, human development approach to

social well being that calls for more than the removal of barriers or risks" (Omidvar, 2003, p. iii). "It is about closing physical, social and economic distances separating people, rather than only about eliminating boundaries or barriers between us and them" (Omidvar, 2003, p. ix). Social inclusion is both a process and a goal and is based on valuing diversity and recognizing differences (Omidvar, 2003; Saloojee, 2003; Papillon, 2002). As it relates to immigration, the goal of social inclusion is to ensure that newcomers have "full and equal participation in the economic, social, cultural and political dimensions of life in their new country" (Omidvar, 2003, p. 1). As a process, it attempts to achieve the closing of the distances that separate people thereby realizing the goal of social inclusion (Omidvar, 2003). This is frequently achieved by creating opportunities for groups who are marginalized and who have been traditionally shut out from participation or deprived of opportunities in these areas (Bertram, 2008; Caidi, 2005).

Approaches to social inclusion can be classified as either weak or strong (Richmond, 2005). The approaches differ in terms of their ideology, application and implications for groups who have traditionally been excluded. A weak approach is also referred to as a liberal approach as it is an approach that is often applied in market-based policy making (Galabuzi, 2006). An example of its application is liberal pledges made to ideologies such as multiculturalism (Saloojee, 2003). Policies that take a liberal approach take procedural steps to achieve inclusion and assume that everyone, even those who are traditionally excluded, has access to resources and services (Galabuzi, 2006). Such policies attempt to change the excluded rather than change the structural systems within a society in order to bring about social cohesion (Barata, 2000; Galabuzi, 2006). Implications of this type of approach on excluded groups, such as immigrants, is that they are included but only just; meaning they are still left on the margins of society as little has been done to directly address the barriers they face to integration (Galabuzi, 2006). Strong approaches seek

to improve integration but take a structural approach to examine historical perspectives of oppression, and take into consideration rights, citizenship and the relationship between dominant institutions and those who are marginalized (Richmond, 2005; Byrne, 1999). Strong approaches differ from weak approaches in that it attempts to change society rather than change the excluded in order to achieve inclusion (Barata, 2000; Galabuzi, 2006). Implications of this type of approach on immigrants who are excluded is that it directly addresses barriers to integration by providing newcomers with equal access, instead of assuming that equal access exists (Galabuzi, 2006; Barata, 2000). In order to achieve inclusion, the Laidlaw Foundation advocates for a strong approach and states that policies and programs must possess five dimensions. They are, recognizing and respecting diverse values; nurturing human development; involving and engaging individuals in community life; promoting proximity, i.e. shared and integrated spaces; and ensuring everyone's material well being (Omidvar, 2003). This paper will utilize these five dimensions as a basis of analysis but will take a liberal approach to social inclusion given that such an approach provides a foundation for a policy related analysis of social inclusion. This is necessary as that the focus of the paper is on analyzing politically driven initiatives in Newfoundland and Labrador targeted at immigrant integration and retention.

The concept of social inclusion first emerged in Europe and was developed as an approach to social policy in the areas of health and welfare (Barata, 2000; Omidvar, 2003). Today, it is applied in fields that service individuals who face barriers to inclusion such as underprivileged children, those who are disabled, suffer from mental illness and/or are racialized (Richmond, 2005). It is also frequently applied to immigrants as a way to understand the barriers newcomers face to integration and settlement (Caidi, 2005; Omidvar, 2003). This field is growing in significance as newcomers to Canada today face a greater number of barriers that affect their

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inclusion than did newcomers of the past (Papillon, 2002). Barriers include access to the labour market, health care, citizenship, housing and language. In terms of the labour market, immigrants are facing barriers to securing employment that matches their education and experience (Omidvar, 2003; Papillon, 2002). Language is another significant barrier that has implications for employment and newcomers who are seeking linguistically appropriate and culturally sensitive services (Omidvar, 2003). These challenges vary throughout an immigrant's life cycle (Papillon, 2002). Initial barriers differ from long term barriers and in order to be inclusive, services must address all of these barriers.

In considering the profile of immigrants to Newfoundland and Labrador presented in the previous section, we see specific barriers faced by immigrants to the Province. It is interesting to note that only half of the immigrants landing in Newfoundland and Labrador possess English language ability. This helps us to understand how many newcomers will face linguistic barriers in accessing services and it speaks to the need for services to be inclusive and respecting of linguistic diversity. Country of origin of immigrants and whether they identify as a visible minority has implications on how they may be socially excluded or racialized. In the Province, less than half identify as such. It is also important to distinguish between immigrant classes to the province as each group differs slightly in terms of the barriers faced. Refugees often have fewer financial and social resources and may experience certain disadvantages compared to the skilled worker class (Papillon, 2002). Currently, Newfoundland and Labrador receives a greater number of skilled immigrants compared to refugees but as we have seen, labour market participation rates are still low and immigrants face barriers to economic integration.

It is also worthy to note that the vast majority of immigrants to the Province arrive and settle in St. John's. Within the city, neighbourhood ethnic segregation is not an issue as there are no large clusters of ethnic populations (Goss Gilroy, 2005). The treatment of ethnic enclaves in the literature and its impacts on integration is two sided (Li, 2004). According to Papillon, the presence of ethnic enclaves contributes to the exclusion of immigrants and therefore a lack of ethnic segregation presents opportunities to foster inclusion (Papillon, 2002). Inclusion may be aided by the potential for interactions between immigrant and mainstream populations as immigrant groups rely less on their own ethnic groups (Papillon, 2002). On the other hand, because they lack the support of large ethnic concentrations, newcomers may experience greater exclusion in trying to find housing or employment and have little access to amenities such as food and clothing to meet their diverse needs (Papillon, 2002). Literature that supports this side of the debate, suggests that ethnic enclaves can aid in immigrant integration and inclusion as they provide a means for immigrants to access such resources, overcome language barriers, as well as serve an important social network function (Qadeer, 2006; Kunz, 2007; Li, 2004). In contrast to Papillon, Qadeer and Kumar state that ethnic enclaves as a neighbourhood phenomenon do not impede social cohesion and inclusion as cohesion is promoted by the larger society and neighbourhoods are of no consequence in this process (Qadeer, 2006). Furthermore, Kunz and Li point to the fact that enclaves facilitate social capital which can have positive implications on an immigrant's economic and social integration (Kunz, 2007; Li, 2004).

Barriers are means of exclusion. According to Saloojee, in order to examine social inclusion, it must be done in the context of dealing with exclusion (Saloojee, 2003; Richmond, 2005). In quoting Walker, Saloojee defines social exclusion as the "process of being shut out, fully or partially, from any of the social, economic, political or cultural systems which determine the

social integration of a person in a society" (Saloojee, 2003, p. 2). Social exclusion then is the opposite of integration and inclusion (Barata, 2000; Saloojee, 2003; Caidi, 2005). It results in individuals being pushed to the margins of society (Barata, 2000). People who are excluded are often so due to being exploited, oppressed or discriminated against (Saloojee, 2003). Incidences of discrimination or oppression are often social in nature; that is, they are a result of group or social processes and not individual acts (Barata, 2000). This is important to the definition of social exclusion and how it is different from other forms of exclusion; the main difference being that social exclusion results from the exclusion of some groups by groups with power (Byrne, 1999; Barata, 2000; Saloojee, 2003).

To understand the reasons why groups with power, such as governments, agencies and the mainstream population, exclude immigrants it is necessary to gauge the public discourse around the issues of diversity and immigration. As Li points out, native Canadians views towards and tolerance of immigrants is important to our understanding of how groups are excluded and what the process might be for inclusion (Li, 2003). The National Working Group on Small Centre Strategies also advocates for assessing the level of community consensus on issues of immigration before proceeding with attraction and retention strategies (National Working Group on Small Centre, 2007). According to Li, the prevailing discourse today focuses on the fact that immigrants are coming from "non-traditional" source countries and because of this they bring different languages and cultural norms which are placing a burden on current systems such as the education system and health care (Li, 2003). In addition to these perceived burdens, there is also the fear that immigration is causing Canada to lose its national identity (Li, 2003). Li terms such a discourse as "the problem of diversity" (Li, 2003). This is a particularly negative discourse, but as Li mentions there are some positive feelings towards immigration as it relates to Canada's role

in humanitarian and compassionate migration (Li, 2003). In the case of Newfoundland and Labrador presented previously, the perceived discourse from the perspective of immigrants is that there is a lack of awareness and desire to connect with immigrants (Goss Gilroy, 2005). It is important to understand discourse as negative public discourses often result in barriers which place excluded groups at a disadvantage in participating in the cultural, social, economic and political realms of society (Saloojee, 2003; Barata, 2000).

Expanding on the idea of inclusion as a principle of a 'welcoming community', I propose a new definition of the term which forms the basis of this paper; a 'welcoming community' is defined as a social inclusion approach to the reception of immigrants. In taking this approach, I apply the established theoretical framework of social inclusion to the term which grounds the concept in theory and provides a standard against which to determine if a community and its policies and practices constitute a welcoming community for immigrants. This is needed given the broad use of the term in policy documents and the broad claim that is frequently made that a community is welcoming without a clear definition of the concept (Belkhodja, 2009).

To determine if a community is welcoming using a social inclusion framework, I apply Laidlaw's five elements of social inclusion – recognition and respect for diverse values of immigrants; nurturing the development of immigrants; involvement and engagement of immigrants in community life; integrating and sharing space with immigrants; and ensuring immigrants material well being, to the Newfoundland and Labrador context. Figure 2 provides a list of criteria to be applied in analysis when determining if a policy or program designed to support communities is welcoming. I also consider barriers, areas of exclusion, public discourse, along with the five dimensions of social inclusion in the analysis.

Figure 2: Key Elements of Social Inclusion

- Is the goal to achieve social inclusion? Or is there an established process to close distances and break down barriers thereby achieving social inclusion?
- What barriers are being addressed? Does it address how immigrants are currently excluded?
- Does it address public discourse on diversity and immigration?
- Are all five dimensions of social inclusion being addressed?
  - Recognizes and respects the diverse values of immigrants
  - Nurtures the development of immigrants
  - Involves and engages immigrants in community life
  - Integrates and shares spaces with immigrants, i.e. promotes proximity
  - Ensures immigrants' material well being

Immigrant Integration and Inclusion in Small Centres

In the context of immigration, the term integration is used to describe how a newcomer is incorporated into the receiving society (Frideres, 2008). The distinction is frequently made between assimilation, which is analogous to a one-way street in which a newcomer adapts to the norms of the receiving society, and integration which is viewed as a two-way street in which immigrants adapt to the receiving society and the receiving society adapts to immigrants (Birjandian, 2005). In studies of immigrant integration, different areas of integration are discussed and the concept is divided into multiple dimensions: social integration, cultural integration, political integration and economic integration (Biles, 2008). The focus of this paper is on the social integration of immigrants which is measured based on the frequency and intensity of immigrants' contact with institutions in the receiving society (Frideres, 2008). In Canada, the discourse on integration is most widely celebrated and criticized in the adoption of a Multiculturalism Policy which invites newcomers to retain their culture while enjoying life in Canada and the freedoms that this entails (von Törn, 2008). Integration is also broadly discussed in policy documents and is the goal of a variety of programs targeted at newcomers. On the national front, one of Citizenship and Immigration Canada's (CIC) primary objectives is "supporting the successful integration of newcomers" (Citizenship and Immigration Canada,

2007). The department funds language, employment and settlement programs to supports its goals. Through programs such as these that are federally funded and those that are administered through provincial and municipal governments and settlement agencies, integration is put into practice.

In examining studies of immigrant integration in small centres, I look at the various levels of community that play a role in creating a welcoming community. Much of the literature discusses collaboration between provincial governments, municipal governments and non-governmental settlement agencies. The literature cites many examples of community-based immigrant integration initiatives that result from multi-stakeholder collaborations. In applying the key elements of social inclusion identified in Figure 2 to the policies and initiatives discussed in the literature, I examine the existing literature to see how small centres address the barriers faced by immigrants, how immigrants are currently excluded, what the public discourse is on diversity and immigration, and if policies and initiatives address the five dimensions of social inclusion.

Barriers faced by immigrants that result in their social exclusion in small centres do not differ greatly from the barriers faced by immigrants in centres across Canada. Studies consistently indicated employment, language and housing as being the top three barriers to inclusion faced by immigrants. In relation to employment, immigrants across many studies discussed their difficulties with foreign credential recognition (Silvius, 2005; Walton-Roberts, 2005; Saskatchewan, 2002). In Kelowna and Squamish, British Columbia, immigrants reported problems finding employment as they characterized the towns as having a "tight labour market" (Walton-Roberts, 2005). In Saskatchewan, immigrants reported being underemployed and frustrated with the lack of opportunities to access further education and training (Saskatchewan,

2002). In terms of language training, several studies either indicated a lack of English language classes (Walton-Roberts, 2005) or inadequate training programs that did not provide work-related language instruction and was insufficient for preparing immigrants for further education (Saskatchewan, 2002). With regards to housing, immigrants across several studies identified a need for improved assistance in finding adequate housing as many faced challenges in doing so due to affordability and low standards of housing (Saskatchewan, 2002; Brochu, 2006). Several studies cited additional barriers faced by immigrants in small centres, including difficulties in accessing health care (Brochu, 2006; Mulholland, 2006), social services, public transit (Derwing, 2005; Derwing, 2008) and affordable childcare (Saskatchewan, 2002).

The public discourse around immigration in small centres is largely based on a lack of understanding of immigrant issues and their contributions (Block, 2006; Saskatchewan, 2002; Derwing, 2005). Such a discourse contributes to the types of barriers faced by immigrants and the degree to which they are excluded. Many of the studies report what immigrants perceive the public discourse to be which has important implications for their feelings of belonging and how they interact with the community. In a study that looked at immigrants' perceptions of their level of integration to francophone minority communities, a few respondents felt marginalized and expressed that the community did not do much to help them (Roy, 2007). As Roy et al. explain this was the case in communities where programs did not exist to address the various stages of immigrant settlement (Roy, 2007). For example, several of these communities were active in the attraction of immigrants in order to meet an economic need but were not active in the welcoming or retention of immigrants (Roy, 2007). Similarly, Belkhodja reported a discourse around immigration within these communities that spoke little of the integration of immigrants or the benefits of cultural diversity (Belkhodja, 2005). The individuals within these communities saw

immigration mainly as an answer to an economic need and a declining population (Belkhodja, 2005). In a study of immigrants' perceptions of life in Prince Edward Island, many perceived the general public to be close minded as long time residents were more interested in one's relational ties and last name than in personal ability (Baldacchino, 2006). As such immigrants felt excluded (Baldacchino, 2006). These sentiments were similar to those expressed by respondents in Walton-Roberts study on Kelowna who reported feeling that Kelowna was a tight knit community that was hard to break into given that opportunities had more to do with who you know than what you know (Walton-Roberts, 2005). Some expressed that it was a narrow-minded community and did not feel like the community was open to outsiders (Walton-Roberts, 2005). Despite reports of feeling 'othered' in these close knit neighbourhoods, several respondents related positive experiences within these communities, particularly in Prince Edward Island. One such experience was immigrants' interactions with the Welcome Wagon, an initiative started in the Province to receive newcomers (Baldacchino, 2006). Similarly in Edmonton, a study revealed that nearly half of the immigrants surveyed believed that Edmonton possessed a "welcoming social environment" (Derwing, 2008, p. 192) and many stated they felt able and comfortable to participate in city life (Derwing, 2005). This was despite the fact that the study reported a lack of understanding among the public of the contributions that immigrants make to society (Derwing, 2005). In addition to a lack of understanding of immigrant contributions, there exist misconceptions of settlement services and immigrants are frequently blamed for local problems. As a result, feelings of resentment are common in some small centres as is the case in Sudbury, Ontario (Block, 2006). In Steinbach, Manitoba, it was reported that some members of the public were under the impression that immigrants receive money from the federal government which generated feelings of resentment (Silvius, 2005). Furthermore, some people equated the housing

shortage in Steinbach with the visible increase in the number of immigrants and subsequently blamed the problem on newcomers (Silvius, 2005).

Immigration and settlement policies in small centres attempt to promote the goal of social inclusion in order to address the negative perceptions of immigration held by the broader population and to break down barriers faced by immigrants (Carter, 2008; Bertrand, 2008). Federal and provincial governments are generally the bodies that establish policies in relation to immigration and settlement. Depending on the federal-provincial agreement some provinces have greater responsibility in the area of settlement. The Province of Manitoba is one such province. As part of its immigration policies, the Province of Manitoba works with employers and professional organizations to raise awareness of the benefits of hiring immigrants, to meet the human resource needs of companies and to improve foreign credential recognition programs (Carter, 2008). The Province of British Columbia also works with employers and economic development agencies in its policy efforts (Bertrand, 2008). Through their work in raising awareness with employers and licensing boards, the policies of these two governments aim to increase the recognition of and respect for diversity. In assisting to secure employment for immigrants, these policies also seek to ensure the development and well being of immigrants.

To meet their policy goals of social inclusion, provincial and sometimes municipal governments are involved in creating and funding initiatives. Such initiatives put the goals of social inclusion into action through established processes designed to break down barriers to integration. The Province of Saskatchewan provides funding for language training and employment assistance programs (Saskatchewan, 2002). In Nova Scotia, immigrants can take advantage of a provincial work placement program called New Beginnings (Akbari, 2006). Ontario funds programs in the

City of Guelph targeted at education enhancement training (Mulholland, 2006). Two initiatives

under this funding grant are equivalency courses in veterinarian training and study groups for

foreign trained physicians preparing to take the licensing exam (Mulholland, 2006). In addition to

employment and language assistance, the Province of British Columbia has appointed settlement

workers to work both inside and outside of the school system and has established a community

connection centre that connects newcomers with a variety of settlement support services

(Bertrand, 2008). Similar to British Columbia's connection centre, the Province of Manitoba has

established a Community Initiatives and Partnership Program as part of the Manitoba Provincial

Nominee Program. Under this initiative, communities sign an agreement with the Province to

assist in the settlement of newcomers (Carter, 2008). In addressing employment and language

barriers, these initiatives help ensure immigrants' well being and assist in nurturing their

development. By involving community associations and matching newcomers with community

based organizations either directly in schools or through community connection programs, these

initiatives involve and engage immigrants in community life, and encourage community

members to integrate and share spaces with immigrants.

While immigration and settlement policy falls within the jurisdiction of the provinces, in some

cases municipalities are active in policy making. Of course, many municipal governments face

barriers themselves to establishing policies and initiatives due to lack of funding and influence as

is the case in Kelowna and Squamish, British Columbia and Guelph, Ontario (Walton-Roberts,

2005; Mulholland, 2006). In contrast to these cities, Sudbury, Ontario, Sherbrook, Quebec and

London, Ontario have established policies to address the integration of immigrants in their

centres. These policies meet many of the dimensions of social inclusion in that they respect

diversity, attempt to integrate immigrants into community life, share spaces with immigrants and nurture the development and well being of immigrants.

Sudbury, Ontario strives to be a welcoming community, to increase diversity within the fields of arts and culture and to provide employment opportunities for immigrants (Block, 2006). To promote improved cross cultural understanding, Sudbury has established policies to diversify its workforce and improve relations between policy makers and minority populations (Block, 2006). Coalitions of diverse groups have been created to encourage people to discuss strategies that address racism and inclusion (Block, 2006). These are examples of initiatives that; attempt to integrate immigrants into community life by involving them in making decisions that impact community; recognizes and respects diversity by attempting to diversify the workforce; and shares spaces with immigrants by making it easier for immigrants to access services from the City and gain employment. The City has also been active in anti-racism research that helps lay the foundation for the inclusion of immigrants in community life.

Sherbrook, Quebec has developed a strategy to integrate and welcome newcomers (Laaroussi, 2006). As part of its strategy the municipal government seeks to sensitize the City to a diverse environment and generate feelings of belonging among newcomers (Laaroussi, 2006). To achieve this, the City has entered into partnerships, encouraged immigrant participation in city activities and has made its services more accessible to immigrants (Corriveau, 2006). These policies have the goal to; engage immigrants in community life by promoting civic participation; respect diversity by increasing awareness; and nurture immigrant development and well being through the provision of improved access to municipal services.

London, Ontario has developed a Welcoming Cultural Diversity in London Plan that has identified social inclusion and civic participation amid its priorities (Brochu, 2006). There are plans to bring together employers to address employment barriers, and to bring together neighbourhoods to encourage them to become leaders in civic participation (Brochu, 2006). As policies, these seek to; share spaces with immigrants and involve them in community life by supporting broad civic engagement; and ensure the development and well being of immigrants by discussing ways to improve the employment situation of newcomers.

Generally, the initiatives funded by governments are carried out by non-governmental agencies or private organizations that provide direct settlement assistance to immigrants. For example, the Town of Steinbach in Manitoba has signed on to the Province's Community Initiatives and Partnership Program. Under this program, employers, churches, schools, healthcare providers and the municipality came together to form the Steinbach and District Immigration Settlement Program. Steinbach's settlement program collects home furnishings, organizes social activities, provides interpretive and translation services, assists with employment and the completion of documents, and facilitates language training for newcomers (Silvius, 2005). This case demonstrates a community that values diversity and immigration, as the initiators of the program is the community itself. Such a down-up approach shows a commitment by the community to share space with immigrants and to nurture their development. The Steinbach model nurtures the development of immigrants and ensures their well being by assisting them to carry out daily activities such as document completion; and to meet their long term needs such as employment and language training. Steinbach's settlement program also engages in programs that promote cultural understanding which involves immigrants in community life and recognizes diversity.

One example is an initiative where immigrant children share their experiences with others in the classroom (Silvius, 2005).

Similar to the Town of Steinbach, agencies that serve immigrants in minority francophone communities across Canada provide settlement services in a variety of areas. They act as an information source for immigrants seeking to navigate their new environment (Belkhodja, 2008). They also provide employment assistance and run programs that connect newcomers with community members such as the Host Program (Belkhodja, 2008). The services provided by these agencies are focused on ensuring immigrants' well being and development and are targeted at reducing barriers, specifically employment and language, faced by immigrants. The Host Program and similar matching programs do help integrate and share spaces with immigrants. However, none of these initiatives or services are active in involving and engaging immigrants in community life.

In New Brunswick and the Yukon, on the other hand, community partners have recognized the need to attract and retain francophone immigrants. Agencies have been engaging in initiatives to help build awareness in Francophone communities and provide space for various Francophone communities to interact (Belkhoja, 2008). These organizations believe that social-cultural integration is the key to successful immigrant integration and concentrate much of their efforts on raising awareness of cultural diversity through networking and organizing social gatherings to encourage mutual understanding (Kasparian, 2008). In the Yukon for example, dinners and craft fairs are held as a means to bring together native Canadians and newcomers (Bourque, 2008). These initiatives met many of the dimensions of being socially inclusive. By providing space for communities to interact, programs integrate and share space with immigrants, involve and engage

immigrants in community life and nurture the development of immigrants. By increasing awareness and providing opportunities for interaction, these services aim to address racism and intolerance by respecting diversity in addition to assisting with settlement (Kasparian, 2008). As Kasparian states this approach is a holistic approach that seeks to provide support in every aspect of integration and help newcomers in forming networks in the community to encourage them to become "full fledged members of society" (Kasparian, 2008, p. 96).

In summary, immigrants in small centres face many of the same barriers to inclusion as do immigrants in large centres. These barriers are access to suitable employment, to adequate language training and appropriate housing. A lack of understanding among the public of these issues and a lack of appreciation of immigrant contributions are some of the prevailing attitudes in small centres that contribute to immigrants' feelings of exclusion. Policies and initiatives of provinces, municipalities and agencies in small centres seek to break down barriers and address the public's negative perceptions as a means to promote social inclusion. Most do so by providing initial settlement services that ensure the well being and development of immigrants especially in the areas of employment and language. Initiatives that connect services to immigrants through schools, businesses and community help to integrate spaces with immigrants. Policies that encourage civic participation attempt to involve immigrants in community life. However, there appear to be few programs that actively seek to engage immigrants in community life. Rather most programs focus on raising awareness and sensitizing the broader community perhaps as a means of laying the foundations for community participation and the recognition of diversity.

Study of Welcoming Communities in Newfoundland and Labrador

The study focused on the City of St. John's, the capital of Newfoundland and Labrador. The purpose of the study was to determine if St. John's is a 'welcoming community' and what impact this has on immigrants' social integration. I sought to achieve this by examining the policies and programs that exist regarding immigrant integration, how immigrants interact with services and how these policies and programs support the claim that St. John's is a 'welcoming community'. As well as by assessing the perspectives of policy makers and service providers in comparison to immigrants to determine how each conceptualizes what is a 'welcoming community'.

The research is guided by the following question: What is the impact of a 'welcoming community' on immigrant integration and inclusion in smaller centres, particularly the city of St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador? Within this research question, I seek to address the following issues: In what ways is St. John's a 'welcoming community'?; What policies and practices support this claim?; and How do immigrants experience these policies and practices?

Methodology

Personal interviews were conducted with government and agency representatives. Personal interviews were chosen as they allow for more in-depth conversation compared to a survey and allow respondents to elaborate on initiatives that are of particular interest to this study. Government and agency interview participants were selected based on their level of involvement with immigration to the Province. Four interviews were conducted. One person was interviewed from each of the two lower levels of government - the provincial government, the municipal government, as well as a representative from a settlement agency and a representative from an immigrant advocacy organization. These four groups were chosen due to their ability to influence

local integration as they all operate within the City of St. John's. Involvement in the field of immigration in Newfoundland and Labrador was an important criterion for interviewee selection in order to ensure the ability of the sample to answer questions related to policy and program direction. All participants have been working in the field for a minimum of five years. Interview participants were recruited through email and selected based on my knowledge of and contacts with these organizations. Interview guides were used as the data collection tool for interviews (see appendix A).

Then focus groups were conducted with immigrants. Focus groups were chosen as they allow respondents to share experiences in a non-threatening environment. They are beneficial as the experiences shared by one respondent may trigger a memory of a similar experience by another respondent. Immigrant participants were selected based on having permanent resident status in Canada and residing in St. John's for three years or less. Subjects were chosen who represented a range of characteristics in terms of their length of stay in the Province, age, gender and country of origin. Such a range of characteristics was important in order to ensure probability levels. That is, the probability that the participants will represent the range of all new immigrants settling in St. John's. Participants were recruited from the client base of a settlement agency in St. John's. Two focus groups were held; one with four participants and the other with five participants. Interview guides were used as the data collection tool for focus groups (see appendix B). Figure 3 lists the characteristics of participants using a pseudo-name.

The age of immigrant participants ranged from twenty three to forty eight with an average age of thirty six. The majority were female, while one third of the respondents were male. The country

Figure 3: Focus Group Participants

Name*	Age	Gender	Country of Origin	Length of Residence in NL	Length of Residence in Canada
Jamal	23	M	Sudan	9 months	6 years
Xavier	28	M	Iraq	5 months	5 months
Caroline	40	F	Romania	1 year 4 months	1 year 4 months
Anna	48	F	Myanmar	2 years	2 years
Lian	43	F	China	3 years	3 years
Jun	42	F	China	3 years	6 years
Vladimir	29	M	Eritrea	2 months	2 months
Zoe	34	F	Chile	1 month	1 year 2 months
Moon	33	F	Sri Lanka	5 months	6 months

* For privacy reasons a pseudo-name is used.

of origin of respondents represented a wide range with respondents representing South Asia, East Asia, South America, Africa, Europe and the Middle East. Length of residence in Canada ranged from two months to six years, suggesting that one of the respondents is not a newcomer given they have been in the country for longer than three years. However, length of residence in Newfoundland and Labrador for all respondents was less than three years, with the most recent having only arrived within the last month, and an average residency of one year and four months.

Limitations

The results of the research are limited in that only immigrants who had contact with a settlement agency were chosen to participate. Therefore the report is biased towards those immigrants who have received some level of integration support from settlement agencies and lacks the insights that would have been gained from respondents who may not have received such assistance. It is also worthy to note that four of the nine immigrants surveyed are government assisted refugees who were destined to St. John's. Due to this, the settlement and integration experiences of these individuals are different as they are guaranteed settlement support through the federally funded Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP). RAP is specifically designed for government assisted

refugees. It provides them with an income, assistance in finding accommodations and orientation sessions on financial and life skills matters (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2004).

Findings

Interviews with government and agency representatives and with newcomers to St. John's reveal the barriers faced by immigrants to integrating in St. John's, what St. John's as a small centre has to offer newcomers, what the public discourse is on diversity and immigration, how St. John's is perceived to be welcoming, and the policies and initiatives that are driven by government and service providers and how immigrants interact with these services.

Barriers and Public Discourse

Barriers to successful integration identified include language, transportation, housing, spousal isolation, foreign credential recognition, recognition of foreign work experience, access to ethnic food, access to public education, lack of diversity, the design of settlement services, difficulty in accessing public services, and lack of awareness of services.

Language was the primary challenge identified by immigrants in the focus groups. This is an issue that is also understood by government and immigrant serving agencies to be a significant barrier for newcomers. As one agency representative said *"I think that* [language] *is the biggest challenge for most immigrants, getting through the language, acquiring the language"*. As she explains, some newcomers get frustrated with the time and investment it takes to become competent in a language, especially to become labour market ready. Challenges with language also exist pre-migration. Several respondents suggested that not knowing the language made it difficult to access information about Canada or Newfoundland and Labrador before coming. As a

result, many did not have sufficient information about Canada, the Province or St. John's prior to arrival unless that information came from family or friends already living here. This frustration carried on for many newcomers in their first months of settlement. As Caroline said *"I couldn't speak English so I couldn't understand when someone give me some information"*. Caroline said because of her problems with English and not having friends, she was often upset, bored or sick.

Challenges with language made some newcomers feel excluded and uncomfortable in their surroundings. As Jun explained, during her first few visits to church she didn't understand anything so she didn't feel comfortable. Many of the respondents in the focus groups differentiated between the different aspects of language acquisition and how they found them challenging. For Xavier, who had studied English for ten years before coming to Canada, he was comfortable in listening but struggled with speaking and expressing himself. He gave the example of being greeted at the airport and feeling like he did not have a tongue because he found it difficult to say hi. Caroline discussed the challenges some newcomers face with learning grammar and because of this she says some of them will not stay in school but instead will isolate themselves by staying home to watch television all day. Several respondents mentioned the challenges they had in listening particularly to native Newfoundlanders who they feel speak very fast. For example, Jun talked of the difficulties her husband had as a teacher in St. John's in understanding his students.

Transportation and learning to navigate their new city was a challenge identified by most newcomers. Lian talked about having to walk a long distance to the power company because she did not know how to use the transit system. Moon, who arrived in the winter, discussed waiting a long time for the bus because she didn't know she could check the schedule. Jun also arrived in

the winter and said she had difficulty finding an apartment and locating shops. Finding suitable housing was an issue that was discussed briefly and identified by only one other respondent who said he had problems finding suitable housing within his budget.

The issues of spousal isolation and family separation were discussed by both government and agency representatives and immigrants. As a representative from the provincial Office of Immigration and Multiculturalism mentioned, there is a tendency for the spouse of a primary applicant to feel isolated and to not integrate into the community. Often times this is a reason why a family may decide to leave the Province and is therefore both a barrier to integration and retention. As an agency representative explains, isolation leaves many newcomers homebound; *"A large percentage of the population is homebound...They can't leave their house. The most they can do is go to the corner store to buy milk and bread and that's it...new residents are tied to their house because there is nothing for them"*. A respondent in the focus groups discussed the subject of spousal isolation by stating that his wife feels lonely and homesick and this is a problem for him because she is always very upset. Another respondent mentioned that separation from his family was an obstacle for him.

The issue of foreign credential recognition poses a significant barrier. According to a representative from the Province, this problem is coupled with the challenge immigrants face in gaining recognition for their foreign earned experience and in paying licensing fees. She states, *"this is not just about the paper and getting those credentials assessed and recognized but often it is about demonstrating their own competencies that they may have gained in their own country even though they have no papers to prove it"*. Two respondents in the focus groups shared this frustration. Xavier stated that one of the problems he has finding work is that he does not have

the proper certificate. Zoe expressed her aggravation that employers are not comfortable when you don't have any Canadian work experience.

Access to ethnic food and education, and a lack of diversity in the City are further challenges faced by immigrants. Upon arrival, many immigrants experience culture shock when it comes to Canadian food choices and cooking. As Anna and Moon reported, they were confused because the food was so different and it was a challenge for them to cook and to know where to find the right food. This is an issue that has also been identified by the provincial Office of Immigration and Multiculturalism who notes that there is room for improvement in this area. Access to education was discussed only briefly as a barrier. As a representative from the provincial government discussed, a complaint they have heard from some newcomers is that the Province lacks good public education. She says this criticism is often made by newcomers who come here from larger centres and compare the education system in Newfoundland and Labrador with that of larger centres, who because of their larger size frequently have better services. While no focus group respondents made this criticism, one newcomer discussed the challenges posed by the student loan system to getting an education. According to Xavier, in order to be eligible to receive a student loan he is required to take three courses in one semester and he feels it would be too difficult for him in his situation to take three courses at once. The lack of diversity in the City was also discussed only briefly. Zoe expressed her discomfort in the beginning because of the lack of people who spoke her language in St. John's. She found it challenging here because she didn't have the same support from people who could translate for her as she did living in another larger Canadian city.

The design of settlement services and the concentration of these services in St. John's pose a challenge to immigrant integration according to some government and agency representatives. While the lack of settlement support outside of the City of St. John's is not of relevance to this study there is, according to one immigrant serving agency, still a challenge within existing settlement services whereby some newcomers fall through the cracks and cannot access services. As one representative said *"Those programs* (federal funded settlement programs) *by the nature of the funding and the nature of the design, have a limited scope. Often times refugees and immigrants find themselves entangled in cracks and webs and hoops and so on that no one can sort out"*. One example given is privately sponsored refugees who do not qualify for the same support as government assisted refugees. Another is spouses of citizens who are not eligible for settlement services. A third is refugees who have been here for five years who cannot access services due to the restrictive definition of who is a newcomer. Although, as one agency representative argues, they are still refugees by definition since they cannot return to their homeland. Even in situations where newcomers manage to access services there are still challenges. One agency expressed their opinion that the federal refugee resettlement program known as RAP is underfunded. A newcomer receiving financial assistance under this program also expressed his frustrations with the lack of funding provided to him and his family stating that it is not adequate to cover housing costs thus making it difficult for him to secure suitable accommodations.

It is not just within the settlement field that immigrants face obstacles to accessing services. Immigrants also encounter challenges in understanding how to navigate other Canadian public service systems. One agency representative refers to this as the difficulty newcomers face in understanding the 'Canadian mindset'; the mindset being how service providers operate in

answering inquiries. As one interviewee explained, in Canada there are two common answers to a question. The first is a referral where immigrants are provided with a name and address which often results in them getting the run around, and the second is an overload of information which immigrants must sort out for themselves. To further complicate matters, numerous services are provided in Canada using an automated voice operated system which is difficult for many newcomers to navigate as they are unfamiliar with this form of service delivery. Even in the health care system, newcomers face challenges in being able to communicate their problems within the standard fifteen minute time allotment for appointments. One focus group respondent discussed the challenges he faced in explaining health problems to a doctor in English in such a short time frame. He said because he could not express himself in English so easily, he was afraid he would make a mistake and get prescribed the wrong drug. These systems and this approach to providing a service is, according to one agency representative, a challenge for newcomers as they often don't receive the straight answers they need and expect.

Another issue in an immigrant's ability to get services is a lack of awareness of the services offered. Several of the newcomers surveyed mentioned getting help from local churches. But as one immigrant discussed, she wondered how people who did not go to church get service. She said *"I think about if you were not going anywhere outside your house because you don't speak English, you don't really have any information, it is so hard, because you feel so homesick"*. An agency representative interviewed wondered the same thing and cited several examples of churches helping newcomers, but said it is providing these connections to people that is a challenge if service agencies don't know these people exist.

Despite these barriers to integration, immigrants and government and agency representatives discussed St. John's many strengths as a small immigrant receiving centre. Focus group participants talked about the City's positive attributes as key reasons why they choose to settle in St. John's. While just over one third of the participants were government assisted refugees and therefore did not make the decision to be located in St. John's, those who did make the decision to settle in St. John's did so either based on having a family or friend connection to the Province, or a spouse who had a job or education opportunity in St. John's. One participant discussed wanting to move to Canada in order to learn English; Zoe had lived in two other provinces in Canada before moving to St. John's to pursue new opportunities and to be with family. She said *"In another place we feel very lonely and maybe this place have different opportunity for me. I think this place is more quiet than* [another Canadian city] *and more safe. Have a sea, for me is so important. And it's a place at this moment that is increasing"*.

Several other respondents shared the same view that St. John's is a safe place. Jamal arrived in St. John's as a refugee but left to live in another province for four years. He returned to St. John's just nine months ago to learn English. He said it is safe here and there is not a lot of crime compared to larger cities. Jun recounted a story she told to her brother who lives in a large Canadian city about the children who knock on her door for fundraising or to collect food for the food bank. She said her brother was very surprised that it was so safe here since it is considered dangerous in his city and children only fundraise in supermarkets. Based on what she has heard from immigrants to the Province, a representative from the provincial Office of Immigration and Multiculturalism discussed how immigrants often talk about feeling safe and that they enjoy the open spaces and clean air. She has heard stories from immigrants who say they take pleasure in going for a walk at night because they feel safe. Another positive characteristic of living in St.

John's as mentioned by one newcomer was the weather. Another said she liked the variety of programs offered, especially sports programs for her children. A representative from the City of St. John's feels that one of the City's strengths that make it a welcoming community is its active multicultural community. As she explains, members of the multicultural community such as the Chinese community and the Indian community often hold events and advertise them to the public. This sentiment was also expressed by one agency representative who feels that St. John's is a welcoming community because of the work of community organizations and churches. He has heard many stories of how churches have helped people find entry level jobs and of community organizations that help people make connections in the City.

The friendliness of the people was discussed by all immigrant respondents and government and agency representatives. Jun discussed the friendliness of her teachers and classmates and how they made her feel included. For her to feel included means to feel comfortable and not nervous. She said she used to feel nervous because of her poor language skills. Jun also talked about the friendliness of her neighbours who help her and give her vegetables from their garden. Moon talked about the friendliness of the staff at a health care centre she visited and said they spoke nicely to her. For her to feel included means that people are polite. Vladimir discussed how the people at his church were familiar and helpful. For him to feel welcome means peace, freedom and for people to be treated equally as this was something he did not experience in his homeland. He says he feels these things in St. John's and feels welcome here. Several of the respondents also spoke of the friendliness of people they would pass on the street who would say hello. This made them feel welcome. To them being welcome here means that people are very polite, friendly and approachable. As Caroline said *"You can find people so easily who want to talk with you, especially around this part. If you go outside to take a walk or go to the park or ...different*

kinds of conversations with people. The people, they are so friendly. They give it to you a smile".
Xavier gave several examples of asking people for help about things like how to ride the bus or
get to the supermarket, and said people he spoke with were very helpful and friendly. He also
gave an example of speaking with a person who was surprised he was from Iraq because that
person had a preconceived notion about Iraqi people. This indicates that there is some
stereotyping and prejudices that exist, however Xavier did not discuss this as a bad thing or as
negatively impacting his perception of people as friendly. In fact, he says later that *"All of them
saying they want to make friends with anyone. They don't see what his color, what his name,
what his religion. They forget all of this. And when I come to anyplace, I find myself, I, exactly, I
am included with the people".* While all of the focus group participants agreed that people in St.
John's are friendly, a government representative interviewed for this study said she has heard
from some immigrants that on the surface Newfoundlanders are very welcoming but that it is
difficult to make friends here. One agency representative disagrees with this sentiment but states
that it is possible that some people don't reach out enough out of a desire not to intrude or
because they are being overly polite.

The perception that people are friendly is an indicator of how respondents interact with people
and institutions in St. John's. While the friendliness of the people is a positive perception there
also exists the perception that there is a lack of awareness about immigration in the Province.
This is especially seen in the labour market where there are challenges to getting employer buy-in
and in raising the awareness of employers. As one agency representative explains *"we are a
pretty homogenous society so* [immigration]*'s probably not a big issue on the radar".* Another
agency representative expressed that we haven't really had a lot of backlash towards immigrants
and being a homogenous society might explain that. She said *"I think probably why we haven't*

had any problems here is immigrants haven't been in people's face too much". She recalls only

one time in the early nineties when there was a large influx of refugees to the City that there was

a bit of a backlash and attributes it to the fact that people started to feel outnumbered. Another

interviewee respondent agreed saying that immigrants are not seen as a threat in St. John's.

Although she did point to a study recently conducted about youth retention to the Province that

polled people on their opinions towards immigration among other things. Related to immigration,

some respondents feared their own cultural preservation might suffer and others felt that they

should be looked after first before bringing in new people. Despite this study, she says that

diversity is growing and that overall it is being appreciated rather than being opposed. She points

to the fact that you do not hear of many incidences of overt racism and that the local media

frequently portrays diversity in a positive light. She senses that people are excited about the

exposure to new ideas that diversity brings and feels that employers are beginning to *"recognize*

the value of having a diverse workforce and the linkages to the global market place". Another

respondent raised the point of view that many communities already recognize the positive

contributions of immigrants since without them many of the rural communities in the Province

would not have doctors.

Policies and Programs

Policies on immigrant integration in St. John's are largely driven by the provincial government

and the individual mandates of immigrant serving institutions as the municipal government does

not have an established policy. The provincial policy is focused on improving immigrant

retention through integration intervention strategies. The objective is to double the current

retention rate which would bring it up to 70%. Within that overall goal of 70%, the Province is

hoping to retain 80% of its Provincial Nominees, 60% of its refugee population and 70% of those

immigrants that come under the federal categories of skilled worker, family reunification and business class. In terms of integration intervention strategies the objective is to work with communities to do a self assessment and develop initiatives that will make them a welcoming community. The policies of immigrant serving agencies focus on providing direct support to newcomers. One agency summed up their policy as follows, *"to empower immigrants with skills* [and] *knowledge to successfully integrate"*. Their objectives are to provide settlement services, facilitate integration and raise public awareness through education. Their goals are to offer a holistic approach to immigrant settlement and integration; to help immigrants to be functional in the English language and to be employed; to help immigrants to be independent and contributing members in their community; and to help communities to be accepting and welcoming. Another immigrant advocacy and service agency stated their objective as follows, *"to provide additional services that refugees and immigrants might need beyond their regular settlement and integration services"*. Within this objective their goal is to help immigrants sort out problems; to provide them with clear answers and suggestions; and to help them navigate the education system, the health care system, the legal system, the housing system, the transportation system, and the labour market. A second objective of the organization is to affect policy, and to provide and be impacted by public education. The City of St. John's does not have a set immigration policy but does seek to improve its efforts in this area through various objectives. One objective is to contribute its support to and gain knowledge from sitting on various committees where immigration is of interest. A second objective is to promote the City as a desirable place to do business and live and in doing so to attract businesses and people. A third objective is to develop ways to make St. John's a welcoming community. A fourth objective is support for multicultural partners. As an overall goal, the City *"want*[s] *newcomers to feel welcomed and that St. John's is their City* [and] *to make it a bit easier* [for them] *to navigate some of the City services"*.

Government initiatives designed to support its policies on immigrant integration are carried out by varying means. The provincial government acts primarily as a funder of initiatives while the municipal government does not provide direct services or funding but does support immigrant integration in indirect ways. Initiatives supported by the provincial government include piloting the Toolbox of Ideas for Smaller Centres in two regions of the Province to meet their objective to foster welcoming communities; working with municipalities and regional economic development boards to develop websites targeted at immigrants and to build awareness within these bodies of the issues faced by newcomers; developing a Newfoundland and Labrador immigration web portal to provide settlement information to newcomers; translating provincial labour standards; funding enhanced language training programs and ESL tutors to support language development; funding programs targeted at labour market integration; funding a research project on access to ethnic foods across the Province; funding other settlement programs including a 1-800 help line; and working with employers to raise awareness of immigration issues by participating in board meetings.

According to the Province's Settlement and Integration Program funding guidelines, funding is also provided for programs that fit any of these six categories: Labour Market Integration, Language Training for Adults, Community Capacity Building and Rural Retention, Creative Initiatives, Research Projects, and Multicultural Activities (Office of Immigration and Multiculturalism, 2009). The programs supported by the provincial government address post migration settlement needs and cover initial settlement needs such as language, to longer term needs such as labour market integration. One project that the Province is exploring is to fund paid internships which will allow immigrants to gain Canadian work experience. The Province is also

considering a small loans program for foreign trained professionals to assist them in paying the necessary provincial licensing fees. To improve access to services across the Province, the government is looking to develop initiatives in the delivery of distance ESL and to hire settlement coordinators in other areas of the Province.

The City of St. John's supports immigrant integration through the dissemination of information on services and events in the City via a newcomers section on its website and a lifestyle guide; an employment equity policy within the municipal service; by recognizing multiculturalism by turning on multi-coloured lights outside of City Hall and organizing multicultural events and performances; and by supporting its partners. In supporting its partners, the City has represented itself on several committees where immigration is the focus, the City has prepared information for the Province's immigration strategy and they have provided in-kind support for citizenship ceremonies. These initiatives support the initial settlement of immigrants primarily by providing information to newcomers pre-migration and within their first few months of arrival. Long term integration needs are supported by the awareness building and celebration of diversity that is generated through multicultural performances organized by the City. As a future direction, the City is looking to form an official committee that would welcome immigrants. This committee would be similar to a welcome wagon program.

Unlike government departments, immigrant service agencies provide direct support to immigrants through programs either developed in house or by a funding agency. One immigrant serving agency interviewed does not receive funding and does not offer formalized programs. Their initiatives are loosely defined but they do provide support during the initial stages of settlement right on up through the long term. Their primary initiatives revolve around helping

immigrants to get answers to their questions about the education system, housing, transportation, the health care system and the legal system. Within the assistance they provide to newcomers seeking to navigate the legal system, the agency assists failed refugee claimants to appeal and complete the necessary paperwork. As well, they help entrepreneurs to fill out forms and gather the necessary information to establish a business through a special initiative. To assist immigrants to navigate their new surroundings the agency provides a translation and interpretation service. This service is both a linguistic translation service and a cultural translation service. The agency has ESL tutors available to their clients. They make connections between newcomers and health professionals when newcomers are in need of specialized services. To address their objectives related to public education and advocacy, the agency created an umbrella organization that brings together groups and individuals who work in or are interested in the area of diversity and immigration. As part of this initiative, the agency has fostered various collaborations. One being between ESL instructors and literacy instructors. The agency also participates in a number of boards as members and advisors in the fields of labour, education and health care. The agency is pursuing an idea to create a clearinghouse that would assist immigrants in getting simple answers to questions by building a network of peers and professionals who would provide these answers along with tips and suggestions for common problems.

In contrast, a second immigrant serving agency interviewed carries out its initiatives through various formalized programs that are funded by the federal government, the provincial government and community agencies. The programs offered address language, employment, as well as other settlement and integration needs, public awareness and research. Most of the programs deal with the post migration settlement needs of newcomers and range from short to long term needs. However, the agency does offer a program that delivers English language

training pre-migration. This program is delivered to individuals who are in the process of becoming permanent residents under the Provincial Nominee Program. In the area of language, the agency delivers the federally funded Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada program (LINC), language assessment, an enhanced language training program that targets occupation specific language, a summer enrichment program and an after-school program for youth to assist them in maintaining language skills, and an ESL tutor program. In the area of employment, the agency has an established career centre that provides assistance with resumes, job search and interview skills.

The agency also delivers the federally funded Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) for government sponsored refugees, the Immigrant Settlement Adaptation Program (ISAP) and the Host Program. ISAP is a program whereby service providers are funded to deliver services such as translation, counselling, referrals, orientation, workshops and employment related services. The Host Program matches newcomers with volunteer host families in the receiving society who meet with newcomers to provide social support, answer their questions and provide guidance. Other initiatives carried out by the agency that are aimed at settlement and integration include airport pickup, housing assistance, a guide for newcomers on the resources available in the Province, a 1-800 help line, a Life-Skills program, social groups, settlement workers and the Settlement Workers in Schools program. The guide and 1-800 help line are designed to orientate newcomers to Canada on things like daylight savings time, money and banking, the housing market as well as to provide referrals to other resources throughout the province. The Life-Skills program is a home visit program designed to equip newcomers with skills such as hygiene, how to use and clean electric appliances and how to clean their home. The social groups meet on a weekly basis and organize various activities including trips to sites of interest in St. John's,

recreational activities and guest speakers to speak on issues of concern such as diabetes, smoking, etc. According to the agency, these groups are *"meant to support, foster camaraderie, help with language skills and help to create a heightened awareness of events in the community while providing them with information on important programs and services they need to know"*. The Settlement Workers in Schools program is an outreach program where settlement workers visit the K to 12 school system to provide settlement support to youth. According to the agency, this program has received a positive response from the community and has assisted in increasing the awareness of those that work in the school system of the issues faced by newcomers. The program is delivered to between twenty and twenty five schools in the St. John's area.

In the area of public awareness, the agency has a speakers' bureau initiative. Through this initiative the agency delivers diversity training presentations to employers, businesses and schools. Specific modules of the program have been developed for employers as well as for teachers in grades four and six. The agency recently held a diversity symposium to promote these programs and diversity awareness as they currently are facing a challenge in getting employer buy-in. In the area of research, the agency has looked at distance delivery of ESL programs.

Immigrants to St. John's interact with the services provided by governments and agencies in different ways. The majority of the immigrants interviewed received initial support from friends already living here or from strangers with whom they later became friends. Three of the nine respondents discussed meeting friends at church and two respondents received linguistic support through the conversation English groups they attended at a local church. The support respondents received from friends included assistance prior to arrival in completing documents, help post arrival navigating their new environment, including using the transit system and help with

cooking. A few respondents were connected with settlement services in the City through these family and friend networks. As Caroline recounted *"all the informations they came to my husband's friend who live here in Newfoundland... she was the only person who helped us with some information, who helped us rent for us the apartment, who give ride to the different places, to get to MCP* [Medical Care Plan], *to get to the different places we needed for the first part when we came"*.

The remainder of the respondents had direct contact with a settlement agency upon arrival as the agency had prior notice of their arrival as government assisted refugees. Upon arrival, the agency greeted them at the airport, provided them with accommodations and brought them shopping for necessities. They also provided an orientation on important skills such as how to use the shower and the electric stove for cooking and provided newcomers with a list of numbers to call in case of emergency. Prior to arrival, these same respondents discussed the positive support they received from the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Representatives from these agencies helped them by providing encouragement through the application process, travel assistance and some information about Canada. Several of the other respondents discussed having a lack of information about immigrating to Canada or a difficulty in understanding that information which they did find, mostly online, as the information was in English. A couple of the respondents discussed the helpful information they received prior to arrival from friends and family already living in Canada who told them about the weather and the school system. As time passed and they became more settled, several of the newcomers were able to find information on services more easily. As one respondent who was pleased with the opportunities available for her child to participate in sports, said *"the most important part I find it here is so many programs. If you want*

it or you like it you can have information on all that program. What I see is that they have a

really good start to doing".

Analysis

In analyzing these findings using the social inclusion framework presented in Figure 2, I look to

see how St. John's addresses the barriers faced by immigrants, what the public discourse is on

diversity and immigration, if policies and initiatives create a welcoming community, and what

impact this has on immigrants' social integration in St. John's. To determine the impact on social

integration, I look at immigrants contact with key institutions. The policies and programs of these

institutions are analyzed using the five dimensions of social inclusion - recognition and respect

for diverse values of immigrants; nurturing the development of immigrants; involvement and

engagement of immigrants in community life; integrating and sharing space with immigrants; and

ensuring immigrants' material well being. It will be determined if St. John's is a welcoming

community based on the degree to which the five dimensions are meet, the level at which each of

the policies and programs address the dimensions of social inclusion, and how initiatives address

barriers to integration and the current public discourse on diversity and immigration.

The barriers identified by respondents in the study are similar to those found in studies of small

immigrant receiving centres reviewed previously. Language was identified as the number one

challenge. Housing and employment were also addressed with the main barrier to employment

being foreign credential recognition. Similar to other studies, access to transportation and

education were also raised, however concerns with education were discussed only by a couple of

the respondents. Access to settlement and public services was a barrier identified in the study and

discussed in some length by agency representatives. The issue of spousal isolation and the

problems caused by immigrants who are homebound was brought up by both immigrants and government and agency representatives, as was access to ethnic foods.

Despite these barriers, immigrants and government and agency representatives perceive public interactions with immigrants in St. John's to be primarily positive. However, there are some elements of a negative public discourse on immigration and a lack of awareness of immigrant contributions. As one government representative indicated, there is an absence of understanding among the general population of immigration issues and as another agency representative suggested this lack of awareness is shared by the employer community. Immigrants' positive interactions with the public can be explained by compassion. Several of the immigrants in the study are refugees and given the nature of the society in Newfoundland and Labrador, there is a sense of obligation to take care of them. Therefore, interactions with the public discussed by immigrants in the study are not necessarily informed by the public discourse or how people feel about diversity and immigration policy.

Examples of positive interactions were relayed by immigrants who stated that they felt safe and that people are friendly in St. John's. Feeling safe was a positive characteristic of the City identified by many respondents. In terms of the five dimensions of social inclusion, a feeling of safety helps to ensure immigrants' well being and assists in nurturing their development by providing an environment in which they can feel free to grow. One respondent mentioned the variety of programs offered in St. John's as a strength. The existence of a variety of programs indicates a goal to nurture the development and well being of immigrants, and depending on the nature of the programs, may seek to achieve further goals of social inclusion. In particular, the efforts of multicultural organizations and churches, as identified by government and agency

representatives, seek to engage immigrants in community life by connecting them with employers and help to share community and/or church space with immigrants.

All respondents expressed their opinion that St. John's is a welcoming environment for newcomers, and the friendliness of the people was a theme that carried through in both focus group discussions. Immigrants discussed interactions with the public and described people as being helpful and willing to lend a hand. In this sense, the friendliness of the people promotes proximity as it increases the possibility for interactions, and ensures immigrants' well being as individuals provide support to newcomers. However, if people are helpful and willing to lend a hand as is suggested by respondents, why then do newcomers still encounter so many barriers to integration such as access to services and employment? The idea that Newfoundland and Labrador is friendly while at the same time barriers are faced by newcomers trying to integrate would suggest a certain level of superficiality to peoples' friendliness and raises the question whether this 'friendliness' masks these barriers. The Province of Newfoundland and Labrador does pride itself on a national reputation of being a friendly society and the responses of immigrants surveyed may reflect this conception. At the same time, however, respondents admitted they do face barriers to integration. These barriers are well understood by government and agency representatives who identified the same barriers as well as discussed initiatives put in place to address these barriers such as internships which deal with the difficulties immigrants face in integrating into the labour market. Therefore, while the evidence that Newfoundland and Labrador is friendly is seemingly contradictory to the evidence of barriers to integration, this does not mean that the 'friendlessness' masks these barriers.

For the most part, immigrants said they felt included in their communities. Immigrants were asked to state what it means to them to feel included. Terms such as to feel comfortable, for people to be polite, friendly and approachable, and to feel like you are at peace, free and treated equally were used to describe feelings of inclusion. Feelings of comfort suggest that immigrants have a sense of well being. Being friendly and approachable implies that the public is open to sharing spaces with immigrants. Being treated equally indicates that diversity is respected and recognized. While most respondents stated they felt included, for a few respondents this was not always the case since their low English language skills in the beginning caused them to feel excluded and uncomfortable as they did not understand the information presented to them. Immigrants seemed to attribute this as a fault of their own rather than as a mechanism of exclusion in the receiving society. Once they overcame this barrier they felt more at ease in their new surroundings. To overcome the language barrier, respondents have enrolled in ESL classes. While respondents have been in Canada for varying lengths of time, they are all within the same English language proficiency level

Policies on immigrant integration in St. John's attempt to address the barriers identified and increase awareness of immigrant issues. Provincial policies are largely focused on creating welcoming communities as a tool to improve retention. This policy strives to share spaces with immigrants, recognize diversity as it seeks to sensitize communities to immigration and address the issue of spousal isolation. Agency policies focus on providing immigrants with skills and direction, promoting education and increasing awareness. By providing immigrants with skills and direction these policies help to ensure immigrants' material well being, nurture their development and directly address barriers to integration and access to services by providing assistance in the areas of language, employment, housing and life skills. By promoting cultural

awareness these policies seek to respect the diverse values of immigrants, promote proximity in the sharing of spaces, increase the awareness of employers and the community at large, and promote a positive public discourse of immigration. The City's goal to welcome newcomers and provide them with information and ease of access to City services attempts to ensure immigrants' well being by equipping them with knowledge and seeks to recognize diversity by developing a welcoming community.

Initiatives set by the Province and those carried out by the City and immigrant serving agencies aim to address these policy goals. Provincial initiatives to develop immigration web portals provide newcomers with important settlement information which helps to ensure immigrants' well being and promotes services thereby addressing the issue of immigrants' lack of awareness of services. Research in the area of access to ethnic foods directly addresses a problem identified by several respondents in the study. Support for language training pre and post migration and specialized language training further helps to ensure immigrants' well being and nurtures their development. Initiatives targeted at employment assistance and breaking down barriers to foreign credential and experience recognition, such as the two future directions the Province is exploring also meet these criteria of social inclusion. Furthermore the initiative designed to provide immigrants with Canadian work experience promotes proximity as it directly involves employers and requires them to share space with immigrants and engages immigrants in community life. Provincial efforts in raising employer awareness seek to promote proximity, the recognition of diverse values and a positive public discourse on immigration by engaging employers in discussion. The piloting of the Toolbox of Ideas for Smaller Centres engages members of the community to develop ways to integrate spaces with immigrants and in so doing it recognizes diversity, promotes a positive public discourse, and seeks to nurture the development and well

being of immigrants. The provision of information via a lifestyle guide and a website by the City of St. John's provides immigrants with the necessary information to ensure their well being. The City's employment equity policy strives to share space by increasing the involvement of immigrants in municipal affairs. Celebrations in honour of multiculturalism recognize and respect the values of immigrants and shares city spaces with newcomers.

The initiatives carried out by immigrant serving agencies are broad. Programs that orientate, provide translation, and assist immigrants to navigate various systems including health care, transportation, education and the law provide immigrants with the skills they need to develop and ensure their well being, and address the barriers immigrants face to accessing settlement and other public services. The 1-800 help line, the guide for newcomers, the Life Skills program, ISAP and RAP are five such programs that meet these two criteria of social inclusion. Programs that provide language training and employment guidance also meet these criteria. This includes assisting entrepreneurs to set up a business, LINC, enhanced language training, tutoring programs and summer enrichment programs. Programs that raise awareness and support public education help ensure immigrants' well being and development, but go further by recognizing and respecting their diverse values and by promoting a positive public discourse on immigration. These programs include the speakers' bureau initiative, participation on community boards and the umbrella organization of settlement and immigration workers developed by agencies in St. John's. The Settlement Workers in Schools program achieves the same goals as it promotes awareness of immigrant issues in the school system and nurtures the development of immigrant youth. The Host Program and social groups are successful in involving immigrants in community life as they bring immigrants out to visit different sites in their community and to speak with

different people in the community. In so doing, it also shares spaces with immigrants and promotes proximity.

From this analysis of the findings we see that through an established policy, the Province and immigrant serving institutions have identified a goal to achieve social inclusion. The City does not have an established policy but does carry out certain practices that seek to break down barriers in order to achieve social inclusion. This is also true of the provincial government and settlement agencies that have many established programs in addition to their policies that address the challenges faced by immigrants. These programs address the barriers that have been identified by respondents in the study and seek to improve the public discourse on diversity and immigration through increased awareness and community participation. However, some barriers are more directly targeted than others. For example, there are many policy and program directions that address language and employment issues such as foreign credential recognition and recognition of foreign work experience. But there are fewer directions that address transportation, housing, spousal isolation, access to ethnic food and access to public education. And there exists no direct program to address the issue of the design of settlement services and the difficulties immigrants face in accessing public services, although several initiatives seek to increase the awareness of services offered.

In some form or another, all five dimensions of social inclusion are addressed through these policies and programs, although not to the same degree. The analysis presented above is summarized in Figure 4 which lists the policies, programs and interactions as they are classified under each of the five dimensions of social inclusion. From a quick glance at the list, one can see that the dimensions of nurturing immigrants' development, and ensuring immigrants' well being

are heavily weighted and share many policies and programs in common, while the dimensions of involves and engages immigrants in community life, and recognizes and respects diversity are less heavily weighted. There is a noticeable lack of policies and programs that seek to involve and engage immigrants in community life through the promotion of civic participation, such as volunteerism and political participation. Civic participation is an area that has not been the focus of any of the policies and programs presented in this study and may help explain the lack of initiatives in St. John's that directly engage immigrants.

Policies and programs that fall under the dimension of respects and recognizes diversity are similar in that they attempt to increase awareness and educate the public. Initiatives that come under the dimensions of nurturing immigrants' development and ensuring their well being can be classified as short term approaches to integration as they aim to satisfy immediate needs of newcomers such as language, orientation and employment. Such approaches can also be seen as only serving one side of the 'integration street' in the sense that immigrants are adapting to the receiving society, but these policies and programs do little to help the receiving society adapt to immigration. While initiatives that fall under the dimensions of involves and engages immigrants in community life, and integrates and shares spaces with immigrants, can be classified as long term approaches that address both sides of the 'integration street' as they aim to increase awareness and interactions between immigrants and the receiving society. Immigration policy is new in the Province and this can help explain why short term approaches are more established than long term approaches, as there has been limited time for long term approaches to evolve.

It is important not only to ask if all five of the dimensions are being meet, but it is also necessary to pose the question; how many dimensions do each of the policy and program directions meet?

There are only two policies/programs that meet all five dimensions of social inclusion. That is the Province's decision to pilot the Toolbox of Ideas for Smaller Centres and agency programs that raise awareness and support public education. Agencies' delivery of the Host Program and social groups, score the second highest as these initiatives meet four of the dimensions, in that it nurtures development, ensures well being, promotes proximity and involves immigrants in community life. The City's goal to welcome newcomers and provide ease of access to services meets three of the dimensions in that it nurtures development, ensures well being, and recognizes diversity. But for the most part, policies and programs only meet two dimensions of social inclusion. As mentioned, there is a strong link between those policies and programs that nurture development and ensure well being, such as agency programs that provide language training and employment assistance, and policies that focus on providing immigrants with skills and direction. The reason why many policies and programs overlap on these two dimensions is because these dimensions seek to achieve the same goal to help immigrants adapt to the receiving society and address short term integration needs. There are also several policies and programs that both recognize and respect diversity, and promote proximity, such as provincial efforts to raise employer awareness and City celebrations in honour of multiculturalism. Again, the reason why many policies and programs overlap on these two dimensions are because these dimensions address long term integration needs that seek to help the receiving society adapt to immigrants by increasing awareness and interactions.

Figure 4: Policies, Programs and Interactions that meet the Five Dimension of Social Inclusion

Recognizes and respects the diverse values of immigrants
- Feelings of being treated equally
- Provincial policies focused on creating welcoming communities
- Agency policies focused on promoting education and increasing awareness
- The City's goal to welcome newcomers and provide them with information and ease of access to City services
- Provincial efforts in raising employer awareness
- The Province's decision to pilot the Toolbox of Ideas for Smaller Centres
- City celebrations in honour of multiculturalism

- Agency programs that raise awareness and support public education

Nurtures the development of immigrants
- Perception of safety
- Perception that many programs exists to support immigrant development
- Agency policies that focus on providing immigrants with skills and direction
- Provincial government programs for language training pre and post migration and specialized language training
- Provincial initiatives targeted at employment assistance and breaking down barriers to foreign credential and experience recognition
- The Province's decision to pilot the Toolbox of Ideas for Smaller Centres
- Agency driven programs that orientate, provide translation, and assist immigrants to navigate various systems including health care, transportation, education and the law
- Agency programs that provide language training and employment guidance
- Agency programs that raise awareness and support public education
- Agencies' delivery of the Host Program
- Agencies' delivery of social groups

Involves and engages immigrants in community life
- Efforts of multicultural organizations and churches
- The Province's initiative designed to provide immigrants with Canadian work experience
- The Province's decision to pilot the Toolbox of Ideas for Smaller Centres
- Agencies' delivery of the Host Program
- Agencies' delivery of social groups

Integrates and shares spaces with immigrants, i.e. promotes proximity
- Efforts of multicultural organizations and churches
- Perception of people as being helpful and willing to lend a hand
- Provincial policies focused on creating welcoming communities
- Agency policies focused on promoting education and increasing awareness
- The Province's initiative designed to provide immigrants with Canadian work experience
- The City's employment equity policy
- Provincial efforts in raising employer awareness
- The Province's decision to pilot the Toolbox of Ideas for Smaller Centres
- City celebrations in honour of multiculturalism
- Agencies' delivery of the Host Program
- Agencies' delivery of social groups

Ensures immigrants' material well being
- Perception of safety
- Perception that many programs exists to support immigrant development
- Perception of people as being helpful and willing to lend a hand
- Feelings of being comfortable
- Agency policies that focus on providing immigrants with skills and direction
- The City's goal to welcome newcomers and provide them with information and ease of access to City services
- Provincial initiatives to develop immigration web portals
- Provincial government programs for language training pre and post migration and specialized language training
- Provincial initiatives targeted at employment assistance and breaking down barriers to foreign credential and experience recognition
- The Province's decision to pilot of the Toolbox of Ideas for Smaller Centres
- The provision of information via a lifestyle guide and a website by the City of St. John's
- Agency driven programs that orientate, provide translation, and assist immigrants to navigate various systems including health care, transportation, education and the law
- Agency programs that provide language training and employment guidance
- Agency programs that raise awareness and support public education

Given that the five dimensions of social inclusion are not meet equally, that not all barriers to integration are adequately addressed, and that few programs meet more than two of the dimensions, it cannot be concluded that St. John's is socially inclusive. However, it can be stated that immigrant integration policies and programs in St. John's meet many of the dimensions of being socially inclusive, and thus meet some of the criteria of being a welcoming community.

This alone does not translate into a positive impact on an immigrant's social integration. To determine this, it is necessary to analyze the findings to see how immigrants interact with these services. As Frideres suggests, social integration can be measured based on the frequency and intensity of contact with institutions in the receiving society (Frideres, 2008). Immigrants in the focus groups interacted with services in different ways throughout their settlement. Immigrants who came to Canada under the refugee program were the only ones to discuss contact with an institution upon arrival and to still have maintained that contact. Through this contact, refugee respondents received assistance with housing, language and life skills usually from a single institution - a settlement agency. Other respondents did not have contact with an institution immediately upon arrival. Rather, they developed these connections later. Many of them made connections with two institutions; one being a settlement agency and the second being a church. For them, their first line of support was family and friends and it was through these associations that they later gained contact with an institution. As was discussed in the literature review on welcoming communities and social inclusion, connections with family and friends provide social capital which can aid in the economic and social integration of immigrants as they provide

important resources and a means to overcome significant barriers such as language (Qadeer, 2006; Kunz, 2007; Li, 2004). Family and friends provided assistance with housing and life skills, while support from institutions was mainly in the area of language. The frequency of contact between the immigrants surveyed and certain institutions in the City is high as many of the respondents interact with these institutions on a daily basis for language support. However the immigrants surveyed only discussed interactions with one or two institutions, which suggests that frequency in terms of the number of contacts with different institutions is low. I propose two possible explanations for why these newcomers have not had contact with other institutions; one being that immigrants have not had to deal with other institutions such as employers because they are not yet ready for the labour force as they are in the early stages of settlement and are concentrating on improving their language skills, which suggests that these low levels of frequency are just a natural part of the settlement process and may increase over time. And the second one being that other institutions have not been open and welcoming to newcomers. The issue of a lack of awareness of immigration in the City raised by a few of the government and agency representatives interviewed could account for this second explanation. Further research is needed to explore this issue.

Along the second dimension, intensity, it is concluded that intensity of contact is also high given that the nature of the support received from these institutions covers issues of great importance as it addresses several of the barriers to integration discussed such as housing, language and transportation, and the quality of the contact is high as the respondents receive daily support and have advanced their knowledge in many of these areas. However, this may not have always been the case. It is interesting to note at what stage in their settlement immigrants made contact with

institutions. For over half of the respondents, this contact was not made until later in their arrival which suggests that their level of social integration was low initially.

Based on this analysis, it can be said that the frequency and intensity of contact that immigrants have with settlement institutions in St. John's is high thus contributing to successful social integration. However, frequent contact with a few institutions, in this case, settlement agencies, churches and international aid organizations, does not mean that immigrants are successfully socially integrated in all spheres of society, therefore it cannot be concluded that immigrants are successfully socially integrated. This conclusion is especially difficult to make given the lack of contact with certain key institutions such as employment institutions, as labour market participation is of great importance to immigrants' integration (Biles, 2008; Sweetman, 2008).

Conclusion

The purpose of this paper has been to provide a theoretical basis for evaluating the concept of a 'welcoming community'; a concept which has primarily been applied in policy as a strategy for retaining and integrating immigrants. This has been achieved by employing the social inclusion framework and its five dimensions as a tool with which to evaluate whether a community and its policies and practices constitute a welcoming community for immigrants, and to in turn determine the impact this has on immigrant integration based on the frequency and intensity of contact with key institutions. In grounding the concept of 'welcoming community' in theory, I have provided a standard against which academics, policy makers and institutions can determine if a community is welcoming.

To determine if a community is welcoming using a social inclusion framework, I have applied Laidlaw's five elements of social inclusion – recognition and respect for diverse values of immigrants; nurturing the development of immigrants; involvement and engagement of immigrants in community life; integrating and sharing space with immigrants; and ensuring immigrants' material well being, to the Newfoundland and Labrador context. I have also considered barriers, areas of exclusion, public discourse, along with the five dimensions of social inclusion in the analysis. Based on this analysis, I conclude that immigration policies and programs in St. John's meet many of the dimensions of social inclusion and address many of the barriers experienced by immigrants and the public discourse that exists regarding diversity and immigration. Given that policies and programs delivered by institutions active in the field of immigration and settlement meet many of the criteria of social inclusion, it can be stated that St. John's possesses some of the characteristics of a welcoming community. Furthermore both policy makers and immigrants feel that the City is a welcoming environment for immigrants. However, it should be noted that the policy framework for the programming is very recent as Newfoundland and Labrador's Immigration Strategy was launched in 2007. Given this, it is difficult to conclude that it has been so successful so soon and to make an absolute claim that St. John's is a welcoming community. What's more, the City of St. John's itself is not supported by an immigration policy framework. Therefore it is premature to make the conclusion that St. John's is a welcoming community but there is real potential for it given time and if other elements are put in place. The framework I have proposed for determining if a community is welcoming invites us to arrive at this conclusion at a later point provided more evidence.

The frequency and intensity of contact that immigrants have with settlement institutions in St. John's is high thus contributing to successful social integration. This is not surprising given that

these institutions have a key stake in the settlement and integration of immigrants and explicitly provide services to or for newcomers. However, frequent contact with these institutions does not mean that immigrants are successfully socially integrated in all spheres of society as it is difficult to conclude even with high scores on a few institutions that immigrants are socially integrated. As Frideres suggests "social integration has many spheres and phases, and an immigrant who is well integrated into one sphere might not have an equal degree of social integration in another sphere" (Frideres, 2008, p. 82).

In summary, this paper cannot conclusively support the hypothesis presented in the introduction; if communities and the institutions that support them are welcoming, then frequency and intensity of contact with these institutions will be high thus resulting in successful social integration.

Appendix A: Government/Agency Interview Guide

1. Tell me about your organization's policy in relation to immigrant integration? What are the key elements and objectives?
2. What initiatives have you undertaken to achieve this policy or these objectives?
3. Tell me more about how you carry out these initiatives? (Do you play the role of funder? Do you provide guidelines? Are you a direct service provider? What resources do you employ?)
4. Do any of these initiatives serve a particular need along the continuum of integration (ex. pre and post migration, initial vs. long term settlement)?
5. What tangible outcomes are you hoping to achieve against these objectives?
6. Have you completed any formal evaluations of these programs? If so, can you tell me about the results?
7. Have you canvassed immigrants for their opinions on the services that are being provided? If so, what have they had to say?
8. Identify three challenges you face in carrying out these initiatives.
9. What gaps do you see still existing? What future directions are you exploring?
10. In general do you feel that St. John's is a welcoming environment for immigrants? Why or why not? What does it have going for it? What can be improved?

Appendix B: Immigrant Focus Group Interview Guide

1. Tell me about yourself. How did you end up immigrating to Canada? What attracted you to St. John's?
2. Who was your primary contact before arriving in Canada/NL? Can you tell me about that experience?
3. Who was your first contact upon arrival? Can you tell me about that experience?
4. What did you identify as your needs in the first few months of arrival? Tell me about the experiences you had trying to meet them.
5. Did your needs change over time? In what ways did they change? Tell me about the experiences you had trying to meet them.
6. Tell me the places you interact with regularly (school, work, community centre, etc.). Do you feel included? How do you feel included or why don't you feel included?
7. Do these places make you feel welcome here? What does it mean to you to feel welcome?

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