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PUBLIC LIBRARIES SERVING NEWCOMERS TO CANADA:
A COMPARISON OF THE TORONTO AND
WINDSOR PUBLIC LIBRARIES

by

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A Major Research Paper
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Master of Arts
Immigration and Settlement Studies
Ryerson University

ABSTRACT

This study examines the programs and policies of two Ontario library systems to determine in what ways their strategies support the social inclusion of newcomers. Through interviews with library administrators and librarians in the Toronto and Windsor Public Libraries, issues surrounding the development and delivery of programs to newcomers to Canada are explored. Interview findings are used to highlight best practices, and to make recommendations designed to address current barriers to and gaps in service provision. Theories of social inclusion and acculturation, outlining stages of immigrant integration, are used to analyze the newcomer services of public libraries and their importance in the process of settlement. This study highlights the challenges faced by Canadian public institutions in responding to the needs of newcomers.

Key words:

Public libraries; immigrants; multiculturalism; Toronto; Windsor

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Introduction

Confronted with increasing levels of immigration and decreasing levels of success among recent groups of immigrants (Omidvar & Richmond 2003), Canadian public institutions are being challenged to provide innovative solutions to promote the social inclusion of newcomers and their families. Public libraries in Canada are among the institutions introducing and implementing services for recent immigrants, in an attempt to ease their transition and integration into Canadian society. An investigation of the strategies, policies and programs developed by library systems in Ontario cities to serve recent immigrants highlights the challenges faced by public institutions in responding to the needs of newcomers.

The debate concerning the appropriate role to be played by public libraries in the lives of immigrants has changed dramatically over the past one hundred years. Librarians of the early twentieth century espoused views of cultural superiority and a desire to ensure the swift and total assimilation of immigrants into the host society (Fain 1978). More contemporary practitioners (Roach & Morrison 1998) indicate a deep respect for the cultural and linguistic diversity of newcomers, citing renewed attempts to assess the needs of these communities and formulate appropriate goals of service provision.

The multicultural framework of Canadian society provides unique opportunities to examine the role that public institutions, such as libraries, play in immigrant settlement. The extensive network of multicultural programs and policies in Canadian libraries are being expanded, while partnerships between different levels of government, cultural organizations, settlement agencies and schools are transforming Canadian public

libraries into potential sites of inclusion and cultural interaction, with the goal of affording newcomers greater access to information and opportunity.

This study will examine the programs and policies of two Ontario library systems to determine in what ways their strategies support the social inclusion of newcomers. Through interviews with library administrators and librarians in Toronto and Windsor, issues surrounding the development and delivery of programs to newcomers to Canada will be explored. Interview findings will be used to highlight best practices, and to make recommendations designed to address current barriers to and gaps in service provision. Theories of social inclusion and acculturation, outlining stages of immigrant integration, will be used to analyze the newcomer services of public libraries and their importance in the process of settlement.

As literature which directly addresses the intersection of multiculturalism and the provision of services to newcomers by libraries in Canada is scarce, a fact which this study hopes to address, literature on the American experience will be substituted at times.

It is hoped that this study will prompt further research examining the ways in which newcomers can best be served by public libraries, and how these public institutions can serve as sites of social interaction, promoting the social inclusion of newcomers and their families in Canadian society.

Literature Review

The bodies of literature which are examined in this study belong to the fields of sociology and information sciences as both disciplines have made important contributions to the study of immigrant settlement. Sociological theories relating to the assimilation and social inclusion of immigrants are applied to historical accounts, research and writings on multicultural library practices in order to contextualize the goals and policies of Canadian public libraries.

A comprehensive Canadian study of the history of public library services to newcomers could not be found during a review of the literature. Though excellent histories of Canadian and Ontario public libraries (McNally 1994; Wiseman 1986; Allen 1977; Bewley 1977), Canadian library associations (Garry 1977), and the Toronto Public Library (Myrvold 1986) exist, none of these resources offers deep insight into the development of services and policies to respond to the needs of recent immigrants. This project is intended to contribute to the study of the newcomer services of Ontario public libraries, and to encourage other researchers to respond to the absence of literature and detailed studies on this topic.

Assimilation, Integration and Social Inclusion

Sociologists such as Milton Gordon (1964) developed theories of assimilation which explored the dynamics of group relations in the United States, and the processes of adjustment experienced by immigrants. According to Gordon, assimilation can be thought of as a process by which newcomers adapt to the language, values, institutions and cultural norms of the receiving society. Gordon proposed that assimilation has

various stages, such as cultural, structural, marital and civic assimilation. In cultural assimilation, the newcomer adapts to the cultural norms of the host society, while structural assimilation signals the entrance of a group into the clubs and institutions of the host society (Gordon 1964).

The term assimilation was found inadequate by those who wished to recognize the effects that newcomers have on the host society in which they settle. The term integration was suggested by Bernard (1956) to describe the process of mutual adjustment. Bernard explained his preference for the term “integration” as a “happier and more exact term than others to describe the successful inclusion of a new group into an existing society” (2). He states that assimilation

suggests that the newcomer is divested of his old culture completely and is virtually remoulded in everything from clothes to ideology. It denies or ignores the many gifts brought by the immigrant to his new home, and the impact of his ideas, his talents, his hopes upon the community that has admitted him (2).

The distinction between the two terms as made by Bernard implies that while assimilation assumes a one-sided process of adaptation, that of the newcomer to the norms of the host society, integration signals change on the part of both the newcomer and the society into which he or she is settling (Demuth 2000).

Joshee (2004) asserts that a shift in preference, favouring the term integration over assimilation, took place in Canadian government policies of the 1950s. She also notes the multiple meanings which were assigned to the concept of integration over time. Though the term would later signify a two-way adjustment, as described by Demuth (2000), in the 1950s and 1960s immigrant integration in Canada was “seen as a step towards assimilation” (Joshee 2004: 140).

Though Demuth notes that integration is a more positive term than assimilation, he also indicates that “complete inclusion” of immigrants into the host society would be ideal (49). The total inclusion referred to by Demuth, can also be referred to as social inclusion (Omidvar & Richmond 2003; Papillon 2002). Omidvar and Richmond (2003) define social inclusion for newcomers to Canada as the “full and equal participation” in “the economic, social, cultural and political dimensions of life” (15). Papillon (2002) distinguishes the full participation gained through assimilation as different from that of inclusion, as social inclusion represents a two-way adjustment of both the newcomer to society, and the institutions of society to the needs of newcomers.

Early Twentieth Century Library Services for Newcomers

Assimilation and social inclusion are concepts which can be directly applied to the practices and ideals of libraries and librarians serving immigrants. Assimilation was the hallmark of American public library services to immigrants in the early twentieth century. Fain (1978) states that the first two decades of the twentieth century witnessed “deliberate attempts by public librarians to assimilate immigrants” (258). She cites the services of one library branch in Brooklyn in 1908 as offering multilingual newspaper clippings on topics such as naturalization and American cultural practices (Fain 1978). The mandate of the provision of multilingual services, citizenship information and adult education by public libraries in the early twentieth century was to draw adult immigrants into the mainstream of American society and facilitate their assimilation (Fain 1978). Fain notes that while some librarians chose to serve immigrant patrons by providing

information and literature in a variety of languages, this practice was scorned by others as “not conducive to good citizenship” (Fain 1978: 261).

Library associations developed handbooks to advise librarians on the best methods of serving immigrant library patrons. The American Library Association founded the Committee for Work with the Foreign Born in 1917 to “extend the knowledge and use of libraries among the foreign born, especially the unassimilated”, and to produce information for librarians on the best ways to achieve this aim (Fain 1978: 268).

Though Novotny (2003) acknowledges the assimilationist goals of American librarians in the early twentieth century in a case study of the Chicago public library system, he also cites a striking number of parallels to the current challenges faced by public institutions in recognizing and responding to diversity. Despite the fact that Novotny is writing exclusively in an American context, his historical overview of the issues surrounding the provision of library services to newcomers provides an excellent starting point for understanding the current Canadian situation. Early Canadian library practices were greatly influenced by those of American libraries, and the “social history” of the development of Canadian and American libraries is similar (Bewley 1977: 153). In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Canadian librarians who attended library schools did so in the United States, and “returned home with similar and American professional educational backgrounds and attitudes” (Bewley 1977: 153). Perhaps the most striking example of the early interaction of Canadian and American libraries is that early Canadian practitioners belonged to the American Library

Association, which was created in 1876 (Garry 1977). Canada would not form a national library association until 1946 (McNally 1994).

The changing nature and face of immigration to Canada, particularly in large cities, is paralleled in the early writings of American librarians, who described the shift in source countries of immigrants to the United States. With Poland and Italy replacing the traditional source countries of the United Kingdom and Germany, American librarians searched for the best ways to respond to these demographic changes and to the perceived needs of newcomers (Novotny 2003). Novotny cites the changing nature of immigration and its influences on the demographics of large American cities as prompting librarians and social researchers to attempt to solve the “problem” of immigration.

Among the calls for immigrant assimilation issued by American librarians in the first decades of the twentieth century, there were also a number of advocates of equality and fair access to library resources (Novotny 2003). In a 1903 article by Edwin White Gaillard titled “Why Public Libraries Should Supply Books in Foreign Languages”, Gaillard argued that a modern library should consider “the needs of the entire community - rich and poor, native-born and foreign-born” (Novotny 2003: 5). J. Maud Campbell, a librarian in Passiac, New Jersey in 1907, stated that immigrants paid taxes, so why “should they not have library materials in their own languages?” (Fain 1978: 262) Campbell recommended that libraries consult with members of different linguistic communities to determine the most appropriate materials, arguing that “less effort should be expended on adapting the foreigner to the library's points of view,” but instead the library should grow, shaped by the needs and opinions of all community members (Novotny 2003: 5).

The historical perspectives outlined above serve to situate the current issues faced by libraries attempting to meet the needs of immigrant patrons. In the early twentieth century, American public libraries were perceived to be a tool of immigrant education and assimilation. Fain compares the position of public libraries in the lives of adult immigrants to the Americanizing influences of the public school system on newcomer children. As public institutions, both libraries and schools reflect contemporary ideologies dominant in society. The effects of multiculturalism on Canada's educational system are traced by Joshee, an analysis which can also be applied to public libraries. Joshee notes that a climate of assimilation dominated Canadian institutions from Confederation until the Second World War. Similar to the Americanization programs outlined above (Fain 1978), Canadian public libraries also worked to assimilate immigrants (Zielinzka 1980). The Ontario Library Association formed a Committee on Books for the Foreign Born in 1929, designed to select books to assist with the task of "Canadianization" (Zielinzka 1980). In supporting the assimilation of immigrants, libraries attempted to shape the development of new citizens, individuals who would be poised to take their place in Canadian society and in the labour force.

Canadian Libraries and Multiculturalism

Though assimilation was an early goal of Canadian librarians, as it was for librarians in the United States, modern library practices in Canada have been uniquely shaped by the federal policy of multiculturalism. Introduced in 1971, multiculturalism asserts that immigrant groups can maintain and promote cultural diversity within the bilingual framework of Canadian society. For public libraries, this meant the creation

and expansion of existing multilingual collections. Providing first, second and subsequent generations of Canadians with the opportunity to maintain their linguistic heritage became a priority for the Canadian government, with implications both for schools (Joshee 2004) and libraries, as multiculturalism implied multilingualism (Campbell 1980).

The adoption of multiculturalism led to the creation of the Multilingual Bibloservice by the National Library of Canada in 1973. Inspired by the goals of cultural preservation and the provision of library services to all members of Canadian society, the Bibloservice was designed to enhance the multilingual collections of Canadian libraries. According to Skrzyszewski (1989), the Multilingual Bibloservice enabled many smaller communities to begin to provide materials to linguistic groups previously underserved by existing library collections.

Multiculturalism was not intended only to preserve cultural heritage, but also to promote equality among “all Canadians in the economic, social, cultural and political life of Canada” (Canadian Heritage 2006b). Public libraries, as stated above, have worked towards the first goal through the provision of multilingual materials. These institutions are therefore uniquely poised to promote the equality and social inclusion of newcomers and to affect the federal policy of Canadian multiculturalism at a local level.

Public Libraries and the Social Inclusion of Newcomers

Through partnerships with all levels of government and community agencies, public libraries can develop services which reflect the diversity of the populations they serve. According to Papillon, national policies such as multiculturalism exist at the

federal level, yet diversity “is expressed and lived at the local level” (13). As a result, the policies and strategies adopted by local agencies and institutions have the potential to affect change in the lives of community members. The recognition of diversity by public libraries can signal not only to newcomers, but also to members of the host society, that these institutions reflect the multicultural realities of Canadian society. It is this accommodation of diversity by public institutions which, according to Kymlicka (1998), is central to Canadian multiculturalism.

The potential of public libraries to respond to the needs of newcomer groups has also been recognized by other Canadian scholars. Caidi and Allard (2005) explore the information-gathering practices of immigrant groups and analyze the role of public libraries in supporting the social inclusion of newcomers. Particularly vulnerable to exclusion due to underdeveloped social networks (Caidi & Allard 2005), some newcomers do not have the informational resources to access employment and other opportunities in Canadian society. Stating that “information provision is a key component of social inclusion,” (Caidi & Allard 2005: 5) the researchers emphasize that libraries are therefore among the institutions well-situated to promote the inclusion of newcomers by providing access to information and technology (Caidi & Allard 2005). According to Caidi and Allard, technology centres, in particular, “function well as public spaces because they promote community identity, social interaction, improve accessibility and increase participants' involvement in civil society” (Caidi & Allard 2005: 7). One of the challenges faced by public institutions in Canada, therefore, is to present newcomers with opportunities to overcome barriers to labour market access and social inclusion.

Wallace and Frisken (2000) note that Canadian public libraries provide “many of the resources, both electronic and print, that immigrants value as they search for jobs, acquire language skills, find out about their new communities and their new country, and retain links to their cultures” (303). The researchers identify the important social role played by public libraries, which create “a sense of belonging” (303) for newcomers, and act as an “important social centre” (Wallace & Frisken 2000: 287). Omidvar and Richmond also note the potential of libraries to act as sites of shared social space, promoting understanding and reducing distances between members of different groups. Murray (2004) provides an example of the social uses of library spaces in Toronto, describing elderly Chinese patrons who read daily newspapers. Murray quotes branch librarian Suk Yin Ng, who refers to the Toronto Public Library as a “welcoming environment” which gives seniors “a chance to go out and integrate into society” (3). In the librarian’s experience, the multilingual collections of the Toronto Public Library assist newcomer patrons to feel socially included (Murray 2004).

The importance of public institutions, such as libraries, in supporting the inclusion of newcomers has become more pronounced in recent years, particularly in light of research highlighting the increasing number of barriers faced by newcomers to Canada (Wallace & Frisken 2000). Immigrants arriving in the past 20 years have experienced more poverty and underemployment than previous groups (Omidvar & Richmond 2003). This situation makes public institutions, including libraries, more crucial as sources of information, interaction and recreation, becoming for some immigrants and refugees “an important lifeboat” (Wallace & Frisken 2000: 291). Omidvar and Richmond echo the

concerns of Wallace and Frisken and indicate an urgent need to address the growing inequalities experienced by recent immigrants in Canadian society.

Libraries not only offer the informational and technological resources needed by many adult newcomers to Canada in the process of settlement (Wallace & Frisken 2000), but also provide important support to newcomer children. In an Austrian study documenting the use of public libraries by Turkish-speaking school children, Yilmaz (2002) notes that “one of the most important reasons why students use public libraries as places to study is because they lack a personal room in their homes” (4). This finding is also relevant in a Canadian context, particularly in relation to recent research on the level of core housing need among a growing number of newcomers to Canada (Murdie & Teixeira 2003). Newcomer children living in inappropriate or inadequate housing may look to libraries to provide quiet study space in which to complete homework and other assignments. The reliance on public libraries identified by Yilmaz among immigrant children in Vienna was compounded by the limitations of school libraries in the city. Among the seven public schools in the study, only one had a school library (Yilmaz 2002). Canadian public libraries may play a role of similar importance among newcomer children, especially in light of research documenting the chronic under-funding of school libraries across Canada (People for Education 2006). According to People for Education, the elimination of teacher-librarian positions and the restriction of opening hours of Canadian school libraries have led some school-age children to rely more heavily on public libraries than in the past.

The multicultural strategies of Canadian public libraries, which in the 1970s were focused on the provision of multilingual materials for the preservation and maintenance

of culture, shifted in the 1990s to begin to address the increasing barriers faced by newcomers and to assist with their settlement. The policy objectives endorsed by the Canadian Library Association include goals such as the prevention of racism, assisting newcomers to become familiar with social services and institutions, and contributing to their successful settlement and inclusion in Canadian society (Cox & Gagnon 1989). More recent policies, such as those of the Toronto Public Library (2004), state that a primary focus of programming is to assist newcomers in overcoming barriers to employment. This goal is reflected in current multiculturalism strategies, which support efforts to promote inclusion and combat racism (Canadian Heritage 2006a). The diversity of Canadians is described by the federal government as an economic advantage in a global marketplace, and the skill development of individuals as crucial to the nation's success: "Canada cannot afford to have any of its citizens marginalized" (Canadian Heritage 2006a).

Challenges and Strategies of Service Provision

Though the provision of multicultural services is an important goal of many public libraries, there remains much work to be done in the implementation of effective strategies of serving newcomers. I will demonstrate, using both Canadian and international research, examples of the important barriers faced by libraries in attempting to serve diverse patron populations.

In his examination of the multilingual services of the Chicago Public Library in the early twentieth century, Novotny touches upon many modern barriers to the provision of library services for newcomers. He cites a lack of resources, both monetary and in the

form of linguistic capabilities of library staff, as reasons for the small size and poor quality of multilingual library collections. Staff members found it difficult to select appropriate materials or catalog them properly due to their lack of fluency in various languages (Novotny 2003). Citing a case study of the Chicago Public Library, Novotny notes that “of the forty-three languages collected by the Chicago Public Library, only four, including French and Spanish, achieved a rate of even one book per person speaking the language during the period 1873 to 1930” (10).

Writing on the situation in Australian public libraries, Cunningham (2004) indicates that potential barriers to service provision include difficulties in locating resources in patrons' first languages. Libraries find it challenging to acquire materials due to the shortage of printed materials in some languages. Cunningham also notes the low levels of first-language literacy of some newcomer groups, resulting from the suppression of their languages in their countries of origin. In addition, orthography can present a challenge in providing materials to some groups, as not every language has a well-documented written form (Cunningham 2004).

Even for libraries offering substantial multilingual services, the type and adequacy of materials, the needs and wishes of the population and the demographics of communities must be continually reassessed. In the evaluation of customer satisfaction with library services, Davies et al. (1981) caution against the use of circulation statistics as the only measure. The findings of Dali (2004) reinforce this statement, indicating that high circulation rates cannot guarantee a collection's adequacy or conclusively signal to librarians the level of user satisfaction. Respondents in Dali's study of patrons using the Toronto Public Library's Russian-language collection indicated that the books borrowed

were “not necessarily the titles that users want to read, but rather, titles that represent the best of what is available” (15). She notes that over 76% of the 50 people surveyed were not satisfied with the Russian-language collections (Dali 2004). Those surveyed indicated that the Toronto Public Library has an insufficient number and poor selection of materials in Russian, with “too many old (classical or Soviet) titles of scant appeal” (Dali 2004: 14). Suggestions for the improvement of the Russian-language collection included a desire to expand contemporary fiction, professional literature, subscriptions to Russian magazines and journals, as well as to acquire more Russian-language non-fiction books on hobbies such as cooking or knitting (Dali 2004). Dali’s examination of library usage by first-generation Russian-speaking immigrants in Toronto is an example of the type of specific research needed to identify the needs of patrons. This type of research, however, could be an expensive and time-consuming process, factors which could present a barrier to the proper assessment of the adequacy of multilingual collections.

Despite facing substantial barriers to the development and delivery of services to newcomers, many libraries have adopted innovative strategies to promote intercultural understanding and raise awareness of issues of migration and settlement. Such programs are valuable if they work to sensitize members of the public to the barriers faced by newcomers, and encourage discussion of the issues of settlement and inclusion. One interesting example is a photo exhibition in Irish libraries designed to raise awareness of the prejudices faced by asylum seekers in Irish society (O'Brian 2005). An American project with similar goals targeted not only the general patron population, but also promoted intergenerational understanding within immigrant families. The 2004 initiative “Teens between Cultures” involved immigrant families from mainland China living in

Texas (O'Toole 2005). Workshops and discussion groups were conducted in both Mandarin and English and focused on teaching immigrant parents and their teenage children to interview one another, discovering the commonalities and diverging experiences of their adolescences in China and the United States, and documenting these oral histories (O'Toole 2005). After the completion of the interviews, the results of the discussions were displayed in the library, thus not only serving to promote the intergenerational understanding of participants, but also the cultural awareness of the library's general patron population (O'Toole 2005). O'Toole (2005) notes that “many exhibit visitors commented that this was their first exposure to Chinese history of the 1960s and 1970s and said they found it enlightening and intriguing” (5).

In addition to finding unique opportunities to encourage discussion of issues surrounding migration, librarians have also attempted to address barriers to service provision by creating materials in newcomer languages. Cunningham documents a pilot project in Australia designed to address the lack of multilingual library resources for children. A family storytelling project was developed involving newcomer families from five different linguistic communities. As part of the program, families created or translated stories into their home languages (Cunningham 2004).

The literature highlighted above serves to identify the context in which public libraries are developing services for newcomers to Canada. In the following section, I will outline the methodology of this study.

Methodology

In order to evaluate the trends and establish the current body of knowledge concerning the provision of library services to newcomers, an extensive literature review was conducted. To determine the nature and extent of the services and programming for newcomers in the Toronto and Windsor Public Libraries, and to ascertain the challenges and successes of newcomer service development and delivery, interviews were scheduled with four library administrators and librarians. Due to the limited scale of this research project, a comparative case-study focused on two library branches, one in each city, to represent the level and type of services and programming offered through the Windsor and Toronto library systems.

To select the most appropriate informants for the study, a non-random sampling method was used with a focus on key informants. Contact was made with the Director of the Windsor Public Library, Jean Foster, who was asked to provide the name of a staff member responsible for multicultural programming. She indicated that Daniel Mungai, Languages Librarian at the Central Branch of the Windsor Public Library, developed newcomer services and programming, and monitored the multilingual collections, and would therefore be an excellent resource for the study.

Ms. Foster was also asked to identify the manager of a library branch located in a diverse neighbourhood, a branch which could be seen as representative of the delivery of newcomer services of the Windsor Public Library. Ms. Foster suggested the Forest Glade Branch, and advised that the manager, Janet Woodbridge, would be able to provide insight into the challenges of service delivery. The openness and enthusiasm of the Windsor Public Library for this research project was signaled not only through the

participation of both respondents, but also through the welcoming attitude of Ms. Foster and Central Branch Manager Karen Bonasso.

Mr. Mungai and Ms. Woodbridge were asked knowledge-based interview questions designed to assess the issues surrounding service development and delivery to newcomer library patrons in Windsor. Both participants were interviewed in person, at their places of work, a situation which provided the advantage of observing the setting and facilities of the Central and Forest Glade library branches. Each interview lasted approximately 45 minutes. Following the interviews, each participant offered to take the researcher on a tour of the branch, pointing out the location of multilingual resources. Both interviews took place in Windsor in June 2006.

The selection of informants and a suitable library branch within the Toronto Public Library was conducted with the assistance of the library's former Multicultural Programming and Services Specialist. The Malvern District Branch was suggested as having a high number of newcomer patrons, and representing a broad selection of the library's newcomer services and programming. Magdalena Vander Kooy, Malvern District Manager, was identified as an expert in the issues surrounding service delivery to diverse clientele. Ms. Vander Kooy was interviewed at her place of work, in July 2006. Following the interview, which took approximately 45 minutes, Ms. Vander Kooy offered a tour of the Malvern District Branch. Elizabeth Glass, Manager of Planning and Development at the Toronto Public Library, was identified as an excellent resource to

highlight the processes of service and program development for newcomers. Ms. Glass was interviewed by phone in August 2006¹.

The interview questions listed below were designed to gain insight into the development of newcomer services. Mr. Mungai of the Windsor Public Library and Ms. Glass of the Toronto Public Library were asked to respond to the following questions:

- What are the initiatives your library has taken in recent years to serve newcomers to Canada?
- Have partnerships been developed with federal or provincial levels of government or with local community organizations serving newcomers?
- How did you develop these services? How were the specific needs of newcomers identified and how was appropriate action decided upon?
- Have any barriers to service and program provision been encountered? If so, could you describe them and state how these issues have been overcome?
- How are existing programs evaluated to measure their success?
- Are any programs designed specifically for subgroups of newcomers, such as children, the elderly, refugees or women?

Additional questions were developed to examine the issues surrounding the implementation of multicultural policies and delivery of newcomer services at the branch level. These questions comprised the interviews with District Branch Managers Ms. Woodbridge, of the Windsor Public Library, and Ms. Vander Kooy of the Toronto Public Library.

- What are the largest immigrant or newcomer groups served by your branch?

¹ Approval of the Ryerson University Ethics Board was obtained before the interviews were conducted. Each of the four interviews included signed consent from the participants. Interviews conducted in person were tape recorded for accuracy.

- Are any members of your branch staff fluent in the languages newcomers speak? If not, how are these linguistic barriers overcome - in responding to patron questions, obtaining and cataloging multilingual materials, etc?
- What are the most popular multilingual collections of your branch? What is the approximate circulation of some of these collections?
- How does your branch publicize its newcomer services in the community?
- How do you evaluate the success of various programs?

The interviews were transcribed and analyzed deductively to determine the nature of the issues raised by respondents. Documents produced by the Toronto and Windsor Public Libraries were also reviewed to ensure the reliability and validity of the responses provided by each of the participants. These documents included Urban Stories: The Next Chapter, the Strategic Plan of the Toronto Public Library, as well as the homepages of both the Toronto and Windsor Public Libraries.

I selected Toronto and Windsor as the focus of this research project in order to examine the newcomer services of the library systems in two different, yet comparable Ontario cities. The importance of Toronto as a centre of immigration has been well documented, and is supported by census data. Similarly, the successes of the Toronto Public Library in serving newcomers and immigrant patrons have been examined in the local press (Hall 2006; Murray 2004; Gillespie 2003) and academic research (Wallace & Frisken 2000). A comparison of the well-established newcomer programs and services of Toronto Public Library with those of a smaller, yet extremely diverse, city in Ontario, such as Windsor, was designed to illustrate the challenges faced by both library systems

in meeting the needs of newcomers, as well as to offer recommendations to develop solutions to barriers to service provision.

Toronto and the Toronto Public Library

Issues of immigration and settlement are vital to Toronto, a city in which, according to the 2001 Census, 49% of the population is foreign-born (Statistics Canada 2001). Over one in five Toronto residents immigrated to Canada within the past decade, signaling the city's status as an important destination for newcomers (Statistics Canada 2001). In light of research noted above, documenting the increasing levels of poverty and underemployment faced by newcomers (Omidvar & Richmond 2003), many public institutions in Toronto, such as the Toronto Public Library, have begun to promote the social inclusion of recent immigrants.

In 2005, the library spent 2.1 million dollars on the acquisition of multilingual materials (Toronto Public Library 2006). Annual circulation of these collections is substantial, with over 4.6 million items borrowed in 2005, representing 15% of the library's total annual circulation (Toronto Public Library 2006). The circulation of English as a Second Language materials, of particular interest to many newcomers, totaled 600 000 in 2005 (Toronto Public Library 2006).

The Toronto Public Library has 99 branch locations and the highest annual circulation of any library system in North America (Hall 2006). With its presence in many communities, special collections² and large investments in programming and

² These include the *Jewish Mosaic Collection* at the Barbara Frum Branch, and the *Rita Cox Black and Caribbean Heritage Collection* at Cedarbrae, Maria A. Shchuka, Parkdale and York Woods Branches. Two other focus collections centre on the First Nations, and Gay and Lesbian communities (Toronto Public Library 2006).

services for newcomers, the library is poised to play an important role in the lives of recent immigrants to Toronto. The Strategic Plan of the Toronto Public Library has highlighted newcomers as a target population in the development and delivery of services and programs. A central goal of library programming is to address the needs of recent immigrants and the challenges they face, such as barriers to labour market access (Toronto Public Library 2004).

Research demonstrates the value of multilingual collections and library programs to immigrant groups in Toronto, as foreign-born residents are more likely to be frequent users of Toronto Public Library services than people born in Canada (Vander Kooy 2004). Hall (2006) and Gillespie (2003) both note the importance placed on library services by newcomers, stating that many recent immigrants become members of the library shortly after their arrival in Canada.

An online information portal for newcomers, Settlement.Org, lists a variety of settlement services offered by the Toronto Public Library, including homework clubs, career workshops and resources, adult literacy services, English-as-a-Second-Language resources, multilingual collections including audio-visual and periodical resources, Internet and computer workshops, citizenship classes, and seminars on personal finance and health (Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants 2006). The library's website indicates additional relevant information for newcomers, such as the telephone interpretation service offered at all branches, free of charge. The service, available in 130 languages (Toronto Public Library 2006), can facilitate library registration for newcomers with little or no knowledge of English.

In addition to the services developed by the Toronto Public Library specifically for newcomers, such as English as a Second Language resources and citizenship classes, other programs have been adopted and used by newcomers to meet their specific needs. A multilingual telephone story-telling service designed for children has become popular among adult learners of English, who embrace the opportunity to listen to and practice English in a non-threatening environment (Vander Kooy 2004).

A quarterly publication designed specifically for newcomers was introduced by the Toronto Public Library in winter 2003 (E. Glass, Interview, August 9, 2006). Canadian Newcomer Magazine, produced in partnership with Citizenship and Immigration Canada, features articles by and for newcomers on such relevant topics as housing and tenants' rights, credential recognition and job-finding resources, mentoring programs, diversity in Canadian workplaces, strategies for dealing with children's adjustment, and banking.

An innovative partnership of the Toronto District School Board and the library has seen the introduction of settlement workers who work in Toronto schools spending the summer months in branches of the Toronto Public Library. The library's Strategic Plan outlines the success of this project in the period from 2000 to 2003 (Toronto Public Library 2004). During this time, the number of participating branches almost doubled and over 5000 individuals received information from settlement workers on the variety of services available to them in organizations throughout the city (Toronto Public Library 2004). The project's success prompted the introduction of a pilot project in November 2005, placing settlement workers in the Toronto Reference Library for the entire year (Glass 2006). The Settlement Workers in Schools program highlights the role played by

public libraries in settlement, making the Toronto Public Library a place where newcomers and their families can have their individual informational needs addressed.

Libraries in cities across Ontario are struggling to keep pace with changing demographic trends and the needs of diverse populations. Though Toronto is the destination of the largest number of immigrants to Ontario, smaller cities, such as Windsor, have important and increasingly prominent roles to play in immigrant settlement. The Windsor Public Library, like the Toronto library system, is challenged to appropriately serve communities of newcomers, and address their settlement and informational needs. In the following section, I will highlight the diversity of Windsor's population and the settlement services currently offered by the city's library system.

Windsor and the Windsor Public Library

Data from the 2001 Census demonstrate that Windsor is one of Canada's most diverse cities. With over 205 000 residents in 2001, the city's population had grown by over 5.4% since the 1996 Census (Statistics Canada 2001). Immigration plays an important role in the region's growth, as approximately 3000 newcomers arrive in the city each year (Macaluso 2005). Windsor has the second largest proportion of newcomers and foreign-born residents in Ontario, surpassed only by the city of Toronto (Statistics Canada 2001). Though lower than Toronto's percentage of 49%, Windsor's foreign-born residents made up almost 27% of the population (Statistics Canada 2001). This total is higher than that of Ottawa (22%), Hamilton (24.7%) and Kitchener (25%) (Statistics Canada 2001). The percentage of immigrants who had arrived within the ten years previous to the 2001 census was 10.8% in Windsor, lower than Toronto (21%), but

higher than Hamilton (6.1%), Kitchener (8.2%) and Ottawa (8.3%) (Statistics Canada 2001).

Recent media reports in Windsor reflect the importance of immigration to the city and serve to highlight the reasons newcomers choose to settle in Windsor. The city's relatively low cost of living, university, and close proximity to the United States are among the factors influencing the decision of immigrants moving to Windsor (Macaluso 2005; Wolfson 2005a). Other factors include the existence of previously established immigrant communities in Windsor and nearby Detroit, and the area's warmer climate and milder winters relative to the rest of Ontario (Macaluso 2005; Wolfson 2005a). A recent article profiles an Iraqi couple who settled in Windsor after having lived in Ottawa and Montreal, attracted by the lower costs of starting a business in the region (Macaluso 2005).

No existing literature was found to date examining the role of the Windsor Public Library in offering settlement services to newcomers. With ten branch locations (J. Woodbridge, Interview, June 22, 2006) and collections in 25 languages, Windsor's library offers daily international newspapers in a variety of languages, English as a Second Language materials, informal English language conversation groups, and referrals to local settlement agencies and services (D. Mungai, Interview, June 16, 2006). Newcomer Magazine, mentioned above, has been available to newcomer patrons since June 2006 and is featured prominently in a number of branch locations (Mungai 2006). The annual budget for Windsor's multilingual collections is \$21,500 for books and audiovisual materials, with an additional \$20,000 for newspapers and periodicals

(Woodbridge 2006). In total, this represents 2% of the annual multilingual collections budget of the Toronto Public Library.

Summer 2006 marks the introduction of settlement workers in the Windsor Library system. The program, described above in relation to the Toronto Public Library, involves a local settlement worker who spends the summer months in the Central Branch of the Windsor Public Library (Woodbridge 2006). The Central Branch is the focus of many of the newcomer and multilingual resources of the library system, as it is where the main language collections are housed, and where Mr. Mungai, the librarian responsible for newcomer services, is based.

In contrast to the numerous policies regarding newcomer services formally articulated by the Toronto Public Library in its Strategic Plan (2004), Windsor's goals for multilingual and newcomer services are embodied in one staff member. Daniel Mungai, Languages Librarian, is the creator and motivating force behind each of the Windsor Public Library's newcomer programming and service initiatives. An immigrant from Kenya, Mr. Mungai spent 12 years in the United States as a graduate student and librarian before immigrating to Canada in 2002. Mr. Mungai's importance as a resource person in Windsor's newcomer communities has been illustrated by recent media reports on immigration and settlement (Wolfson 2005b). Mr. Mungai supports newcomer patrons, offering referrals to local settlement services, agencies with which he is familiar. Through his volunteer work with newcomers at the Windsor-Essex County YMCA, Mr. Mungai identifies the service gaps which are not being filled by community agencies (Mungai 2006). Aware of needs which are not being met, he attempts to develop library programs to address these settlement issues.

In the next section, I will present my interview findings as gathered through discussions with the four study participants.

Interview Findings

Responding to Changing Patterns of Settlement

The interview findings revealed a number of points regarding the development of multilingual collections in the Toronto and Windsor Public Libraries. Ms. Woodbridge cited the shifting patterns of settlement in Windsor, and the often limited heritage-language literacy of second-generation Canadians as factors in the provision and maintenance of multilingual collections. Waves of immigration have made different linguistic groups more prominent in the city at various periods, prompting the need to establish and later scale back language collections. Mr. Mungai and Ms. Woodbridge both identified the “weeding out” of old and outdated materials from collections, and the removal of chronically underutilized language collections as vital due to spatial limitations. The process of evaluating multilingual materials is tedious and inefficient as the Windsor Public Library’s computer system does not permit the retrieval of mass circulation data for items in the language collections (Mungai 2006; Woodbridge 2006). As a result, materials must be brought to the circulation desk and scanned individually to obtain information on their circulation history. Language collections which have been removed from the Windsor Public Library in recent years include Japanese and Finnish (Woodbridge 2006).

Ms. Glass indicated the ability of the Toronto Public Library to respond quickly to shifts in immigrant settlement patterns. She noted that census data is supplemented by demographic information from local school boards to achieve updated community profiles of newcomer groups (Glass 2006). Program delivery is evaluated on a continual

basis, and the branch locations of settlement workers are revised accordingly each year (Glass 2006).

Service Development and Recent Initiatives

The process of program development differs in the Toronto and Windsor Public Libraries. While services are planned, developed and evaluated through the use of detailed program statistics and demographic data in the Toronto Public Library (Glass 2006; M. Vander Kooy, Interview, July 14, 2006), the Windsor Public Library relies on Mr. Mungai for an analysis of the needs of newcomers (Mungai 2006). Mr. Mungai's volunteer work with local agencies serving recent immigrants and feedback he seeks and receives from newcomer patrons assist him in determining the nature of programs and services to be developed (Mungai 2006). Community consultations were also indicated by Ms. Glass as vital to the process of program development in the Toronto Public Library. Extensive community consultations are conducted involving 1400 community members, such as newcomers and settlement workers, in the formation of the library's four year strategic plans (Glass 2006).

A number of recent multilingual programs and settlement resources have been introduced by the libraries studied. The Toronto Public Library has created a video designed to introduce newcomers to the settlement and other services provided by the library (Glass 2006; Vander Kooy 2006): The video was filmed in the Malvern library branch and is available in ten languages. The Windsor Public Library will have a settlement worker in the Central Library branch during the summer months beginning in

2006 (Woodbridge 2006). Both of these initiatives are funded by the department of Citizenship and Immigration of the federal government.

Partnerships

In order to better serve newcomers, both library systems have developed numerous partnerships with government and community agencies. The Toronto Public Library cited ongoing partnerships with the provincial and federal government, in the form of active program delivery and the funding of partner organizations (Glass 2006). Both the Toronto and Windsor Public Libraries benefit from Newcomer Magazine and the Settlement Workers in Schools program, both of which are funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (Mungai 2006; Vander Kooy 2006). Additional materials are provided to the Windsor library system by Statistics Canada, such as information on the 2006 census written for English language learners (Mungai 2006). Local partnerships with settlement agencies (Mungai 2006), ethnic associations (Mungai 2006; Woodbridge 2006), or local colleges and schools (Vander Kooy 2006) were also identified by interview participants. Ms. Glass of the Toronto Public Library emphasized the importance and mutually beneficial nature of partnerships for agencies and the library in serving recent immigrants. The combination of library resources with the expertise and community engagement of local settlement agencies can result in improved service delivery to newcomers, fulfilling the mandate of both parties, according to Ms. Vander Kooy.

Local ethnic associations have partnered with the Windsor Public Library to support and sponsor language collections. Mr. Mungai and Ms. Woodbridge noted the

extensive development of the Polish language collection in Windsor due to the matching of library funds allocated for this purpose by the Polish community. When told by the Windsor Public Library that budget limitations might hinder the establishment of a Bosnian language collection, the local Bosnian community began to raise funds for the initial purchase of materials (Mungai 2006; Woodbrige 2006).

The Settlement Workers in Schools program was identified by the Toronto Public Library as a key component of service delivery, outreach and program evaluation (Glass 2006; Vander Kooy 2006). The summer program has expanded significantly since its introduction in Toronto and pilot, year-round projects are on-going in five branches (Glass 2006). Statistics are kept by settlement workers on the types of referrals and information provided to newcomers, in addition to demographic information on those served (Vander Kooy 2006). As noted above, this information concerning newcomer patrons is vital to the evaluation and development of services by the Toronto Public Library (Vander Kooy 2006; Glass 2006).

Communicating with Linguistically Diverse Patrons

Issues of communication were identified by the Windsor and Toronto Public Libraries as leading to challenges in serving linguistically diverse newcomer populations. Ms. Woodbridge of the Windsor Public Library indicated a desire on the part of staff to translate library policies into a variety of newcomer languages. Such translations exist in 15 different languages at the Toronto Public Library and are available both in branches, as well as on the library homepage (Vander Kooy 2006). Some communication barriers

are lessened in Toronto through multilingual signage of library policy and the use of telephone translators to speak with newcomer patrons (Vander Kooy 2006).

The linguistic diversity of staff was noted as a factor of service provision by participants from both library systems (Vander Kooy 2006; Mungai 2006; Woodbridge 2006). Despite having only 93 staff members in the entire library system, Ms. Woodbridge stated the relative diversity of languages represented in the Windsor Public library staff. She indicated, however, that having more multilingual staff would also be a desirable goal. Ms. Vander Kooy noted that union restrictions prevent the Toronto Public Library from specifically recruiting staff on the basis of language ability, while Mr. Mungai cited the characteristics of a unionized workplace as a barrier to benefiting from the language skills of current staff members. Though some multilingual library staff members in Windsor assist Mr. Mungai with the maintenance and evaluation of foreign-language materials, others request financial compensation, or refuse as these tasks do not belong to their job description (Mungai 2006).

Librarians in both Windsor and Toronto identified part-time library staff, or pages, as excellent linguistic resources (Vander Kooy 2006; Mungai 2006; Woodbridge 2006). Pages, who are generally high school students, retired or underemployed adults, often speak a variety of newcomer languages (Woodbridge 2006). The Toronto Public Library also addresses language through a system of bonuses, designed to reward staff for the linguistic skills they bring to the organization (Vander Kooy 2006). Material selection for specific languages, for instance, is done by staff members who are not librarians, but who are then compensated for this work at a higher rate of pay (Vander Kooy 2006).

Provision of Services to Newcomers at Various Stages of Settlement

Though the Toronto and Windsor Public Libraries have provided multilingual collections for decades, the introduction of settlement services has been more recent. The Windsor Public Library began to target newcomers approximately four years ago (Mungai 2006). The Toronto Public Library's focus on settlement has been developed over the past nine years, with increased attention and concentration on newcomers in the last four years (Glass 2006). Ms. Glass notes that the library's policies and programs were introduced in response to the increasing length of time needed by newcomers to achieve income parity with Canadians. Mr. Mungai cites his own difficulties in accessing information and resources during his settlement in Canada as the impetus to providing these services to newcomer patrons in Windsor.

Participants noted the various roles played by libraries during the process of immigrant settlement. The more immediate needs of newcomers, such as access to information on labour market access and credential recognition, are served through extensive holdings of language tests, dictionaries, professional literature, and industry directories at the Toronto Reference Library (Glass 2006). Online resources developed with the assistance of the provincial government are available on the Toronto Public Library website, including links to updated accreditation information (Vander Kooy 2006). Language acquisition is supported both for newcomers and their children by the Toronto and Windsor Public Library systems (Woodbridge 2006; Mungai 2006; Vander Kooy 2006; Glass 2006).

The economic success of newcomers is not the only part of settlement which is facilitated by libraries. Ms. Woodbridge notes the importance of public libraries as

gathering places, helping newcomers fight feelings of social isolation (Woodbridge 2006). For newcomers who have dealt with the initial challenges of settlement, the library can be a resource to keep in touch with current events in their country of origin. Participants noted the importance of daily newspapers from around the world to newcomers, materials which are available online at the Toronto Public Library (Vander Kooy 2006) and in print at the Windsor library (Mungai 2006). Multilingual resources can also assist with later goals of settled immigrants, such as heritage language acquisition by their children (Woodbridge 2006).

Barriers to Service Provision

Interview participants also cited barriers to the provision of services to newcomers. Ms. Glass and Mr. Mungai noted that only limited outreach activities could be undertaken in light of funding and staff shortages and due to the time-consuming and labour-intensive nature of the work. All participants stated that budget limitations presented a substantial barrier to the expansion and development of newcomer services (Glass 2006; Mungai 2006; Vander Kooy 2006; Woodbridge 2006). Ms. Vander Kooy noted that spatial limitations are a barrier to offering more programs within the Malvern Branch. Ms. Woodbridge cited the sorting and elimination of outdated multilingual materials as necessary, particularly in light of limited shelf space within branches. In Windsor, in addition to staffing shortages, difficulties in recruiting enough volunteers is a barrier to meeting the demand for programs such as English language conversation groups (Woodbridge 2006).

Mr. Mungai and Ms. Woodbridge stated numerous barriers to the provision of multilingual materials in the Windsor Public Library, including difficulties in obtaining high quality material in many newcomer languages. Among the challenges faced after acquiring materials, Mr. Mungai listed the lack of professionally-trained cataloguers in the Windsor Library System and the lack of linguistic diversity of staff as barriers to cataloguing and shelving multilingual items.

The pirating of audio-visual materials was mentioned as a barrier to services provision in the Windsor and Toronto Public Libraries. The purchase of multilingual DVDs, which are then determined to have been pirated, has resulted in considerable financial loss for the Windsor Public Library (Woodbridge 2006). Toronto Public Library faces similar issues, with original DVDs in circulation being stolen and replaced by pirated copies (Vander Kooy 2006).

The libraries studied often found innovative ways of circumventing the substantial barriers to service provision outlined above. Ms. Vander Kooy highlighted the introduction of self-service terminals in the Malvern District Branch of the Toronto Public Library as one effective method to deal with staffing limitations. Introduced in 2005 following the renovation of the branch, the self-service check-outs have user prompts in five languages: English, French, Tamil, Chinese and Urdu, enabling newcomer patrons from those language groups to use the interface (Vander Kooy 2006). Mr. Mungai enlists community volunteers to compensate for the linguistic limitations of library staff, and to assist with the section and cataloguing of multilingual materials (Mungai 2006).

The expense and difficulties involved in acquiring materials in other languages, discussed above, are also eased through better distribution of existing resources. Participants in the Windsor Public Library identified the rotating of collections as a good way to use limited resources to their fullest potential (Woodbridge 2006; Mungai 2006). Rotations of approximately 150 to 200 books are sent to three Windsor library branches, those with the highest proportions of newcomer patrons, for a period of six months (Mungai 2006). Ms. Woodbridge explained that materials are rotated to offer variety to the holdings of smaller branches, and also to expose patrons to a sample of the multilingual resources which are kept in Windsor's Central Branch (Woodbridge 2006).

Both Mr. Mungai and Ms. Woodbridge mentioned the importance of SOMP, the Southern Ontario Multilingual Pool, in enhancing the resources of the Windsor Public Library. Designed for smaller library systems, SOMP permits members to share the multilingual resources of other libraries for a period of six months at a time (Woodbridge 2006; Mungai 2006). As a result, small communities, often with extremely limited library budgets, do not have to invest in large multilingual holdings for their towns, but can borrow the resources from other communities on a rotating basis (Woodbridge 2006).

Analysis and Recommendations

Representing federal multiculturalism on a local scale, public libraries attempt to enable the preservation of culture and heritage language acquisition for first, second and subsequent generations of Canadians. In addition to assisting Canadians with cultural maintenance, libraries work towards the economic inclusion of newcomers. As public institutions with programs funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, libraries serve the goals of the federal government with regard to the economic integration of newcomers. By providing recent immigrants with materials and instruction for language acquisition, accreditation information and job-finding resources, public libraries facilitate immigrants' entry into the labour market.

It becomes clear through this analysis that public libraries are no longer pursuing immigrant assimilation, as early twentieth century librarians were. The most salient proof of this fact is the inclusion of the needs of newcomers in service and program development. The voices of recent immigrants are heard by planners within both the Toronto and the Windsor Public Library systems, ensuring that services are designed not only to achieve the economic, political and cultural goals of the federal government, but also those of newcomers, if they differ.

The ways in which library systems approach the development of newcomer services depend on the size and structure of the institution. The Windsor Public Library is a smaller organization, with only 10% of the branch locations, 4% of the staff and 2% of the multilingual collections budget of the Toronto Public Library (Woodbridge 2006). As a result, the process of community consultation is more informal and individual than in Toronto. Mr. Mungai, in developing programming for newcomers, speaks one-on-one

with settlement workers and recent immigrants to determine the need for services (Mungai 2006). Service development in the Windsor library, therefore, is limited to the contacts Mr. Mungai has in the community, and to the time and effort he supplies, both personally and professionally. His contacts and the newcomer initiatives he oversees could be lost to the Windsor Public Library entirely if he leaves their employment. Though the introduction of a settlement worker in the Central Branch of the Windsor Public Library in summer 2006 (Woodbridge 2006) will provide an additional opportunity to assess the library's newcomer services and obtain feedback from newcomers, the consultation process will likely remain personal. The formalized evaluation of community needs conducted by the Toronto Public Library is appropriate for the size of the institution and the population it serves, just as an individual approach, such as that of Mr. Mungai, would likely be ineffective in Toronto.

The large departmental structure of the Toronto Public Library presents certain advantages over the smaller Windsor system, enabling Toronto to cope more easily with the selection and maintenance of languages collections. A collections department deals with the challenges of obtaining and cataloguing multilingual materials in Toronto, while in Windsor, Mr. Mungai has sole responsibility. In addition, the pool of linguistic resources of staff members available in such a large organization is likely much broader than in the Windsor Public Library.

Though multiculturalism policies are designed to promote social and cultural equality as well as equality of opportunity among Canadians, these ideals remain abstract for some newcomer groups. While the presence of a multilingual library collection can be an important statement of group identity for a community, its absence can be equally

revealing. Groups who have the power to lobby and have their needs addressed are better represented in the multilingual collections of public libraries than other communities. The Bosnian community in Windsor recently requested that the library establish a Bosnian language collection. Faced with budgetary limitations of the Windsor Public Library, the association turned to its community members to raise funds for the purchase of materials. It is relevant to note that this type of request indicates a group's desire, such as that of the Bosnian community, to have their language and cultural identity represented in the public library. The establishing of a multilingual collection by a newcomer group is a symbol of their visible inclusion in a Canadian public institution. This move signals the consolidation of a linguistic community, and demonstrates its power and influence.

By contrast, the absence of a particular language collection can also be a statement regarding the status of a newcomer group within the host society. Mr. Mungai noted the absence of any African languages among the multilingual collections of the Windsor Public Library. Though this absence could be due to the possible small size of African newcomer groups in the city, it could also be an indication of the still vulnerable place of Somali and Rwandese newcomers in the community of Windsor. Struggling to establish themselves, these communities cannot present a unified or powerful voice to lobby for the inclusion of resources in their languages. If public libraries wish to promote the inclusion of newcomers, librarians must not only listen to their input in the development of appropriate resources and programs, but actively seek those who are underserved and underrepresented by current services.

It is important to note that the value of multilingual collections has been contested. Just as Bissoondath (1994) criticizes multiculturalism policies as presenting a

divisive force in Canadian society, allowing ethno-cultural groups to isolate themselves, Wertheimer (1991) laments the politicization of library services by newcomer groups and the increasing demands placed on library resources to satisfy diverse needs. The first of two issues raised by Wertheimer is the difficulties in navigating conflict between ethno-cultural groups during the provision of multilingual collections. The expression of conflict in a library setting noted by Wertheimer was also identified by an interview participant in this study. Mr. Mungai of the Windsor Public Library cited a request from the Serbian and Croatian communities to move their language collections away from one another on library shelves. Group animosity is encountered not only in the placing of multilingual collections in the library, but also in the selection of materials. The difficulties involved in choosing materials for newcomers from Somalia, in light of continuing conflicts and differing interpretations of history in that country, have been encountered by the Windsor Public Library (Mungai 2006). The politicization of library services in Ontario, however, is not new or, as Wertheimer would seem to suggest, limited to newcomer communities. Wiseman (1986) notes the difficult choices encountered by Ontario librarians during the First World War, in deciding whether or not materials written from a German perspective would be welcome in branches. I would argue that libraries do not encourage or foster conflict between groups, but simply reflect existing societal tensions. Perhaps the democratic and equal provision of library materials to diverse language groups is precisely the position a Canadian public institution should take when confronted with ethno-cultural group conflict, in order to demonstrate the “way of life in Canada” (382) Wertheimer wishes newcomers would learn. The second point raised by Wertheimer, the strain placed on library services by

diverse communities, is essentially a financial concern. It can be argued, however, that as a public entity funded by taxpayers, public libraries should represent all members of society.

A number of recommendations arise out of the review of library literature and interview findings. As noted above, the challenges faced by the Toronto and Windsor Public Libraries are not unique to those cities, but are shared by many libraries around the world. The strategies suggested here, therefore, could have a much wider appeal than in Windsor and Toronto, and could be adopted in libraries across Ontario to improve the services and programming offered to recent immigrants.

It is recommended that partnerships which currently exist between all levels of government, schools and community organizations be expanded and the possibility of new partnerships explored. The introduction of settlement workers in public libraries during the summer months has been extremely successful in Toronto, and will be introduced in the Central Branch of the Windsor Public Library in 2006. Settlement workers are “one of the most effective means of communicating public library resources and services” to newcomers (Mylopoulos 2004: 12). The need for settlement information in libraries cannot be understated, particularly in branches located in communities with high newcomer populations, such as the two branches examined in this study.

Community outreach is also an important factor in the success of newcomer programming in public libraries. The Windsor Public Library may be able, as in Toronto, to address some of the outreach needs through the activities of settlement workers and their promotion of library services to newcomers. As libraries must make newcomers aware of the vast range of programming and informational resources available, and

expand their base of patrons to include those currently not served by the library, it is recommended that staffing shortages be addressed to permit an expansion of the outreach activities of librarians.

It is recommended that the Windsor Public Library explore the introduction of a telephone interpretation service in the most popular newcomer languages, similar to that currently in place in Toronto. An interpretation service available from any branch would assist staff in overcoming linguistic barriers in communicating with newcomer patrons. Translation is also a key recommendation for the Windsor Library system, in particular important information introducing newcomers to library services and the responsibilities of cardholders.

It is recommended that public libraries increase the linguistic diversity of staff members. If budgetary and hiring restrictions do not permit the hiring of additional staff, an expansion of the practice of hiring pages from newcomer communities could ease some of the linguistic challenges, such as those faced by Mr. Mungai in the maintenance and administration of multilingual collections and services. In addition, the introduction of a language bonus system, such as the one currently used in the Toronto Public Library, may assist the Windsor library in overcoming staff resistance to using their linguistic skills for multilingual service and programming purposes. The importance of staff training is emphasized by Davies et al. (1981) in the provision of appropriate library services to diverse patron populations. The Toronto Public Library makes training courses on cultural sensitivity and diversity available to all staff (Glass 2006). It is recommended that the Windsor Public Library evaluate similar diversity training

initiatives to determine whether or not they would be appropriate for Windsor staff members.

Research indicates that the quality of the material available to library patrons in languages other than English and French must be evaluated, and that circulation statistics should not be relied upon as the sole measure of a collection's success (Davies et al. 1981; Dali 2004). As the collection evaluation conducted by Mr. Mungai in the Windsor Public Library is necessary, measures could be introduced to make the process more efficient. New cataloguing procedures for multilingual materials should be introduced to enable the production of inventory lists and circulation statistics. As staffing limitations may not allow for the re-cataloguing of multilingual materials, the revised process could be applied to newly acquired materials.

Budgetary restrictions are key barriers to the provision and expansion of programming and services for newcomers in both the Toronto and Windsor Public Libraries. It is recommended, therefore, that budgets be increased for this domain. An expansion in the budgets of libraries would allow for the acquisition of new materials and the consolidation of small or outdated multilingual collections. The English-as-a-Second-Language materials in both library systems are wildly popular and heavily used, and could therefore be expanded.

Public libraries can and should be sites of intercultural education, according to the Canadian Library Association (Cox & Gagnon 1989). If libraries are to support the social inclusion of newcomers, in addition to their economic inclusion, then the anti-racism and public education initiatives of libraries should be expanded. The potential of libraries to act as educational tools to fight racism and encourage cultural understanding

has been documented in library practices in the United States (O'Toole 2005) and Ireland (O'Brian 2005). The public nature of these projects targets a larger audience than one particular cultural group, and includes members of the host society as potential viewers.

A recent initiative in the Windsor Public Library, celebrating World Refugee Day in June 2006, is an example of intercultural programming. Members from different communities, recruited by Mr. Mungai and Marcela Diaz of the Multicultural Council, spoke to members of the public about their experiences as refugees. The situating of the event in the lobby of the Central Branch served to attract curious patrons and caused the continual expansion of the audience. Though the pain of forced migration was a theme, as many speakers described the political events which led them to leave their countries of origin, the celebration was also surprisingly hopeful, as the participants gratefully expressed their joy at settling in Canada. One Congolese woman burst into spontaneous song and prayer during her presentation, wishing members of the Immigration and Refugee Board, Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper and everyone assembled a long and healthy life. Initiatives such as this provide members of the public with valuable information about the lives of newcomers, their experiences and their hopes for the future. It is recommended that projects designed to facilitate discussion and sensitize members of the host society to the challenges of migration be expanded by Ontario libraries.

Avenues for Future Research

This examination of the newcomer services, policies and practices of the Toronto and Windsor Public Libraries suggests a myriad of relevant and fascinating research topics which have yet to be explored. More Ontario libraries could be included in a larger-scale project, which could highlight the practices of a variety of public library systems, such as Ottawa, Hamilton and Kitchener. The newcomer programs and policies of city libraries across Canada could be researched, offering insight into successful initiatives. A comparison of the newcomer services and policies of the Toronto and Vancouver Public Libraries, for instance, could reveal the specific challenges faced and strategies adopted by two of Canada's largest library systems, located in important immigrant-receiving destinations. A program which places settlement workers in libraries is being expanded annually in Toronto, and introduced in Windsor this year. A detailed evaluation of this unique, federally-funded initiative could also prove to be an exciting avenue of future research.

Conclusion

It is hoped that public libraries such as those of Toronto and Windsor will continue to tailor services to the specific needs of recent immigrants, in an effort to promote their social inclusion in Canadian society. Governments, local community groups and settlement agencies all have a role to play in the creation of inclusive library services, which need to be developed in consultation with each of these groups, and with input from recent immigrants. It is only through input from individual newcomers and partnerships with community organizations that the needs of recent immigrants can be ascertained and properly addressed.

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