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**"QUALIFICATIONS ALONE WILL NOT GET YOU
THE JOB YOU WANT"**

**INTEGRATING INTO THE QUEBEC LABOUR MARKET
WITH FOREIGN CREDENTIALS**

Myriam Mansour

A Thesis

in

the Department

of

Geography

**Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Masters of Arts in Public Policy and Public Administration at
Concordia University
Montréal, Québec, Canada**

October 1996

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0-612-25972-2

ABSTRACT

"QUALIFICATIONS ALONE WILL NOT GET YOU THE JOB YOU WANT" INTEGRATION INTO THE QUEBEC LABOUR MARKET WITH FOREIGN CREDENTIALS

Myriam Mansour

In Canada over the last few decades, education, occupational qualifications and work experience have been introduced as important criteria in the selection of potential immigrants. However, foreign "credentials" get very little or no recognition at all in Canada, a situation that reduces their holders to a non-qualified status. Hence, the fate of qualified immigrants on the Canadian labour market is becoming a growing concern amongst scholars and public policy analysts.

It has been argued that an "equivalency" system between qualifications acquired abroad and Canadian (or provincial) qualifications could contribute to resolving this problem on the grounds that, if "translated" into domestic terms, foreign documents will be more recognizable to certifying bodies and potential employers in the job market. Quebec is among other provinces to have implemented such a system. Indeed, the *Service d'équivalence* of the *Ministère des Communautés culturelles et de l'Immigration* (MCCI) is said to be the most comprehensive system in the country. However, no studies seem to have ever been conducted to evaluate the efficiency of such a system in assisting newcomers in the process of labour market integration.

The objective of this thesis is, therefore, to examine the literature's claim that an equivalency document for foreign qualifications is an efficient tool in labour market integration in one's own field of expertise. This research is based on a survey of Quebec immigrants and its findings emanate from their personal experiences, perceptions and

opinions. It was found not only that the equivalency certificate does not represent an efficient tool for labour market integration but also that rapid integration into the labour force is a priority over the equivalency process. The results of this research carry important messages that are worth considering in future policies or initiatives regarding foreign credentials.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There are many people without whom this thesis would not have come to completion. Many thanks to the various non-governmental organizations for welcoming my survey project and for putting me in contact with potential respondents. For their friendly cooperation, "merci" to the staff of the MCCI *centre de documentation* who coped with my frequent visits and questions for more than a year. I also wish to mention the important contribution of Dave for his map and of Helgard for proof reading most of my work before she departed our world in July 1996. May you rest in peace Helgard.

I owe a lot to my professors, Alan Nash, Brian Slack and Jim Young, who had faith in my research and helped me gain confidence along the various stages of this thesis. Thank you to Professor Brian Ray for accepting the role of external examiner in my defense.

"Merci papa, merci maman". You came to Canada as immigrants and have a lot to do with the choice of my thesis topic. Thank you, Yohan, for enduring Mommy's frequent periods of stress over the past year. Above all, I wish to offer my gratitude to my dear husband, Martin, who encouraged me to enrol in the Master's program five years ago and continued his support throughout the years until this final day.

I dedicate this thesis to all my family.

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GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

MCCI	<i>Ministère des Communautés culturelles et de l'Immigration</i>
MEC	<i>Ministère de l'Éducation</i>
EIC	Employment and Immigration Canada

CHAPTER 1

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Context

Canada is a country of immigration and intends to continue to be, at least in the short run (Canada, Employment and Immigration 1992b). In the last few decades, the nature of this immigration has changed with respect to the origin and the labour force characteristics of newcomers. Canada now receives immigrants from over 200 countries from all continents and many of them arrive with an education and qualifications in a great variety of trades and professions. One of Canada's major reasons for encouraging immigration is to meet the domestic labour market demand on the assumption that "immigrants arrive with training and experience acquired at no cost to Canada" (Canada, Special Joint Committee of the Senate and of the House of Commons on Immigration Policy 1975, p.2). In effect, the selection of certain categories of immigrants is based on the premise that:

Those persons selected for their labour-market skills play a important role in meeting the economic objectives of the immigration program (Canada, Employment and Immigration 1993a, p.7).

It would certainly be ideal for Canada if this was true in fact. Unfortunately, the following evidence tends to disprove this assumption.

There is now extended evidence to show that the majority of qualified immigrants who come to Canada are unable to use their qualifications acquired abroad to work in their field and at the level of their expertise. The fact is that although post-secondary

institutions around the world train individuals in a wide variety of fields and grant them official credentials, these documents do not get the same level of recognition everywhere. More particularly, there is a tendency for Western countries such as Canada to under-value degrees acquired in Third World countries (Boyd 1985; DeSilva 1992; Seward and McDade 1988). As Seward and McDade (1988) have stated,

the issue [of lack of foreign credential recognition]... is particularly acute for immigrants with qualifications from anywhere other than Europe or North America (Seward and McDade 1988, p. 31)

Paradoxically, however, the majority of Canadian immigrants increasingly come from those countries.

Two reasons are most commonly given to explain the lack of foreign credential recognition in Canada. One lies in the fact that in many sectors of the Canadian job market people are not familiar with immigrants' qualification documents and, therefore, do not have the tools or adequate knowledge to assess and recognize the value of those credentials (Canada, Employment and Immigration 1993d; Muszynski and Reitz 1982; Seward and McDade 1988). The difficulty of evaluating foreign credentials increases with the broader and more diverse selection of countries from which newcomers arrive.

The other source of the recognition problem is said to stem from professional and trade associations which set their own requirements for qualification and hence the right to practice in Canada (Boyd 1987; Canada, Employment and Immigration 1993d; Mata 1993). The rationale often cited to justify the strict licensing system and limited access to professions and trades is the preservation of high standards of practice for the safety, security and health of the public. However,

there is no evidence that countries which license fewer occupations, ... have put work or public health, safety or security at risk (Canada, Employment and Immigration 1993b, p. 34).

Further,

if the public interest is the main focus, and the "public" is increasingly multicultural, then public interest includes serving the needs of a multicultural public (Battershill 1992, p. 258).

The under-utilization of qualifications, skills and related experiences acquired overseas that emanate from non-recognition can have significant consequences for both the immigrants and their receiving society. For the former, this means not being able to work in their field of interest, and for which they have devoted years of studying, which in turn may result in a high degree of anxiety and frustration. For the latter, if large numbers of immigrants find themselves in lower occupational status relative to their qualifications and to the occupations held prior immigration, social harmony may suffer and the potential for conflict may arise in the host communities. It also follows from the problem of lack of foreign credential utilization that there is a loss of human resources potential for Canada which tends to "reduce its ability to compete more effectively in international marketplaces" (Mata 1993, p. 21). It is also said that "the magnitude of the loss to the Canadian economy could probably run into the hundreds of millions of dollars" (Canada, Employment and Immigration Advisory Council 1991a, p. 17).

1.2 The Issue

Following the identification of the recognition problem of foreign credentials, it has been suggested widely that a standardized system of evaluation and assessment of foreign credentials that could issue official equivalencies of those credentials would resolve part of the problem (Canada, Employment and Immigration 1993d; Canada, Employment and Immigration Advisory Council 1991a; Cumming 1989; Mata 1993). It is said that such a system would contribute in helping qualified immigrant workers in two principal ways: first, in assisting certifying bodies in the assessment of foreign credentials of those immigrants who need to obtain certification from them; second, in providing

potential employers with a document (stating one's credentials in Canadian equivalencies) which they can refer to and acknowledge more easily than original qualification documents issued outside of Canada.

Since such a system already exists in some parts of Canada (Manitoba, Ontario and Quebec), the literature further suggests that these should be taken as models for a nationwide system. The Quebec *Service d'équivalence* received special attention and was particularly recommended as a model.

Quebec has one of the most experienced foreign credential assessment mechanisms in the country (Mata 1993, p. 17).

In a symposium presentation, Michael Phair praised the Quebec immigrant integration system, as the symposium report covers:

Quebec, for example, has shown that equivalency assessment can be done with a very small staff and budget. With the exception of Quebec, it is surprising that Canada and the provinces have moved so little in developing coherent, planned, efficient and effective settlement policies, directions and programmes over the last 20 years.... He pointed to Quebec as the only province to change its perspective and begin to institutionalize settlement with a set of policies and programmes that sees newcomers as a resource. (Canada, Employment and Immigration Advisory Council 1991b, p. 32)

McDade (1988) also described it as "the most comprehensive equivalency information service in the country that operates in the public sector" (McDade 1988, p. 17). Although in the literature other types of labour market integration obstacles are identified, the type of obstacle described above is considered a major one for qualified immigrant workers, and particularly for those with qualifications acquired in Third World countries.

1.3 Thesis Objectives

In order to improve existing systems of immigrant integration into the labour market in general, and, of foreign credential recognition in particular, or to innovate new systems, it is crucial to understand the extent to which immigrants and the governments

(federal and provincial) expectations are actually fulfilled. Studies have been conducted in Ontario, British Columbia, Manitoba and Alberta pertaining to the recognition of foreign qualification practices in their provinces (Canada, Employment and Immigration 1993d), but there seems to be an absence of similar studies for the province of Quebec, despite its famous reputation in this respect. Furthermore, the relationship between foreign credential recognition and labour market integration into one's field of expertise has mainly been discussed in the literature from a theoretical point of view rather than from an empirical basis.

These are the gaps the present research hopes to fill, at least partially. The goal is to focus on what is really happening with regard to immigrant labour market identified integration in general and to foreign credential recognition in particular. In order to do this, the attention was turned toward the Quebec immigrants' point of view on the above issues.

The following questions are the ones this paper seeks to answer: What can immigrants' personal experiences tell us about the value of an equivalency certificate on the job market? To what extent is it easy or difficult to integrate the labour market in one's field of qualification in Quebec when qualified from abroad? What are the various obstacles to this integration? What are their personal opinions on these various points? Furthermore, to what extent is the outcome of the survey similar or different to that of published literature? In short, the overall goal is to verify, on the basis of the survey, the general ideas claimed in the literature that official equivalencies represent an efficient tool to assist and help qualified immigrant workers to integrate into the labour market in their field of experience.

Chapter 2 is a review of the published research on skilled and professional labour force immigration in Canada, on the integration of immigrants into the labour market and on occupational qualifications and foreign credential recognition in Canada. For this thesis, a survey was conducted with immigrants of the Montreal region. Chapter 3

describes the methodology used to conduct this survey. Chapters 4 and 5 present the analysis of the data collected from each of the two surveys. Chapter 6 discusses the issues mentioned above in the light of both the review of literature and the two-fold survey, comparing their respective findings. Finally, Chapter 7 proposes some directions for further research.

CHAPTER 2

IMMIGRANTS IN THE CANADIAN LABOUR MARKET AND CREDENTIALISM: A LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This review is organized into three sections. First, an overview of the forces that have influenced the demand for skilled and professional labour force immigration in Canada and in Quebec is presented. Secondly, immigrants' integration into the Canadian labour market and the various barriers to this integration are discussed. In the final section, the focus is on the recognition of foreign credentials in Canada in general, and in Quebec in particular.

2.2 Skilled and Professional Labour Force Immigration

Canada is a country of immigration, but what type of immigration? Important changes occurred in the 1960s in this respect. Prior to that decade, immigration to Canada consisted primarily of an unskilled labour force. Following the 1967 immigration regulations, however, Canadian immigration experienced a switch from a primarily unskilled to a semi-skilled and professional labour force (Passaris 1977).

The factors that have influenced the change and the reasons behind these changes have been discussed extensively in the literature. There seems to be a general agreement that the major forces were economic in nature (Green 1976; Li 1992; Passaris 1977). The

rising demand for qualified immigrants is often explained as a cause of the post-1945 industrial expansion:

During the post-war period it has become increasingly apparent that the future prosperity of a nation will depend in large measure on its success in creating and maintaining an adequate supply of professional, technical, managerial and other highly skilled manpower (Canada, Economic Council, as quoted by Green 1976, p. 169).

Green (1976) added that, in addition to the increasing needs in industry,

the demand for school and health care facilities would seem... to offer a more relevant explanation for an expanded demand for human capital (Green 1976, p. 176).

In order to pursue this idea, he studied separately the movement of scientists, engineers, doctors and teachers in Canada. The demand for engineers was a function of the high investment in manufacturing industries. However, the immigration of engineers was not constant over the years for it depended on the domestic output of engineers which was facilitated by expanded university training facilities:

... relative to domestic outputs, immigration dropped sharply at this time [in the early 1950s]. With the next surge in industrial investment, however, came a renewed inflow from abroad... (Green 1976, p. 180).

It was also DeVoretz and Maki's (1983) argument that,

the post-1967 expansionist period of immigration was carefully controlled in response to the number of yearly Canadian graduates entering the labour market (DeVoretz and Maki 1983, p. 58).

Flows of immigrants were controlled, the authors argued, by the means of yearly planning levels introduced in the 1976 immigration policy.

The demand for physicians and teachers, on the other hand, was a function of an increasing demand on the part of the public, partly due to the 1947-1966 "Baby Boom" period. An additional factor for teachers was the fact that more children continued attending school beyond the compulsory age of school attendance which is 16 years of age. Unlike engineers, however, the domestic output of physicians and teachers did not

seem to expand, which explains the high demand for immigrants in those occupations (Green 1976). Further,

by the 1960s, it had become clear that, although Europe was still the main source of immigration to Canada, the quality of European immigrants had been diluted by a increased number of unskilled immigrants from southern Europe... (Li 1992, p. 150).

Another factor of labour force shortage in Canada was the high rate of emigration from Canada to the United States prior to the 1960s (Li 1992). For Quebec, emigration of its citizens to the United States or to other parts of Canada, especially Ontario, was at such a high rate that it became one of the most important problems of its labour market shortage (Gagné 1989). So, to compensate for this high demand for a qualified labour force without having to rely on the traditional source countries, Canada's strategies were, according to Green (1976), twofold: first, to move

from an ethnic-based immigration policy to a skill-based, universalistic one... [and second to go] on a world-wide search for talent and the main untapped sources areas were the less developed countries (Green 1976, p. 190).

This "world-wide search for talent" sparked a debate over an issue referred to as the "brain-drain", an issue that has raised a controversial debate about the ethical correctness of draining human capital from other countries (DeVoretz and Maki 1980; Labelle, Lemay and Painchaud n.d. [year of publication not given]; Marr 1976b). Bolaria (1992) saw the brain-drain phenomenon operating with regard to two categories of professional migrants: immigrants who come with the intention of settling on a permanent basis and temporary foreign workers who migrate for a limited period of time with no official rights to remain in the country permanently. Comparing the data on imported labour under the non-immigrant work authorization program, he found out that,

more foreign workers are now being brought to this country as migrants... rather than as immigrants... [and that] professional workers are a significant part of this temporary transient labour force (Bolaria 1992, p. 226).

Already deploring the fact that immigrants "face social subordination and economic exploitation" (Bolaria 1992, p. 225), he adds that migrants'

temporary status puts them in an even more disadvantaged position.... They are brought in to fill certain positions and sent home when their services are no longer required (Bolaria 1992, p. 227).

The 1967 points system, by which unsponsored immigrants (independent applicants) could be selected on their educational qualifications and occupational skills, was instituted for two major reasons: to satisfy the

demand for workers in a broad variety of occupations... [and to satisfy the] growing desire to rid immigration policy of its discriminatory elements (McLaughlin 1985, p. 89).

Although these two components are closely interrelated and often mentioned as reasons underlying the 1960s changes, the former is usually considered the most significant of the two (Parai 1974; Proudfoot 1989).

This need to fill labour market gaps is also one of the main reasons that led Quebec to search for qualified labour and to select immigrants according to its own needs, since it was found that the skills in demand in Quebec were not exactly those Canada needed (Ouellet, LeMinh, Turgeon 1978). In fact, Quebec has managed, progressively and through a series of negotiations with the federal government, to obtain great power over immigration issues and even over the selection of immigrants (Vineberg 1987).

The Canada-Quebec Accord, signed in February 1991, enhances the powers originally given Quebec under the 1978 Cullen-Couture Agreement (Canada Employment and Immigration 1991b, p.15).

Another reason for the division of power between the federal and the Quebec government lies in their diverging immigration objectives.

La loi fédérale de l'immigration a comme politique de promouvoir les intérêts internes et internationaux du Canada. La loi québécoise a comme politique d'assurer et de faciliter l'intégration des immigrants au sein de la

société québécoise et, plus particulièrement, au sein de la majorité francophone (Belzile n.d., p. 10).

Given that Quebec's authority especially applies to selection, it is particularly in this field that Quebec's and Canada's ideas on 'who should be admitted' diverge (Karam 1990). While there are several common elements between the two selection grids, which contain the set of criteria against which applicants are evaluated (such as education and employment) the Quebec grid allows more points for the knowledge of French than for the knowledge of English (Young 1989). For Quebec, the integration of immigrants into the francophone society takes priority over other selection objectives (Quebec, MCCI 1990).

For Canada, the picture is somewhat different. The main guiding principle of the Canadian selection system is to "ensure that newcomers to Canada are selected against criteria which mirror the economic and social requirement of the day" (Canada, Employment and Immigration 1985, p. 3). Independent immigrants are even defined as "those persons selected for their labour-market skills" (Canada, Employment and Immigration 1993a, p. 7).

However, scholarly opinion is divided over whether an increasingly skilled immigration labour force can resolve Canada's labour force shortage. In two successive articles, Rao and Kapsalis (1982) of the Economic Council of Canada on the one hand, and Robertson and Roy (1982) of Employment and Immigration on the other, set out their opposed opinions on the issue. Rao and Kapsalis argue that, based on the Council's own CANDIDE macro-economic simulation model, the cost of immigration could be quite high. Hence,

the policy implication is that we should rely primarily on domestic sources of meeting future labour requirements. Vocational and on-the-job training, and policies to encourage female labour force participation... would have to assume a more prominent role. Such policies may well be less costly than more immigration (Rao and Kapsalis 1982, p. 382).

Robertson and Roy's response was that no such clear conclusions could be drawn from such models as CANDIDE as they

do not desegregate the labour force, neither do they assess the domestic labour market displacement effects by skill level.... [Further], the paper also ignores significant differences with regard to some of the other characteristics of immigrants and Canadian residence (Robertson and Roy 1982, p. 386).

In analyzing, on the one hand, the labour shortage in certain sectors of the Quebec labour market and, on the other, the selection of immigrants by the Quebec government according to the demand, Ouellet, LeMinh and Turgeon (1978) came to the conclusion that the solution to a better functioning labour market was not necessarily the importation of skills through immigration. This argument contrasts with Labelle, Lemay and Painchaud's (n.d.) idea that a transfer of skills across international borders was beneficial to Quebec.

Throughout the 1970s, immigration policy continued to emphasize the selection of immigrants on the basis of skills in demand in the Canadian labour market. The 1980 *Employment and Immigration Report to Parliament*

again emphasized that it was essential to pay particular attention to the selection of skilled immigrants (Proudfoot 1989, p. 240).

However, due to the 1982 recession, immigration levels were adjusted and

a restriction in selected worker intake was introduced... only entrepreneurs and self-employed persons were exempt from the restrictions imposed in May 1982 which affected all other immigrants subject to labour market criteria in the immigration selection points system (Proudfoot 1989, p. 241).

A revised selection system was introduced in January 1986 which opened the door to selected workers of the Independent category of immigrants, who continue to be admitted in large numbers to the country every year. The 1991-1992 *Employment and Immigration annual report* stated that

the government will ensure that an increasing number of immigrants are selected because of the valuable skills they bring to Canada.... Over the course of the five-year plan, the total planned number of immigrants selected for their skills or business acumen will rise slightly from 34,000 in 1991 to 45,000 in 1995 (Canada, Employment and Immigration 1992a, p. 19).

The fact that a large proportion of Canadian immigrants are now professionals or skilled workers and are mainly from Third World countries can, therefore, no longer be denied. What is debatable, however, is whether these selected immigrants satisfy the needs of the Canadian labour market. Many (Labelle et al. n.d.; Marchi 1990; Marr 1976a; Parai 1975) have glorified the benefits of a selective immigration on the grounds that

immigrants arrive with training and experience acquired at no cost to Canada (Canada, The Special Joint Committee of the Senate and of the House of Commons on Immigration Policy 1974, n.pp. [unpaginated]).

Focusing on Quebec, Benyahia (1975) has calculated the value of immigrants' years of schooling to the province:

... de 1968 à 1973... l'immigration internationale a amené au Québec un capital intellectuel d'environ 1 million d'années de scolarité équivalant à un apport moyen de près de 8 années d'instruction par personne (Benyahia 1975, n.pp.).

Others, however, have deplored the fact that, although Canada is increasingly a multiethnic society, this multiethnicity is not represented in certain sectors of the labour force where the need for multiethnic professionals is felt (Seward and McDade 1988). Referring to the 1980s government policies and medical associations policies to reduce the number of Foreign Medical Graduates (FMGs), Battershill (1992) writes that:

On the one hand, immigration was increasing, especially from Third World countries,... on the other hand, it was commonly argued that the diverse ethnolinguistic backgrounds of these new patients was not being adequately addressed by the social services and health care system (Battershill 1992, p. 244).

The same idea was argued by Wotherspoon (1989) with regard to teachers:

Current difficulties by educators in meeting problems associated with immigrant children in Canada's urban areas provide an illustration of the dangers of traditional teacher recruitment practices (Wotherspoon 1989, p. 552).

These two quotes illustrate the need to improve immigrants' integration into the Canadian labour market.

The literature referred to in this first section shows that the important industrial expansion following World War II propelled a high demand for semi-skilled and highly-skilled labour in Canada. In order to satisfy this labour market demand, Canada changed its immigration policy and went on a worldwide search for qualified immigrants. Further, Canada's and Quebec's ideas on who should be selected diverged with respect to issues such as language. This led Quebec to obtain a certain amount of power over the selection of its immigrants. Both jurisdictions created their own selection grid against which applicants are evaluated and eventually admitted.

The opinion of scholars on whether such selection systems are actually efficient in satisfying the domestic labour market needs varies considerably. While some believe the country should rely more on its domestic human resources, others argue that a flow of qualified immigrants can only contribute positively to the nation's economy. There is, however, a widespread belief in the literature that many immigrants, despite their qualifications, do not integrate into the labour market with their full potential and tend to stay in the margins of the Canadian economy. It is the intent of the following section to focus on this issue of the qualified immigrants "fate" once in Canada.

2.3 Integration of Immigrants into the Labour Market

The large number of studies produced on the issue of immigrants' performance in the Canadian labour market integration illustrates the significance of the issue for both newcomers and the host society. DeSilva (1992) presents three major reasons to explain

the importance of the issue. First, the concretization of immigrants' expectations has a direct impact on their actual capacity to integrate into society. If they do not succeed, discontent and social tensions may arise. Second, since Canada projects an image of welcome to newcomers, it is important to make sure the perception of this image corresponds to reality. Third, since most immigrants will become Canadian citizens, the issue of their success or failure represents a national interest.

Beaujot, Verma and Basavarajappa (1986) add that,

...the economic experience of immigrants is an important form of feedback for immigration policy and the programs associated with the selection and adaptation of immigrants (Beaujot et al. 1986, p. 2).

Together with the question of how immigrants perform in the labour market inevitably comes the issue of discrimination in employment, which itself raises some questions: does discrimination really occur in Canada? What types of discrimination occur? And how can it be measured? Muszynski and Reitz (1982) define discrimination as:

the extent to which in the procedures of and the decisions made affect recruitment, hiring, salaries, promotions, training or working conditions, members of racial or ethnic minorities are adversely affected because of their racial or minority group status (Muszynski and Reitz 1982, p. 9).

In the literature, the concept of discrimination extends further than racial or ethnic differences to include a whole range of other socio-demographic factors that influence immigrants' access to the Canadian labour market. Academics have measured discrimination in employment in two major ways: first, in terms of the economic performance of immigrants and second in terms of the type of jobs these immigrants occupy. The following sections presents these two aspects.

2.3.1 Economic Performance of Immigrants

Most studies concerned with immigrants' economic performance are based on census data. However, Samuel and Woloski (1985) looked at

data resulting from an integration of EIC's Longitudinal Labour Force Data Base (LFDB) and the Landed Immigrant Data Base (LIDS) which offers the opportunity to trace the full history of the labour experience of immigrants (Samuel & Woloski 1985, p. 226).

The first section of the study, comparing Canadian to immigrant cohorts, revealed that despite lower insurable earnings the immigrant cohort

appeared to be adapting reasonably well to the Canadian labour market (Samuel and Woloski 1985, p. 236).

In the second part, the immigrant cohort was analyzed according to a number of factors. Among the most successful immigrants were those of the Independent category, those having entered Canada from European countries, those with the knowledge of English and those with the highest level of schooling (Samuel and Woloski 1985).

Beaujot, et al. (1986) looked at the relative income of immigrants in comparison to their Canadian counterparts on the basis of the 1981 census. The results of their analysis demonstrates that as a whole the former had higher average incomes than the latter. However, comparisons between groups, classified by age, sex, level of education, etc., showed that some of them suffered particular economic disadvantages, particularly if they come from non-traditional sources such as Asia, Latin America or Africa.

On the basis of statistical analysis, other scholars have concluded that, as a whole, the immigrant population has performed well economically, but that once the population is broken down into sub-groups, important differences in economic performance appear (DeSilva 1992; Economic Council of Canada 1991a; Seward and McDade 1988; Verma and Basavarajappa 1981). Those originating from Third World countries - especially if they are also members of visible minority groups - are found to be more at a disadvantage than those from traditional source countries (Beaujot, et al. 1981; Boyd 1985).

Since most of Canada's immigrants are now from visible minority groups, there is an increasing concern about whether those immigrants are more discriminated against than others (Samuel 1990). In one well-known study (Richmond 1990), Caribbean immigrants were compared with immigrants from other countries (including Italy, United Kingdom, Europe, Asia and other regions) and with the Canadian-born, in terms of their total income. This particular ethnic group was chosen by the author on the grounds that earlier studies had shown that the Black population was amongst the most disadvantaged of all ethnic groups in Canada. The analysis demonstrates that:

1981 total income data for Caribbean immigrants in Canada show there was a systematic disadvantage compared with other immigrants and Canadian-born, even after controlling for sex, age, period of immigration and education level (Richmond 1990, p. 375).

Differential economic performance was not considered by all authors to be a product, among other things, of racial discrimination. DeSilva (1986) used 1986 census data to carry out a comparative analysis of salaries between two groups of foreign-born: those who had acquired their educational qualifications abroad and those who had acquired them in Canada. The results of his study led him to conclude that there was no significant discrimination toward immigrants in general, toward those from Third World countries or visible minority groups in particular. The study revealed, however, that education and professional experience acquired abroad leads to lower returns in terms of salaries than when acquired in Canada.

En conséquence, il faut aux immigrants, sauf pour les plus jeunes, jusqu'à 20 ans pour égaler les salaires des Canadiens.... Cela suggère qu'on accorde des valeurs différentes aux qualifications et non qu'il existe des préjugés à l'égard des minorités visibles (DeSilva 1986, p. 38).

The Economic Council of Canada (1991a) also came to the conclusion that whether someone had received his/her education in Canada or not had a greater influence on earnings than skin colour. In trying to understand

why colour matters if you are not educated in Canada but does not matter if you are (Canada, Economic Council 1991a, p. 92),

the Council (1991a) came up with two possible explanations: the foreign accent which could be stronger for those who studied abroad and the fact that foreign education may be valued less than Canadian, and even less valued if obtained in Asia, Africa, or the Caribbean. The latter hypothesis was reinforced in another report of the Economic Council (1991b) entitled *New Faces in the Crowd*.

Also significant is the evaluation of foreign vs. Canadian education and experience. There are strong indications that education and experience acquired abroad pay much less, in terms of earnings, than they do if obtained in Canada (Canada, Economic Council 1991b, p. 23).

The major factor of earning differential the Council (1991a) has detected is in fact gender, but not only for immigrants:

women are consistently discriminated against, irrespective of whether they are immigrants or Canadian-born (Canada, Economic Council 1991a, p. 93).

Seward and McDade (1988) who focused on immigrant women argued that they,

as a group, appear to be doing better economically than Canadian-born women (Seward and McDade 1988, p. 9).

The two authors do, however, acknowledge the presence of a great heterogeneity within the group in which

a disproportionate number of immigrant women are in the most disadvantaged groups within the Canadian society (Seward and McDade 1988, p. 9).

Boyd (1992) uses the concept of "multiple discrimination" to refer to the idea that if an individual is at the same time female, foreign-born and a member of a visible minority group, this person will be more at a disadvantage than someone who has two or only one of these characteristics.

Among the factors affecting insurable earnings and unemployment rates, Samuel and Woloski (1985) mention the country of last permanent residence, the degree of

knowledge of English and the number of years of schooling. They note that those immigrants entering Canada from the United Kingdom, and Northern and Western Europe, with good knowledge of English and with high level of education are doing economically better than other immigrants. They also found that immigrants of the independent category were doing better than those of other categories, Family or Refugee. However, the Economic Council (1991a) has noted that:

Given the evidence that independents seem to earn more than the other classes, it might be argued that those who go through the point system do better than those who do not. But they may or may not do better than comparably qualified native-born Canadians, which is the key point at issue (Canada, Economic Council 1991a, p. 86).

Marr (1976b) has also investigated the factors that could influence foreign and Canadian-born earnings.

In general, the most important explanatory variables are occupation, education, age, labour force status, full or part time work, and marital status (Marr 1976b, p. 232).

He adds that,

For education, foreign born have consistently lower earnings elasticities than the Canadian born and for work experience, the foreign born have a lower elasticity for less than six years of experience (Marr 1976b, p. 232).

This parallels DeSilva's (1986) findings on the value of qualifications and experience acquired abroad.

Another influential element on earnings that has emerged from several of the above studies is the length of time in Canada. There is a general consensus that a certain period of adjustment is necessary to reach a certain economic success in Canada (Seward and McDade 1988; Verma and Basavarajappa 1981). Several longitudinal studies have been conducted on immigrants' integration and have permitted a better understanding of their achievement over time. Two have already been mentioned above. Manpower and

Immigration's (1974) longitudinal survey conducted on 1969, 1970 and 1971 cohorts concluded that

by the end of the immigrant's third year in Canada, the differences between him and his [sic] Canadian counterpart on a variety of economic measures had become rather small (Canada, Manpower and Immigration 1974, p. 11).

The other study, *Trois années d'établissement d'immigrants admis au Québec en 1989* (Renaud, Desrosiers et Carpentier 1993), did not make a comparison with a Quebec control group. Rather, it analyzed the process of various integration aspects according to a number of factors such as gender, immigration category and level of education. In terms of employment earnings, male immigrants of the Independent category and with a post-secondary education were found to have faster rising earnings over their first three years in Canada than other types of immigrants.

In Ornstein and Sharma's (1981) 1976 longitudinal survey, immigrant groups were only followed during their first year in Canada. Some of their conclusions are similar to those of the 1974 Manpower and Immigration study, *Three years in Canada*. However, since the focus was on the first year only, their attention was particularly drawn to

the very real problems of economic adjustment experienced by many immigrants (Ornstein and Sharma 1981, p. 96).

Their major finding is that,

although the majority of immigrants showed a substantial improvement in their situation by the end of the first year it is evident that the period of economic adjustment is longer than 12 months (Ornstein and Sharma 1981, p. 97).

Another way that was used to analyze immigrants' economic performance was through unemployment experience. Several authors have included this indicator in their study (Canada, Economic Council 1991a; Manpower and Immigration 1974; Renaud et al. 1993; Samuel and Woloski 1979; Seward and McDade 1988).

Robertson (1986) conducted a comparative study exclusively on unemployment experience of immigrants and Canadian-born for the 1977-1981 period. He examined three specific aspects of unemployment: its incidence, its frequency and its duration.

The results indicate that immigrants have a structurally similar distribution of post-entry unemployment experience (with the exception of those immigrants with an arranged job who tend to have lower expected unemployment duration) (Robertson 1986, p. 37).

Richmond (1984), however, is of the opinion that

recently arrived immigrants tend to be the victims of unemployment rather than its cause. Despite high levels of education, Third World immigrants appear to be particularly vulnerable in this respect (Richmond 1984, p. 253).

Like unemployment, the rate of participation in the labour force is a qualitative indicator of immigrants' economic performance rather than a quantitative one. In studying the labour force participation of Canada's immigrants, McLaughlin (1985) found out that

overall, the participation rates of immigrants appear close to but slightly lower than those for the Canadian-born population (McLaughlin 1985, p. 109).

This contradicts the Economic Council's (1991a) findings which argue that differences appeared between the two groups when age and sex were taken into account, and within the immigration population itself when period of immigration and place of birth were considered. Generally,

The later the period of immigration, the lower the participation rate. ...men from European regions have the highest adjusted rates. ...for women, the Caribbean and South-east Asia are the regions of birth for which participation rates are the highest (McLaughlin 1985, p. 110).

2.3.2 Type of Jobs Occupied by Immigrants

Indicators such as wages, salaries and income represent only one way of analyzing immigrants' performance in the labour market. Another way is the type of work they occupy and whether it fits their qualifications. Several of the influential factors mentioned above will also be found in this section since wages and type of jobs are closely related.

The study of the type of jobs occupied by immigrants in Canada has been approached in two ways: first from the perspective of the labour market and second from the perspective of the immigrants themselves. Viewed from the labour market perspective, several academics have raised the question of whether those immigrants destined for the Canadian labour force were proportionately represented in that labour force (Boyd 1985; Marr 1986; Ouellet, et al. 1978; Seward and McDade 1988).

Marr (1986) examined the question closely in a study based on 1981 Census data. His objective was to find out

whether or not the foreign-born labour force are over- or under-represented in the occupations which grew relatively quickly over the decade 1971 to 1981 (Marr 1986, p. 769).

One of his findings was that foreign-born men were over-represented in machining and natural science-engineering occupations compared to their Canadian counterparts and that female foreign-born were over-represented in machining and fabricating occupations. Also, the results demonstrated that

foreign-born males seem to have done a better job than foreign-born females in being over-represented in the fast growing occupations of the 1970s (Marr 1986, p. 772).

Further, the more recently immigrants had arrived in Canada, the less represented they were in the fastest growing occupations.

In an earlier study in which he looked at Ontario's immigrant profile, Marr (1976b) mentioned that 38.71% of all immigrants of that province were concentrated in

three particular occupational groups (clerical, service and fabricating-assembling) and that the immigrant labour force was over-represented in natural sciences, services, processing, machining, fabricating and construction occupations when compared with the Canadian labour force. Boyd (1985), to the contrary, noted that,

comparisons of occupational distribution of the foreign and native-born groups suggest only slight occupational differences between the foreign and native-born males (Boyd 1985, p. 398).

Her source of data, however, were different as she used the 1973 Canadian Mobility Survey data on males in the labour force.

A study on Quebec's immigrant labour force based on immigration statistics from landing documentation (the IMM-1000 forms) reveal that immigrant workers admitted between 1973 and 1975 had a very strong concentration in specific occupational sectors in comparison to the native-born (Ouellet, et al. 1978). The authors argue that these differences are probably simply due to the domestic labour market structure of the time.

... une profession à concentration relativement plus forte de main-d'oeuvre immigrant devrait, théoriquement, avoir des besoins aigus de main-d'oeuvre. Inversement, une profession à concentration relativement faible de main-d'oeuvre immigrante devrait, en principe, avoir de faibles besoins de main-d'oeuvre (Ouellet, et al. 1978, p. 22).

When the issue of the types of jobs occupied by immigrants is approached from the immigrants' perspective, other kinds of questions emerge: Do immigrants work in Canada in the occupation they intended to have before immigrating? Do they work in the field of their qualifications ? Although some studies have examined the occupational situation of non-qualified immigrants (Kempeneers and Neill 1985; Labelle et al. n.d.), it is more the concern of this paper to focus solely on those that have examined the situation of qualified immigrants. The reason for this is that while so much effort is invested on the part of the Canadian and the Quebec governments to select immigrants for their skills and qualifications, it seems that these newcomers are still not able to realize their full potential in employment.

Authors who have examined the integration process of immigrants into the labour market have mentioned the existence of a number of barriers which prevent access to occupations that correspond to their credentials. Access to employment for immigrants can be impeded by such factors as accent or lack of fluency in one of the official languages (Canada, House of Commons 1984). Employers may perceive these characteristics as signs of poor education and may not be inclined to consider the individual as a potential candidate for a job (Verma and Basavarajappa 1989).

Kempeneers and Neill (1985) mention the urgent necessity for immigrants to work as soon as they immigrate. As a consequence, it may then become difficult for them to concentrate on finding a job that fits their expectations. Bolaria (1992) adds a number of other characteristics that may put immigrants at a disadvantage:

Place of origin, racial background, cultural differences or other characteristics considered to be "undesirable attributes", in addition to entry status, may result in differential labour market opportunities which channel these professionals into the least sought-after positions (Bolaria 1992, p. 216).

The various factors mentioned so far stem from characteristics of the immigrants themselves. Other factors, however, stem from the host society itself. Among them is the fact that in certain occupations, professional corporations and associations as well as unions impose their own rules for entry, licensing and even practicing (Alacoque 1977; Canada, Employment and Immigration 1993c; McDade 1988). The document entitled *Equality Now!* also mentions the existence of closed circles in certain labour sectors:

One need only look at the employment practices of police departments, fire departments, government services, universities, the media and private companies to see that visible minorities are consciously or unconsciously denied full participation in almost all Canadian institutions (Canada, House of Commons 1984, p. 1).

In a working paper on employment, Muszynski and Reitz (1982) noted that racial and ethnic discrimination could occur due to the fact that Canadian employers did not

have sufficient knowledge on how to evaluate foreign educational qualifications or work experience. This problem of credential evaluation and recognition is one that has recently attracted a lot of attention from a number of scholars (Bolaria 1992; McDade 1988). This particular issue is the focus of section 2.4 of this chapter where it will be further discussed.

The results of such barriers to employment access are the high concentration of immigrant workers in lower status occupations.

These workers [high cost labour] often face career obstacles with regard to their professional careers and opportunities and often end up at the lowest levels of their professional hierarchies and in places where indigenous trained professionals are unwilling to work (Bolaria 1992, p. 216).

Immigrants' own perception of their access to employment experience has also been investigated. In Renaud, Desrosiers and Carpentier's (1993) longitudinal survey, two questions about the perception of employment were asked. The first question asked whether the type of job immigrants had in Quebec was different than that held prior to immigration. In response, 35.6% said that the type of job they were practicing after three years in Quebec was the same prior to and after immigration and the remainder said it was different. The second question concerned their perception of the qualification of the job they had. Of respondents to this question, 46.3% declared they had a less qualified job than before they immigrated, 24.9% said the job obtained in Canada was of equivalent qualification compared with that held prior to immigration and 28.8% declared it was more highly qualified. The study does not, however, make any reference to the possible reasons for these differences. Another study that surveyed perceptions noted a number of reasons given by immigrants:

Parmi les raisons invoquées par les travailleurs immigrants pour expliquer qu'ils n'occupent pas l'emploi de leur choix dans les six mois suivant leur arrivée, mentionnons les plus importants: le manque d'expérience au Canada, les problèmes linguistiques et la "non-disponibilité" de l'emploi choisi (Ouellet, et al. 1978, p. 58).

In neither of these two surveys, however, has a link been made between the non-recognition of foreign credentials and the difficulty immigrants face if they wish to work in their field of training.

It is obvious from this overview of the literature on immigrants' integration into the labour market that points of view about immigrants' performance in this respect vary greatly. This diversity in opinion depends on the approaches used and the source of the data. Two major approaches can be distinguished. While one uses measures such as income, insurable earnings, salaries, unemployment and participation rates in the labour force, the other approach focuses on the types of jobs occupied by immigrants in relation to their credentials.

There is a general consensus in the literature about the fact that, although the immigrant population as a whole appears to fare well, particular immigrant groups have certain difficulties in performing in the labour market as well as their Canadian counterparts. However, a subject of debate amongst academics is the nature of the barriers hindering access to employment. In a broad sense, factors such as country of birth or of origin, age and sex, level of education and period of residence in Canada are all considered, to varying degrees, to be potential influencing elements. For some scholars, racial discrimination is at the very base of inequality in employment, while others put the blame on the fact that foreign credentials are difficult to evaluate and are often not recognized in Canada.

In summary, most studies that have focused on immigrants' labour market integration are based on statistical data; only a few are based on surveys or have investigated immigrants' opinions on the issue. It is clear that more research of the latter type could contribute to the acquisition of a better understanding of the real situation.

2.4 Occupational Qualifications and Foreign Credential Recognition

2.4.1 Canada

The issue of the recognition of credentials acquired outside of Canada is one that has recently stimulated the concern of many. The fact is that immigrants are often unable to work in the field of their qualifications and expertise because their credentials are poorly recognized (if at all) by Canadian institutions or employers. This phenomenon is often referred to in the literature as "credentialism" (McDade 1988). Although this problem can affect all three categories of immigrants, its implications are greatest for Independent class applicants, because they are selected in part for their qualifications and experience in specific fields according to the points system so that they can work in those fields once in Canada.

Il semble...que la politique d'immigration canadienne admette quelques sujets parmi les meilleurs et les plus brillants, pour ensuite les condamner à une vie de frustration en les empêchant de mettre à profit les talents qui au début, justement, rendaient leur candidature intéressante. C'est là une anomalie qui mérite d'être corrigée (Canada, Employment and Immigration 1987a, p. 6).

According to Boyd (1987),

the lack of recognition has two main sources: employers who either cannot or are unwilling to assign Canadian equivalencies to education received elsewhere; and professional associations which demand compliance with their own certification rules and training standards (Boyd 1987, p. 23).

In 1988, McDade produced an entire document on the problem of credentialism. Her work is probably one of the most comprehensive and informative documents that has been written on the issue. She examined the process by which immigrants seek recognition of their credentials on the basis of the argument that

failure to recognize immigrant credentials undermines federal immigration policy, one of whose objectives is to promote national prosperity through the contribution of a highly motivated and well-educated immigrant labour force (McDade 1988, p. viii).

In order to assess the extent to which foreign credentials are not recognized in Canada, her paper examined the process by which immigrants seek recognition of their academic and occupational qualifications, for both trades and professions.

In this context, credential recognition is considered to be the first stage of integration into the Canadian labour force. McDade (1988) treated separately trades and professions since entry processes greatly differ between these two occupation categories. She identified several barriers to credential recognition for each of the two categories. With regard to trades, she indicates that,

The right to work in a given trade may or may not require compulsory certification depending on provincial regulations (McDade 1988, p. 9).

She notes, however, that even for trades that do not require formal certification, it is still recommended that immigrants obtain certification, because those with proof of qualification are most likely to be hired ahead of those without such proof. When certification is compulsory to work in a field, some obstacles may be encountered by immigrants. Those with training acquired outside of Canada

may be unable to provide documentation of their training and certification.... [For] those with documentation from a country for which Canadian authorities have little knowledge of occupations, it is difficult to assess the equivalency of their training by provincial standards (McDade 1988, p. 10).

In cases where foreign-trained individuals have to re-certify in Canada, other barriers may emerge. One of them relates to the necessity to be familiar with one of the two official languages in order to qualify. Language training through courses sponsored by Employment and Immigration Canada are available to newly arrived immigrants.

However, courses are designed to teach communication skills, rather than to provide learners with occupational or professional terminology... [and] opportunities for learning English or French in job-related courses are rare (McDade 1988, p. 11).

Another problem mentioned by McDade (1988) is that,

it appears foreign-trained persons seeking certification in a trade may be hindered by a simple lack of information on the process involved (McDade 1988, p. 11).

For professions the picture is different. Certain professions are regulated by self-governing groups commonly referred to as professional associations.

The primary justification for regulating the professions is protection of consumers of specific services or the general public (McDade 1988, p. 11).

Potential barriers to entry access into professions in Canada lie in large part in the evaluative procedures that are established by professional associations to assess competence of candidates trained abroad. McDade (1988) notes that

weaknesses are in most cases attributable to the use of subjective methods of evaluation... [and that] variations in the objectivity of procedures are most evident at the first stage of the certification process, which is a review of the candidate's academic training to assess its Canadian equivalency (McDade 1988, p. 12).

Although some professions carry out a systematic evaluation of academic credentials, others

refuse *a priori* to grant equivalency to candidates from outside their jurisdiction, or they restrict equivalency to known schools (McDade 1988, p. 12).

Very often then, the consequence of such procedures for immigrants means the need to repeat all or some of their education, and this, only if they are accepted into academic or training programs.

A exhaustive study, entitled *Occupational Standards and Certification* was conducted by Employment and Immigration Canada and released in 1993 (Canada, Employment and Immigration 1993b). The study consists of four reports, the last of which is completely devoted to recognition of foreign credentials in Canada. The study's concern with the issue is based on the idea that,

to capitalize on [the immigrant] labour supply depends upon the recognition foreign-trained workers receive for their skills acquired outside Canada (Canada, Employment and Immigration 1993d, p. 3).

The study mentions eight barriers to certification which create obstacles for foreign-trained workers in securing employment in the occupational areas of their training:

- the lack of availability of information on how to become certified or licensed;
- an inability to perform well on "paper and pencil" tests due to cultural differences, and/or lack of practice and skills in completing such tests;
- the requirement to take an examination is seen as a barrier to many people who have strong experience but who have been away from formal academic learning for a number of years;
- the integration of employment into the qualification, certification, and licensure process (for example, a worker can not become certified without work experience, but cannot gain work experience without certification);
- the absence of a reliable and publicly accountable system for evaluating foreign training and experience;
- the lack of re-training or bridging opportunities for people who have completed part of their training in another country;
- the validity and appropriateness of examinations and tests used in the normal certification and licensure process; and
- the level of language proficiency required and the means used to assess such proficiency (Canada, Employment and Immigration 1993d, p. 6).

In addition, the report mentioned as another potential difficulty the high cost and time consumption of collecting the necessary information on education systems to proceed with fair assessments of foreign qualifications.

Mata (1993) saw as

other major systematic obstacles... the lack of uniformity in regulations, the ambiguity with respect to the recognition of certificates (foreign and national) and the difficulty in assessing foreign working experience by licensing or certifying bodies (Mata 1993, p. 14).

Further, the

lack of recognition may stem from a number of considerations including difficulties in evaluating foreign credentials, and perceived and real differences in quality between Canadian and foreign qualifications.... It is also conceivable that prospective employers may use the reasons given earlier for not recognizing foreign qualifications as an excuse to discriminate against foreign job applicants (Canada, Economic Council 1991a, p. 88).

Interestingly, the possibility of discriminatory practices either on the part of employers or on the part of institutions in the recognition process appears also in a number of other studies (Canada, Economic Council 1991a; Thomas 1990).

The problem of credentialism was even detected as early as the 1970s. For example, the Manpower and Immigration Canada's (1974) 1969-71 longitudinal survey notes that recognition difficulties may also be experienced by immigrant professionals moving from one province to another within Canada, such as lawyers or teachers.

Canadian professionals, however, have the advantage of familiarity with Canadian institutions, procedures, and way of life (Canada, Manpower and Immigration 1974, p. 121).

Hence, immigrants may find themselves in a disadvantageous position in this respect.

Several empirical studies also found that the problems related to the acquisition of an accurate and consistent assessment of credentials acquired outside of Canada were to be blamed for the difficulties experienced by immigrants in integrating into the Canadian labour force (Beaujot, et al. 1986; Boyd 1985; Canada, Employment and Immigration 1987a). Furthermore, the federal government is not only aware of the problem of credential recognition for immigrants, but openly warns potential immigrants of the problem. In *A Newcomer's Guide to Canada* (1991), the reader will encounter the following statement:

You may not be able to practice your profession in Canada. If you are a doctor, lawyer, nurse, engineer or other professional person, you must re-qualify. In some professions there are limits to the number of places available for training, interning or articling, and preference is given to those who have graduated from Canadian schools... Qualifications alone will not get you the job you want in Canada. Employers look for experienced people who will immediately become productive. They may hesitate to hire someone who seems unable to cope with Canadian ways. For their first jobs, many newcomers accept employment outside their trade or profession, and for lower wages than they eventually achieve (Canada, Employment and Immigration 1991a, p. 23-24).

Further, Independent class immigrants are required, prior to immigrating to Canada, not only

to obtain evidence from the authorities in the province in which they intend to settle that they will be able to meet the licensing requirements... [but also] to sign a form as part of the immigration process stating that the immigrants understand that acceptance into the practice of his or her professions or occupation in Canada is in no way assured (McDade 1988, p. 25).

Immigrants may appeal to human rights commissions and request investigation and review of the process by which their credentials were evaluated if they believe discrimination to have occurred. However,

contact with the commissions revealed that surprisingly few complaints had reached the board of inquiry stage (McDade 1988, p. 21).

Among the few efforts made by the government to try to cope with the problem of credential recognition, McDade (1988) mentions Canada's accession to the United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees concerning Higher Education in the States belonging to the European Region. However, since the majority of immigrants entering Canada are not from the "European Region", the problem remains (McDade 1988).

Such measures as cited above do not, however, seem to satisfy certain groups of the Canadian public. Following a series of studies and reports, several recommendations have been made to the federal government. Seward and McDade (1988), for example, recommend a

more rigorous counseling of potential immigrants regarding the constraints they may face with respect to recognition of their credentials (Seward and McDade 1988, p. 52).

Despite the fact that standard setting in employment is mainly under provincial responsibility, one recommendation is that the federal government should get more involved in the process by which foreign credentials receive recognition in order to be in

agreement with the goals of multiculturalism policy, immigration policy, human rights law and international relations (Canada, Employment and Immigration 1987b; McDade 1988). Others see a need for the government of Canada to cooperate more closely and to establish consistent agreements with the provinces on the issue of foreign credential recognition (Canada, House of Commons 1984). However,

recognition of qualifications between provinces must exist prior to mutual recognition of professional qualifications between two countries (Canada, Employment and Immigration 1993d, p. 35).

In a report by the Employment and Immigration Advisory Council (1991a), the request extends further, suggesting that the EIC (Employment and Immigration Canada)

set up the necessary institutional framework to objectively assess and establish the equivalence of education, training and work experience obtained abroad (Canada, Employment and Immigration Advisory Council 1991a, p. 19).

The report also recommends that federal government bodies in cooperation with professional associations work together to put in place training programs for professional women in relation to the needs of the labour market (Canada, Ministry of State for Multiculturalism 1981).

McDade (1988) argued that the Council of Ministers of Education of Canada (CMEC) commission has a major role to play in acting as a central repository of equivalency information and should become Canada's main source of equivalency assessment for immigrants. This would allow a remedy for the present situation in which

evaluation services vary across Canada and do not exist in some parts of the country (McDade 1988, p. 42).

As they addressed the problem of evaluation of foreign educational qualifications and work experience, Muszynski and Reitz (1982) stated that,

there is a need for employers to have more information about foreign qualifications (Muszynski and Reitz 1982, p. 47).

The request for more diffused information on the matter is also represented by one of the Economic Council's (199b) recommendations:

We recommend that the provincial and federal governments increase their efforts at disseminating information on the degree of equivalence or otherwise of foreign credentials and that they enlist the support of professional associations in this endeavour (Canada, Economic Council 1991b, p. 38).

This suggestion also appeared in other studies (Canada, Employment and Immigration 1993d; Seward and McDade 1988). Equivalency services exist in some parts of Canada as part of provincial initiatives. The following sections will explore the situation in Ontario, Manitoba and Quebec.

2.4.2 Provincial Initiatives

Although many authors believe and have declared that they consider the federal government should take responsibility for assuring some kind of systematic and objective equivalency assessment service for the foreign-trained, some provinces have initiated certain moves to try to overcome credential recognition barriers. These are Quebec, Ontario and Manitoba (McDade 1988). While Quebec will be the object of particular attention in the third section of this chapter, the two other provinces will be discussed here.

In 1964, the Comparative Education Service (CES) of the University of Toronto was founded. The organization's staff now comprises three full-time employees in addition to the manager (Kindiakoff 1993). It assesses foreign-trained persons' education in terms of Canadian equivalency and receives applications from all over Canada. However, McDade (1988) notes that,

the statement of equivalence provided [by the service]... is perceived only as advisory information by any university or association to which it is presented by the applicant (McDade 1988, p. 28).

Five years ago, an in-depth examination on access to professions and trades was done in Ontario by a provincial task force and resulted in a report entitled *Access!* (Cumming 1989). The document

acknowledged the presence of professional accreditation barriers in the province.... The absence of objective criteria in assessing the training needs and the lack of appropriate counseling restricted significantly the choices of immigrants (Mata 1993, p. 17).

The task force identified several main barriers to access including prior learning assessment, licensure testing, language training, language testing, retraining and mechanisms by which decisions are reviewed. The solution proposed by the task force for the first of these barriers, which is the issue of concern here, is the creation of a systematic mechanism to assess prior learning on the basis that,

the assessment of equivalency is the stage in the process that is least standardized, most difficult, and most open to abuse (Cumming 1989, p. xvii).

It therefore suggested

the creation of a Prior Learning Assessment Network (PLAN), to be an independent agency operating under the aegis of one or more ministries (Cumming 1989, p. xvii).

Further, the network is proposed to be public, accessible, comprehensive in its assessment strategies and credible to those who use its service (Cumming 1989). So far, PLAN has not yet been implemented. However,

In December 1992, the provincial Ministry of Citizenship announced the allocation of \$ 2 million over two years towards a Demonstration Project Fund which includes: 1) 10-15 demonstration projects per year, 2) cost-sharing projects with the private sector and, 3) establishing networks between professional and trade associations and community organizations whose composition includes non-Ontario trained individuals (Mata 1993, p. 18).

For the province of Manitoba, there is no such thing as a centralized credential evaluation service as there is in Ontario or in Quebec. Instead, what is offered to

immigrants in the province is Program Recognition which was launched in 1984-85 by the Ministry of Employment Services and Economic Security. The objectives of the program are two-fold:

first, to provide wage assistance to private sector employers to assist in the creation of meaningful employment opportunities for unemployed and/or under-employed skilled newcomers; and second, to assist newcomers in their quest for academic equivalency or professional/technical accreditation, by identifying and obtaining appropriate training (Mehzenta 1978, in McDade 1988, p. 29).

McDade (1988) adds that,

the Program does not have the mandate or the resources to carry out complex assessments of academic equivalencies; officials are assisted in this task by university registrars in the province (McDade 1988, p. 30).

Throughout Canada, universities and colleges conduct evaluations of their applicants' foreign qualifications and sometimes also advise immigrant service organizations, licensing organizations and government employment officials. However, these activities do not operate as a public service offered to all immigrant workers.

2.4.3 Quebec

Quebec's service of equivalency is the most complex organization in Canada with respect to the evaluation of foreign credentials. In fact,

Quebec is the only province in Canada that operates a public sector comprehensive equivalency information service (McDade 1988, p. 28).

Prior to 1983, the Quebec Ministry of Education (MEQ) had the mandate to assess equivalencies of foreign credential. Between 1983 and 1993, the MEQ and the MCCI joined their efforts to create the *Service d'équivalence* as it is known today. However, since 1993, the MCCI alone has full responsibility for the mandate (Lecourt 1993).

The service includes two divisions. First, the *Division de l'orientation et de la référence scolaire et professionnelle* which operates as an information centre on Quebec

school system, post-secondary education, requirements for practicing a trade or profession, and the labour market. Second, the *Division des équivalences* is where immigrants are referred to when they wish to obtain an assessment of their educational qualifications. The outcome is a document called *attestation d'équivalence* and is issued on the behalf of the Ministry of Education.

These certificates indicate the Quebec level, stated in terms of years of scholarship, corresponding to the studies pursued outside Quebec (McDade 1988, p. 28).

Despite its authoritative appearance,

educational institutions and professional organizations have the discretion to disregard the equivalency statement (McDade 1988, p. 29).

McDade (1988) emphasizes the quality of the Quebec system as she mentions that financial and human resources are made available

to collect current and comprehensive information on international education programs..., [that it] has membership in 13 associations of international comparative education and is represented on the World Education Committee in Washington, [and that] the staff are able to work on related issues, such as investigation of fraudulent documents, and to maintain contact with the F.B.I. for this purpose (Zinman-Madoff 1987, in McDade 1988, p. 29).

The organization presently runs with about twenty employees, and over 6500 equivalency certificates were issued in 1992 (Lecourt 1993).

Despite the existence in Quebec of such an equivalency service, no direct link seems to ever have been made between the equivalency service provided by the Quebec government and the capacity for immigrants to integrate into the labour market. However, some written material does show evidence of non-recognition of immigrants' credentials. In a survey interview, Kempeneers and Neill (1985) have observed that many of the immigrants ended up in a lower status job because their qualifications acquired abroad simply had no recognition at all in Quebec. This situation may be in part due to the strong power of authority held by professional bodies and unions in the province.

Alacoque (1977), having himself immigrated to Quebec, expressed with sarcasm his opinion about Quebec's professional corporations which he defined as "des instruments de protection du ghetto canadien-français en Amérique du Nord" (1977, p. 53). He adds that,

pour se débarrasser d'un immigrant, une corporation professionnelle peut déclarer nul et non avenu tel diplôme universitaire étranger, ce qui obligerait le nouveau venu, architecte, comptable agréé ou autre, à recommencer la totalité de ses études, à refaire plusieurs années de scolarité à plein temps (Alacoque 1977, p. 54).

Alacoque (1977) also argued that, given high unemployment rates (at the time when he was writing), unions considered immigrants as direct competitors and did everything to hinder their access to employment. Interestingly, however, other scholars have noted that, despite immigrants' high level of activity in the labour market, they most often generally do not work in unionized sectors (Labelle et al. n.d.).

As the literature on credentialism illustrates, barriers to foreign credential recognition, both for trades and professions, is a real problem for qualified immigrants who wish to integrate into the Canadian labour market in their chosen field. The standardization of qualifications acquired outside of Canada by issuing equivalencies of such documents appears to be one solution to reduce the magnitude of the problem. These equivalencies must, however, be adequately and equitably assessed. To do so requires, according to many scholars, the cooperation of the two levels of governments (federal and provincial) and of the professional bodies.

On a provincial basis, Ontario and Manitoba have initiated efforts to try to reduce the problem of non-recognition of foreign qualifications. While the former has an equivalency service provided by the University of Toronto, the latter has a program that focuses on re-training rather than on the actual evaluation and assessment of foreign qualifications. Universities across Canada also play a role in the evaluation of foreign

credentials, although this role is rather limited, for it is not offered as a widespread public service.

Quebec has developed a comprehensive system, unique in Canada, which operates on the behalf of the Quebec Ministry of Education. As a consequence, the equivalency documents issued and provided to immigrants who make a request have a more official and authoritative appearance than that of any other such service in the country. However, there is nothing in the literature that discusses or measures the efficiency of the Quebec equivalency service. Nor has research examined the impact of the services on immigrants' integration process into the labour market in the field of their qualifications. This is a significant gap in the literature.

2.5 Summary

It is not surprising to find a vast literature on the topic of immigration in Canada. Further, since the nation has experienced some important changes in the last three decades in terms of the type of immigrants it receives, many academics have studied these changes from a range of perspectives.

It is generally agreed that the shift, in the 1960s, from a mainly unskilled labour force from European countries to a skilled and professional labour force from all over the world was primarily due to economic factors. It was often argued at the time that Canada could greatly benefit from such an immigration. Over the years, however, opinions on this idea gradually became diversified and a whole range of other issues started to emerge. Among these are concerns about the domestic unemployment rates and the economic well-being of Canadians, the rising number of newcomers from non-traditional sources and the question of who to select as immigrants. From another perspective, concerns have been raised about the socio-economic performance of immigrants in Canada, whether they were harmoniously integrating the labour market and whether they were a burden or a benefit to the Canadian society.

In order to study these questions, several approaches have been used, including statistical analysis of census data and surveys. The literature on the labour market integration of immigrants also shows that while many scholars used quantitative measures (such as earnings) to study the issue, others relied on more qualitative ones (such as the type of employment and its relevance to the individual's credentials).

From the quantitative perspective, several authors came to the conclusion that, as a group, immigrants were not doing too badly in comparison with their Canadian counterparts but that, broken into sub-groups, some were not doing very well in terms of their economic performance. From the qualitative perspective, it was also found that many immigrants were not able to get the occupation they were wished. Influencing factors affecting immigrants' socio-economic integration experiences included elements such as gender, country of origin, level of education, level of language fluency (in English or French), period of residence in Canada, and so on.

Some of the written material suggested that one of the major problems lies in the difficulty immigrants have in getting their foreign qualifications and work experience recognized in Canada. As a result, many immigrants with trade and professional qualifications are never able to work in their field and end up in marginal occupations. Given that part of Canadian immigration policy is the selection of qualified immigrants to satisfy labour market demand, the problem of a lack of credential recognition is one that undermines such policy.

It appears that the lack of knowledge about how to interpret foreign qualification documents on the part of Canadian institutions and employers is one of the sources of the problem. Hence, services have been put in place in Ontario, Manitoba and Quebec with the main objective of standardizing qualifications acquired abroad in order to ease their recognition in Canada. While Manitoba has directed its energy toward re-training programs for skilled immigrants, Ontario and Quebec have focused on issuing equivalencies of foreign qualifications.

The Quebec system is however more complex, with a more official-looking label given on the document, indicating that it is part of the MCCI and issues equivalencies on the behalf of the province's Ministry of Education. To what extent this latter document helps immigrants integrate into the Quebec labour market in the field of their expertise is not known, for the literature on this issue seems almost non-existent. Hopefully, the research reported in this thesis will be able to shed light on this question.

In summary, a number of themes can be developed from the literature on immigrants' integration into the labour force and "credentialism" in Canada. First, the changing nature of immigration in the last three decades gives prominence to a number of obstacles encountered by certain groups of immigrants in trying to integrate into the Canadian labour force. One of these barriers is credentialism, which prohibits skilled and professional immigrants to obtain recognition for their academic qualifications and work experience acquired abroad. Secondly, high immigration levels appear to be important for Canada together with an efficient and rapid integration of newcomers into the labour force in particular and into society in general. The third theme, which tends to correspond to the mid-1980 to mid-1990 period, is that new integration strategies are necessary to keep up with the continuously changing nature of Canadian immigration (Malarek 1987).

The Multiculturalism Policy of 1971 is clearly insufficient and out of date. It does not have the ability to respond to the need of today's multicultural society.... Ethnocultural and visible minorities continue to face varying degrees of discrimination in employment.... The mainstream of Canadian society and institutions have yet to be "multiculturalized" (Canada, Employment and Immigration 1987b, p. xi).

Other authors have insisted on this need for change in Canadian institutions, for it is there that major obstacles seem to be hindering immigrants' efforts in integrating into Canadian life (Teitelbaum 1984).

Institutions at all levels need to become aware of the changes that are occurring and take appropriate measures to see that the integration of

Third World immigrants to Canadian society takes place in an orderly manner (Samuel 1990, p. 397).

Passaris views the situation from a larger, picture which is that of the Canadian immigration policy as a whole.

... the expanded role for immigration to Canada must be examined from the perspective of a comparatively larger inflow of immigrants from non-traditional source countries. In this regard, certain changes and modification may be required to correlate Canada's immigration policy with our economic and social policies... (Passaris 1989, p. 28).

Concern over the issue of credentialism is increasing and some initiatives for change have already started as seen in Part 2.4 of this chapter. The impact of these initiatives remains to be seen.

CHAPTER 3

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The above review of published literature on immigrants in the Canadian labour market revealed the presence of an important gap in research. There are very few studies based on field work and surveys. Hence, although immigrants are at the center of the issue, they were seldom consulted on their employment experiences in Canada and on their opinions on the issue. It is the intention of this thesis to fill the gap, at least partially. This chapter describes the approaches used to conduct the survey of Quebec immigrants.

3.2 Developing a Survey Strategy

The objective of this survey is to inquire into the labour market experience of a sample of immigrants, in the Montreal region, and into their perception on the issue of foreign credential recognition and on the efficiency of the service issuing equivalencies of foreign credentials. The development of a survey strategy that would adequately respond to the needs of this goal was not a straightforward process. In fact, the final strategy is the result of several attempts that are explained as follows.

The first questionnaire designed for this purpose was 19 pages long and included 80 questions on credentials, experience before immigration, experience after immigration, labour market experience in Canada and finally, general information. After the second draft of this questionnaire had been approved, a pre-test was conducted with five

respondents to evaluate its efficiency in gathering the desired information. It was then realized that the questionnaire had important weaknesses given the type of information that was needed.

The main problem was the fact that in order to get as close as possible to the reality of each immigrant's labour market experiences and the evolution of these experiences, the ideal would have been to obtain information (such as the type of job, the duration of the job, whether it was full-time or part time) on every single job each respondent had before and after immigration. But such a questionnaire was not practical for it would have meant providing space for a possibility of perhaps 15 or more jobs. Moreover, those respondents who had that many jobs would have been discouraged by the questionnaire's length and those who had only a few jobs would have left many pages empty.

The 19 page questionnaire was an attempt to mediate between an irrationally lengthy questionnaire and the necessity to obtain sufficient information of job experiences. The "before immigration" section only asked about the "most rewarding job you had" and the section on "labour market experience in Canada" requested some information on "your first job" and "your more recent job". It was then hoped that it would be possible to get an idea on the progress made in the Canadian labour market from the first to the last job.

This hope was rather illusionary as it was based on an unrealistic assumption that job experiences always go from the worst to the best in a temporal continual progression. The pre-test clearly revealed that important information were missing. Following a discussion with the pre-test respondents about the questionnaire, it was realized that some of the work experiences they had had were significant for the purpose of this research, but could not be described in the questionnaire because they were neither their first nor their last job in Canada. By the same token, the most rewarding job prior to immigration was not necessarily the one that gave us the most valuable information.

It had been planned to conduct this survey by mail and this by itself was a weakness since mailing surveys are known to have amongst the lowest response rates in comparison to other types of surveys (Jackson 1988). For all these reasons, it was felt that an alternative strategy was needed. Consequently, it was decided to combine two approaches to this survey: a very short questionnaire distributed to as many respondents as possible to obtain some statistical data, and a few personal in-depth interviews giving the detailed story of a selected sample of respondents. Each approach is described in the following pages.

3.2.1 The Questionnaire Survey

The main role that was assigned to the questionnaire survey was to obtain from a large number of immigrants some general information on the use of the equivalency service in Quebec and on the utility of the equivalency documents in helping their holder to integrate into the labour market in their field of qualifications. The four page questionnaire (Appendix A) was designed to be short and concise, and to embrace the main issues of concern without being overwhelming. It included 16 questions grouped in four main sections, namely "General Information", "Equivalencies", "Job Applications" and "Job Offers". It was also made available in both French and English and was designed for any immigrant who had arrived in Quebec as an adult, whether they had degrees prior to immigration or not, whatever category they had been admitted under, whatever country they came from. In total, 200 questionnaires were distributed through the means of various non-governmental organizations. The name of those organizations were found in the *Répertoire des organismes des communautés culturelles du Québec's* fourth edition, 1990. Since the directory was already four years old, many of the organizations listed in it were no longer in existence. As a matter of fact, the 1994 edition came out in September 1994, but it was too late to be used for the survey which had been conducted five months earlier.

Out of 67 organizations called, only 14 were still in service and willing to participate in the survey. These organizations are listed in Appendix B. In all cases, the questionnaires were delivered personally to the organizations, usually following a first phone contact. It was not always possible to be present while the questionnaires were being completed by respondents. Most of the time, they would be left there and picked up a few days or weeks later. Of the 200 copies distributed in both languages, 72 were returned completed.

Along with each questionnaire was distributed a sheet entitled "Interview Survey" (Appendix C) inviting questionnaire respondents to volunteer as interview respondents. If they were willing to participate to this second part of the survey, they could leave their name and phone number in the space provided at the bottom of the sheet. The following section elaborates on the interview survey methodology.

3.2.2 The Interview Survey

The purpose of the interview survey was to allow an in-depth examination of the life, the immigration and the labour market experience of a selected number of immigrants. Another major goal was to allow these respondents to speak out freely about their perception of their own experience and on the equivalency services of which they made use.

For this particular part of the survey, respondents were required to have immigrated with some kind of diplomas, certificates or qualifications acquired abroad and to have arrived in Quebec between January 1982 and December 1992. All the individuals who completed the bottom section of the interview survey form were called individually and were asked a few questions over the phone to find out whether they met these criteria. Those who did not were thanked for their willingness to contribute to the survey and their participation ended there. For those who did, an appointment was set. Of the 23

respondents who had agreed to participate in the interview (out of the 23 sheets that were completed), only ten met the criteria to fit the desired profile.

These ten respondents were then met on an individual basis, at a time and place of their convenience. Prior to the interview, all respondents had been notified that they were going to be tape-recorded during the interview and were requested to fill up a "Consent Form to Participate in Research" (Appendix D). This form clearly indicated that all the information given during the interview was completely confidential.

The interviews had an average duration of one hour and were conducted in either French or English depending on the respondents' individual preference. Two sets of questions were asked to the respondents: first, the facts of their immigration experience and second, their views and opinions on their experience. Appendix E presents the general questions that were asked during the interview. Although the interview was guided by these questions, their open-ended nature allowed the respondents free narration of their story. They were strongly encouraged to speak about issues they considered significant according to their individual experience and to make honest comments on all aspects of the questions.

3.3 Comments on the Survey Strategy

The survey is somewhat limited in scope due to certain constraints. First, given that the focus of this research is on the usefulness and efficiency of an equivalency service such as the one offered by the Quebec *Ministère des Communautés culturelles et de l'Immigration* (MCCI) in assisting immigrants in their integration into the labour market, it would have been very interesting to make a comparison with other provinces which do not have this service. In this particular case, however, the research was restricted to the province of Quebec due to financial and technical limitations. An analysis of the MCCI equivalency service is nevertheless feasible on the basis of answers

and comments collected from both the questionnaire and the interview respondents within the province of Quebec.

Second, a study such as this one should ideally have been based on probability sampling to allow generalization of results and of concluding statements over the total target population. Unfortunately, in the present case where both time and funds were limited and where access to immigrants files is strictly controlled, probability sampling was not possible. Instead, the selection process of this survey was based on the snowball sampling method which consisted of getting in touch with respondents through non-governmental agencies, personal contacts and word-of-mouth. Therefore, the sample population that has resulted from the selection process is not necessarily representative of the total population. Nevertheless, each respondent's testimony represents a reality of experience and opinion that is worth considering.

After having conducted the survey, it was realized that the questionnaire could have been improved in two ways. An additional question should have been added to the section "Equivalencies". As another evaluation criterion of the equivalency service, it would have been useful to know how long it took respondents to obtain their equivalency document from the moment they had submitted their request to the MCCI or other organizations. If this information had been collected, it would have allowed us to cross-tabulate it with the country of origin of respondents; this might have revealed some kind of relationship between the two indicators. The basis for this assumption is that education systems of certain countries may be better known than others by organizations issuing equivalencies of foreign qualifications. This in turn would cause certain requests to take longer than others to be processed. Unfortunately, this information is not available as the question was not asked to questionnaire respondents, but was asked to the interview respondents.

One can notice that in both the questionnaire and the interview survey, the origin of respondents is represented by their country of birth. This indicator is perhaps not the

best to illustrate where respondents lived and did most of their schooling. Other indicators such as country of citizenship or country of last permanent residence could also have been used, but each of these alone may not have fulfilled these needs either. Perhaps the combination of the three would have given a better picture of the situation. However, given the shortness and user-friendly nature of the questionnaire, it would have added length and confusion to include all three indicators. Hence, only one was chosen to represent origin and this is the country of birth. Despite the fact that improvements can always be brought to a survey strategy, it is hoped that the way this one has been designed will lead to some interesting findings.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY DATA

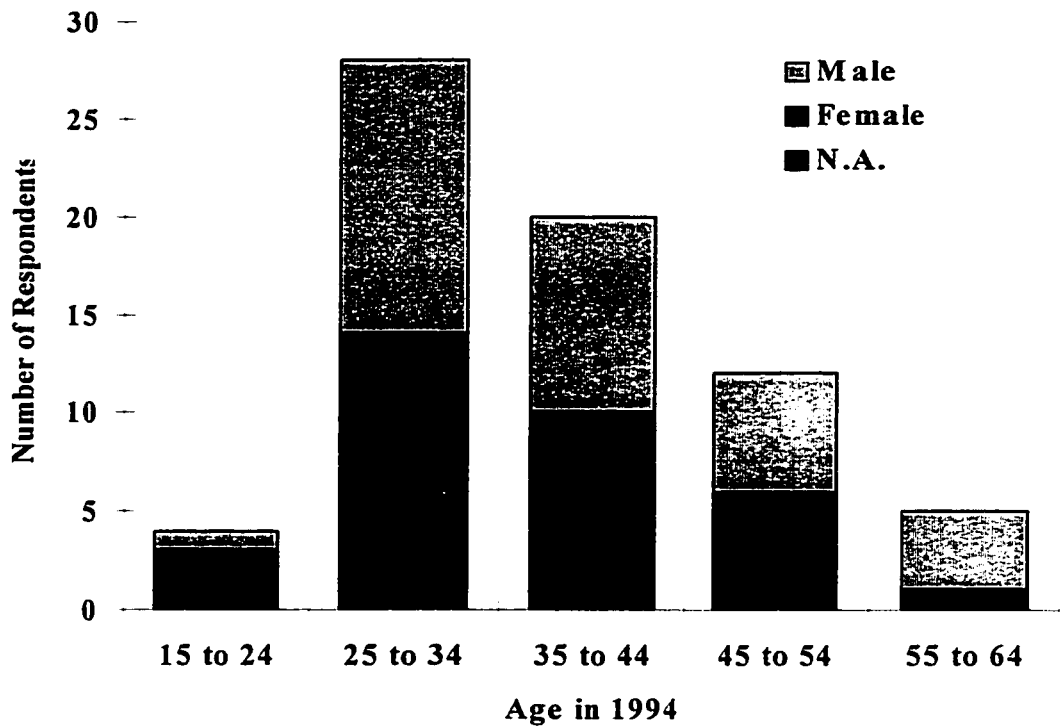
4.1 Introduction

Although not representative of the total Quebec immigrant population, the sample of 72 respondents, from all immigrant categories, from a wide range of origins and with a very diversified background, presents a general picture of immigrants' fate once in Quebec with respect to their integration into the labour market. This chapter is a compilation and an analysis of the data collected from a questionnaire of 16 questions completed by 72 respondents.

4.2 General Attributes of Questionnaire Respondents

Figure 4.1 below shows the respondents' age¹ and gender distribution. Among the 72 respondents, 38 were male, 32 were female and two did not say (the abbreviation N.A. in all of the following tables and figures stands for "no answer"). Many of the questionnaire respondents were between 25 and 34 years old, although more than a third were between 35 and 54 years of age. The balance between male and female is surprisingly almost perfect in the three major age groups, leaving a fewer females than males for the 55 to 64 age group and vice versa for the 15 to 24.

¹ The question on age in the questionnaire asked for the year of birth rather than for the actual age, but the latter was calculated as in 1994 and used in the graph instead of the former.

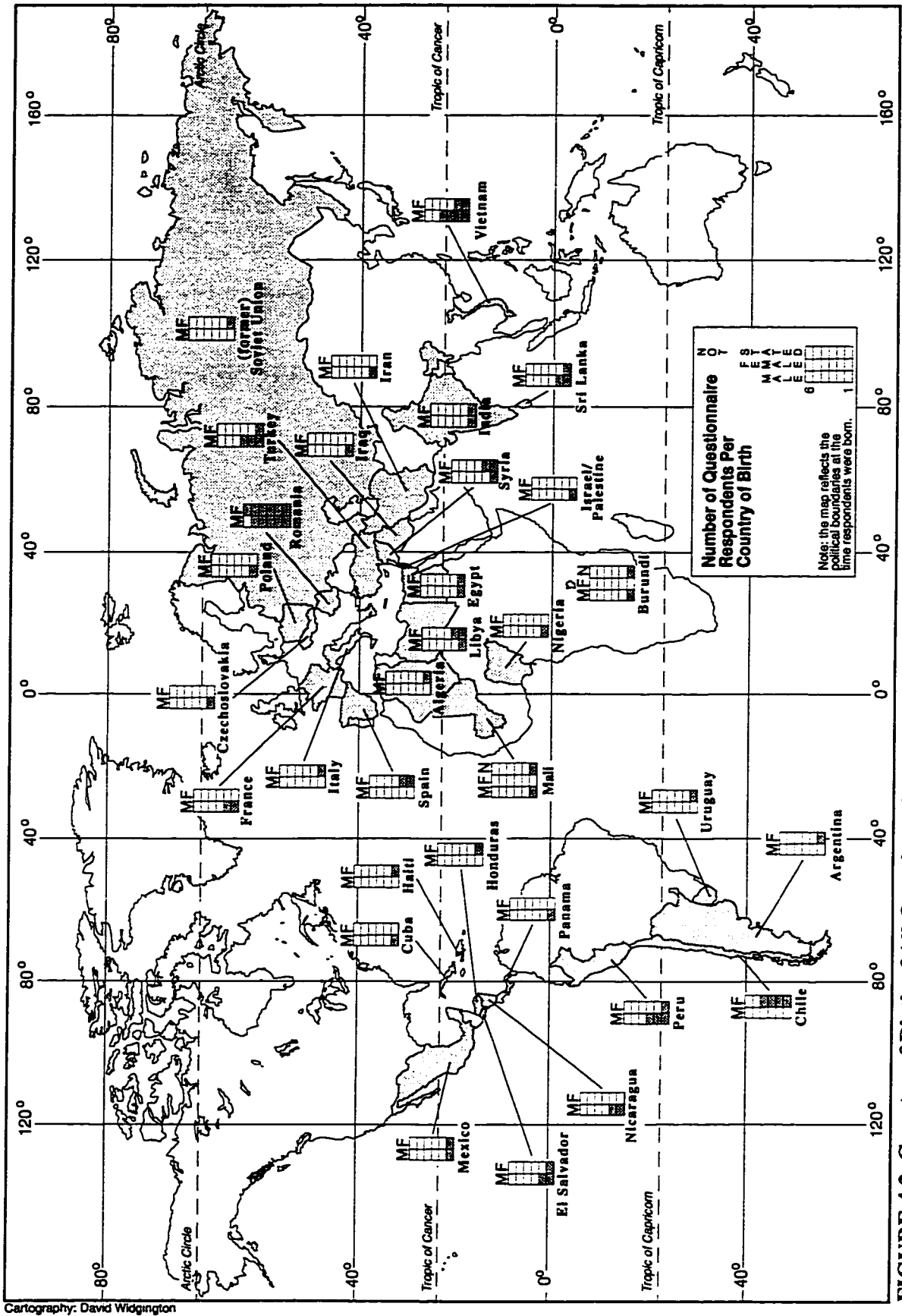


Note: 3 male respondents have not given their year of birth and are therefore not included in this graph.

Figure 4.1 Age and Gender of 69 Respondents.

The country of birth of respondents is illustrated on the following map of the world (Figure 4.2). About one third are from Central or South America, 18 are from Europe of which a large proportion are from Romania, 11 are from Africa, ten from the Middle East, leaving 12 for Asia.

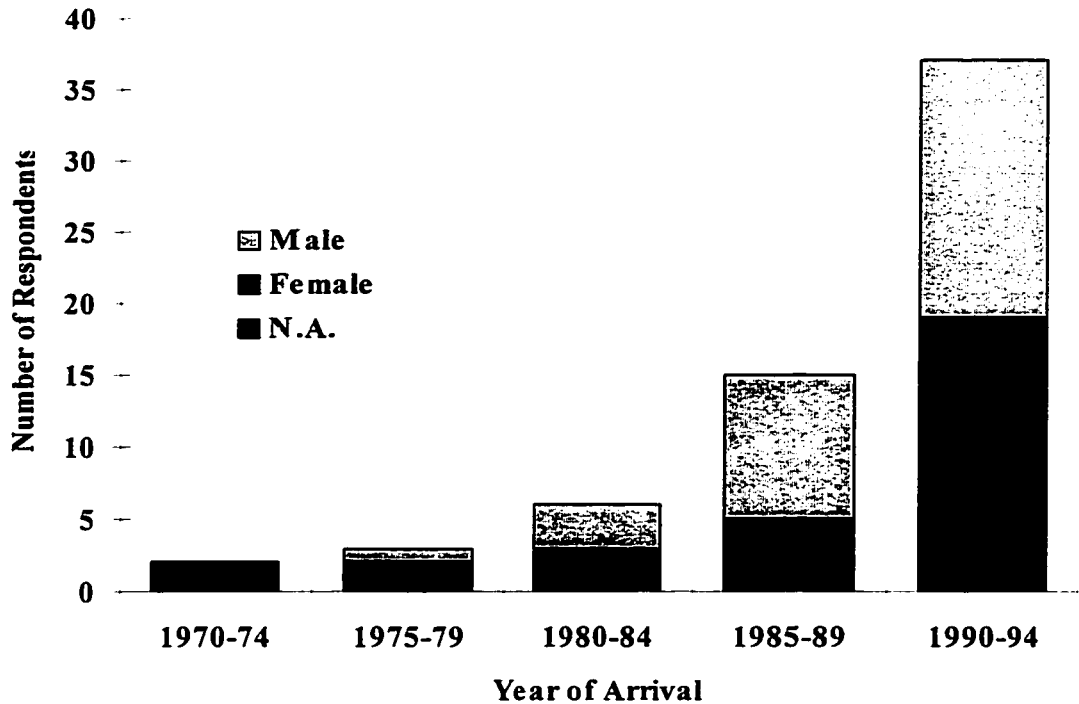
As indicated in Figure 4.3, slightly more than half of the people who answered the questionnaire came to Canada after 1990 and only ten came before 1980. The earliest arrival was in fact in 1974. One can note that the difference between male and female is still not very pronounced. The only major difference is that twice as many males than females arrived between 1985 and 1989, while the two individuals who arrived before 1975 were females.



Source: Myriam Mansour (1994) Survey Data

FIGURE 4.2 Country of Birth of All Questionnaire Respondents

Cartography: David Widdington



Note: One female respondent has not given her year of arrival and is therefore not included in this graph.

Figure 4.3 Year of Arrival and Gender of 71 Respondents.

The table on immigration category (Table 4.1) reveals that most respondents were in the Refugee class of immigrants. The second most important category is the Independent Worker, closely followed by the Family class. These three categories comprise 94% of the 69 respondents, leaving only 6% to the four other categories. A third of all refugees were males, but twice as many individuals of the Family category were females. However, the 19 Independent Workers are almost equally divided between males and females.

Immigration Category	Male	Female	N.A.	Total
Family	5	9	1	15
Refugee	20	9	1	30
Assisted Relative	0	1	0	1
Entrepreneur	0	1	0	1
Self-employed	1	0	0	1
Investor	1	1	0	2
Independent Worker	10	9	0	19
N.A.	1	2	0	3
Total	38	32	2	72

Table 4.1 Immigration Category and Gender of all Respondents.

Table 4.2 presents the cross-tabulation between immigration category and country of birth. A few elements emerge. First, and perhaps the most significant, is the higher number of independent workers originating from Europe in comparison to other continents. It is evident are the high numbers of refugees from Central America and Asia, although South America and Europe follow close behind.

	Country of Birth	Family	Refugee	Assisted Relative	Entrepreneur	Self-employed	Investor	Independent Worker	N.A.	T
<u>Europe:</u>	Poland							1		
	Czechoslovakia		1							
	France					1		1		
	Italy							1		
	Romania	1	2					6	2	1
	Spain	2								
	Turkey		1					3		
	Soviet Union		1							
	Total	3	5				1		14	1
<u>Africa:</u>	Burundi		2							
	Egypt	1						1		
	Libya	1		1				1		
	Mali	1	1							
	Nigeria		1							
	Algeria	1								
	Total	4	4	1					2	
<u>Asia:</u>	India	2								
	Iraq		1							
	Iran		1							
	Israel	1								
	Sri Lanka		2						1	
	Syria				1		2			
	Vietnam	3	3							
Total	6	7			1		2		1	1
<u>Central America:</u>	El Salvador		2					1		
	Honduras		1							
	Mexico		1						1	
	Nicaragua		2							
	Panama		1							
	Total		7						1	1
<u>Caribbean:</u>	Cuba		1							
	Haiti	1								
	Total	1	1							2
<u>South America:</u>	Argentina							1		
	Chile	1	2					1		
	Peru		4							
	Uruguay							1		
	Total	1	6					2		

Table 4.2 Immigration Category and Country of Birth of all Respondents.

Out of all respondents, 58 had acquired some post-secondary diplomas, certificates or other types of qualifications before immigrating to Canada. Table 4.3 shows these results in relation to the immigration category.

Immigration Category	Post-Secondary Qualifications		
	With	Without	Total
Family	9	6	15
Refugee	26	4	30
Assisted Relative	1	0	1
Entrepreneur	1	0	1
Self-employed	0	1	1
Investor	2	0	2
Independent Worker	17	2	19
N.A.	2	1	3
Total	58	14	72

Table 4.3 Immigration Category and Education Level of all Respondents.

The proportion of respondents with post-secondary qualifications in comparison to those without is approximately the same for the two most important immigrant categories, that is 87% for refugees and 89% for independent workers. This result is surprising to the extent that the latter group was selected on the basis of the point system, in which several criteria are related to education and professional orientation. Therefore, it could have been expected that all of the independent workers had post-secondary qualifications. Since this is not the case, the two independent workers who did not have such qualifications upon entry were probably selected according to other criteria. It is further surprising that the refugee respondents compare themselves so closely to independent workers in terms of education given that this element is not an official criteria of selection for them. For the family member category, the education level is lower than for the two other groups as only 60% of them have post-secondary degrees. Again, as for the refugee

group, education is not a selection criteria for admission. Among the other categories, only one self-employed respondent did not have this sort of qualification.

4.3 Equivalency Services

In this section, the way respondents have evaluated the MCCI equivalency service is explored on the basis of the data gathered from section B of the questionnaire. Respondents were first asked whether they knew about such organizations. If they did, they were asked to name it and give its location. To the question, 60 out of 72 answered affirmatively and mentioned the following organizations² (Table 4.4).

It is clear that the majority of respondents knew about the *Services d'équivalence* or the MEQ service. However, nine other organizations were also mentioned, some of them based in Ottawa or Toronto.

Organizations	Number of Respondents
Ministère de l'Éducation (Montréal)	4
Service d'équivalence du MCCI et MEQ (Montréal)	46
Service d'équivalence du MCCI et MEQ (Québec)	1
McGill University	1
Medical Council of Canada	1
Ordre des Ingénieurs du Québec	1
National board of dental exams	1
Alliance française	1
Ordre des pharmaciens de Montréal	1
Open House of Toronto	1
Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur	1
N.A.	1

Table 4.4 Organizations Offering Equivalency Services (results obtained from 60 respondents).

² Four of the respondents who mentioned the *Ministère des Communautés culturelles et de l'Immigration* (MCCI) as an organization made in fact use of it prior to 1983. Prior to that year though the only equivalency service offered by the Quebec government was managed by the *Ministère de l'Éducation*(MEQ), and it is not until 1983 that both the MEQ and the MCCI joined their efforts to create the official *Service d'équivalence* as it is known today. We must therefore assume that these four respondents meant MEQ rather than MCCI as an organization issuing equivalencies. In order to respect this difference, the distinction will always be made between the MEQ (prior to 1983) and the equivalency service (after 1983).

Out of the 72 respondents, 12 people answered that they did not know about any organization of that sort. A specific question was then asked about whether they thought there was a need for such an organization to exist. All of them said yes. Such an unanimous response definitely suggests that immigrants wish to have access to some services helping them to make the best of their credentials. Perhaps this is because they do not feel adequately equipped to confront the job market with their original qualification document as their only tool.

Sixty respondents answered the question on how they had heard of the organization of which they made use. Given that it is the Quebec government equivalency service that is of special interest in this research, only the data that concern this particular organization are presented here. Out of the 60 respondents, 51 mentioned the MEQ or the Quebec equivalency service. Table 4.5 shows the number of responses that was given for each option from these 51 respondents. (The abbreviation T.F.F. in all of the following tables and figures stands for "translated from French").

Sources of Information	Number of Responses
1. From family or friends	14
2. From non-governmental agency	8
3. From governmental agency	31
4. Other: - "COFI" [Centre d'orientation et de formation des immigrants] - "Information document handed out at the airport" [T.F.F.] - "By personal research" [T.F.F.] - "I got interested" [T.F.F.]	4
N.A.	3
Total	60*

* Some respondents answered by more than one option which gives a total of 60 responses.

Table 4.5 Number of Responses for each Source of Information (results obtained from 51 respondents).

Half of the respondents checked the third option which indicates that the government played an important role in directing immigrants toward this service. The word of mouth from family or friends was also an efficient way for immigrants to hear about the equivalency service. Non-governmental agencies do not seem to play a major role in this respect perhaps because most immigrants already knew about the organization before approaching such agencies.

Out of the 60 respondents, 48 said that they had made use of the organization they had previously mentioned and the remainder said they had not. The latter group was asked why and Table 4.6 shows these results.

Reasons for Non-use of Organizations	Number of Responses
1. Fees too high	5
2. Preferred to use original qualification documents	2
3. Employer(s) understood original qualification documents	0
4. Other: "Because I didn't bring my certificate to Canada" "Start studies over again from the beginning" [T.F.F.] "Commodity" [T.F.F.] "No documents" [T.F.F.] "Equivalencies quite low" [T.F.F.]	6
Total	13*

* One respondent answered by more than one option.

Table 4.6 Number of Responses for the Non-use of Equivalency Services (results obtained from 12 respondents).

Most respondents thought that the fees were too high.³ Others simply preferred to use their original qualification documents. In the fourth option, "other", two people wrote

³ In fact, there used to be no charge at all for the equivalency process and certificate. Then, fees of \$90.00 were imposed in May 1992. One year later, these went up to \$150.00 which is the present cost to obtain an MCCI equivalency certificate if original qualification documents are in either French or English. If these are not, additional fees must be added either for the authentication process if the applicant's translation is accepted or for the translation process if it is refused.

that they did not have their original documents with them and could therefore not have equivalencies done. The other answers are unfortunately not very clear. After answering the above question, those 12 respondents were directed to Question 14, in Section D of the questionnaire⁴.

For all those immigrants who did make use of the organization they had mentioned, the lapse of time between the year they immigrated to Canada and the year they made use of the organization is presented in Figure 4.4. Three quarters of the 46 respondents made a request to the organizations within the same or the following year of immigration. Such a result suggests that most immigrants included the equivalency process as an integral part of their effort to integrate into their new society.

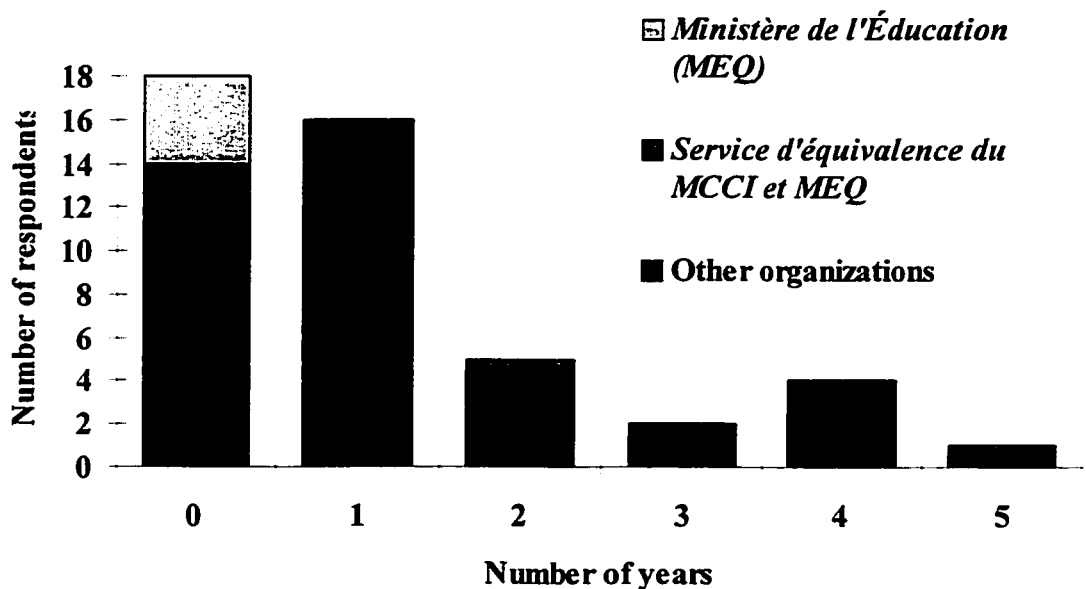


Figure 4.4 Number of Years Between the Year of Arrival in Canada and the Year of an Equivalency Request (results obtained from 46 respondents).

⁴ Their response to questions 14 and 15 will not be considered because of the fact that they should have been directed to questions 10 and 14 instead. Since these respondents have not obtained equivalencies of their original documents, question 15 is inappropriate for them while questions 10 and 14 are. Further, question 10 having not been answered and results having no value without a comparison between questions 10 and 14, those results will have to be ignored.

An important question for this research asked those individuals whether they were satisfied or not with the equivalencies they obtained from the organization where they had submitted a request and why. Results are presented in Appendix F. While 16 people were satisfied with the equivalencies they obtained from the qualifications they had acquired abroad, 22 were not and two had reasons to be both satisfied and dissatisfied (out of the 48 respondents, two did not answer and six said that they were still waiting for results). It is noticeable that all of the dissatisfied respondents had dealt with the Quebec government services. On the other hand, 11 of the 16 satisfied respondents had dealt with these services. Most of them declared that they were satisfied because the equivalencies they had obtained corresponded to the level of education they had acquired abroad and a few simply wrote "correct".

Of the 22 who were dissatisfied, 16 identified the loss of one or more years of schooling to explain their discontent. Along the same lines, two others blamed the equivalency for not being fair and for not adequately representing one's training. One individual believed that "the equivalency of studies is not the same as the equivalency of a diploma" [T.F.F.] which may suggest that this person was unhappy with the system's way of defining the level of a diploma by the number of years of studying.

New elements emerged from the three remaining comments. One was the fact that employers do not accept equivalencies. The second related to the extensive length of time to obtain results. In the last comment, the respondent was dissatisfied with the equivalency service because a request was refused due to the unavailability of the courses' description of his foreign degree.

Two people expressed both satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the service. One of the individuals was satisfied because the equivalency document had become his only diploma and the other one because he thought that "it was more than others" [T.F.F.] (the latter respondent probably meant that he obtained a better return for his foreign studies than his fellow immigrants). On the other hand, while the first one

would have hoped for a system of exams in order to evaluate the real potential of newcomers and to make the best of what they have. [T.F.F.],

the second one said:

I could not work and they [the equivalencies] did not correspond to university criteria, which means that they were not very useful. [T.F.F.]

With regard to the country of origin of respondents, no strong correlation emerges with the level of satisfaction. The only noticeable element is that all of the Vietnamese respondents are part of the satisfied group while all those from Romania are among the dissatisfied people. The type of foreign diploma held by the individuals of each group may be accountable for this difference as some may be easier to evaluate and to grant equivalencies for than others. The country in which the diploma was obtained may also influence equivalency results. A look at the original data reveal that most respondents of the Romanian group arrived in Canada in the last five years (which can be explained by the opening of Eastern European boundaries) while in the Vietnamese group many came as early as 18 years ago. It is agreed that employment opportunities tend to decrease during times of economic difficulties (Brassard et al. 1986). One suggestion, that still needs to be proven, is that the Quebec Ministry responsible for equivalencies might have evaluated foreign credentials more rigorously during these last years of economic recession. This in turn could have resulted in a lower return of equivalencies for the Romanian respondents in comparison to their Vietnamese counterparts.

From Table 4.7, it can be noticed that almost four times more independent workers were dissatisfied with their equivalencies in comparison with those who were satisfied. Such an important difference between the number of satisfied versus dissatisfied people is not found in any other immigration category. That may suggest that independent workers come to Canada with higher expectations about the value of their credentials than the other immigrant categories, as opposed to the actual recognition they

get once they arrive here. In the refugee category though, more were satisfied than dissatisfied. This could perhaps be attributed to the fact that they did not come to Canada under the same circumstances and with the same level of expectation than the former group of immigrants. The two individuals who were ambivalent in their degree of satisfaction were of the family member category.

Immigration Category	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Both Satisfied and Dissatisfied
Family	3	2	2
Refugee	9	7	0
Assisted Relative	0	1	0
Entrepreneur	0	1	0
Self-employed	1	0	0
Investor	0	1	0
Independent Worker	3	11	0
N.A.	0	1	0
Total	16	24	2

Table 4.7 Correlation Between the Degree of Satisfaction with the Quebec Equivalency Service and Immigration Category (results obtain from 42 respondents).

In summary, according to the above findings most immigrants are aware of the existence of the Quebec government's equivalency service and many of them did make a request for an equivalency of their qualification soon after their arrival. Further, those who had never heard of such services do see the need for one. Among those respondents who made use of the services, 16 were satisfied with the process while 22 were not. Most of the satisfied group said that they had obtained an adequate equivalency for their qualifications acquired abroad. The reasons identified by the dissatisfied group to explain their discontent vary somewhat more, although the main one is the loss of their education level. Other comments were that the evaluation system was unfair, that the equivalency document was not recognized by employers and that the whole process was taking too

long. Besides the fact that all Vietnamese showed satisfaction and all Romanians showed dissatisfaction, the country of origin seems to have little influence on respondents' judgment on the equivalency service. Variations appear to be more related to when respondents immigrated and to the length of time in Canada at the time of the survey. Finally, the dissatisfied respondents were mainly of the independent worker immigration category.

4.4 Labour Market Integration

The concern of Section C of the questionnaire was to know how many job applications respondents had made using first their original foreign qualification documents (Question 10) and second their equivalency document (Question 11). The interest was also to know whether potential employers, among the places where respondents had applied for a job, knew about the equivalency document (Question 12) and acknowledged the value of the document (Question 13).

In Section D, Question 14 asked about the number of positive answers received from job applications using the original qualification documents and Question 15 using the equivalency document. Out of the remaining 48 respondents, only 34 gave some answers to these six questions. Appendix G is a compilation of the data collected for the six questions from each of the 34 respondents and also provides for their gender, their country of birth and their immigration category.

Table 4.8 compiles the results of Questions 10 and 14, which concerns the use of original foreign qualifications and of Questions 11 and 15 which deal with equivalency documents.

	With Original Qualifications	With Equivalency Document
Number of Respondents who Made one or more Job Applications	26	15
Number of Respondents who Received one or more Job Offers	24	14
Number of Respondents who Made no Job Applications	5	9
Number of Respondents who Received no Job Offers	7	9

Table 4.8 Comparison Between the Use of Original Qualifications and of Equivalency Documents in Terms of Number of Respondents.

As can be seen, the difference between the number of individuals who used their original qualification in job applications (26 people) and those who used their equivalency documents for the same purpose (24 people) is very small. In terms of job offers, the difference between the number of people using each of the two types of documents is also small (15 against 14).

A closer look at the initial data recorded from Questions 10 and 11 (Appendix G) permits to realize that:

- 7 respondents made one or more job applications with **only** their original qualifications;
- 5 of them made one or more job applications with **only** their equivalency document;
- 16 used **both** types of documents in applying for one or more jobs;
- and the remaining 6 gave no answer to either question.

This shows that very few people chose to use their equivalency document alone. Most of them preferred to present both documents to potential employers. So, despite the fact that they went through the whole process of obtaining the Quebec equivalencies of their credentials, it seems that they still believe in the value of their original documents in comparison to the former document.

A comparison between the number of job applications and the number of job offers with the original documents on the one hand and with the equivalency documents on the other is made here (Table 4.9).

Number of Respondents...	Using their Original Qualifications	Using their Equivalency Document	Total
...Who Made no Applications and Received no Offers	4	3	7
...Who Made several Applications but Received no Offers	5	6	11
...Who Made 1 Application and Received 1 Offer	3	2	5
...Who Made 2 or more Applications and Received 1 or more Offers	10	11	21
...Who Received more Offers than they had Made of Applications	2	1	3
Total	24	23	47

Table 4.9 Comparison Between Job Applications and Job Offers in Terms of Number of Respondents (results obtained from 34 respondents).

This method of comparing results helps to determine the extent to which the use of each document influences respondents' potential of being offered a job. Further, the fact that some individuals were offered more jobs than the number of applications they made suggests that jobs can also be obtained through routes other than with official applications, through personal contacts for instance.

Another way of looking at the results of Questions 10, 11, 14 and 15 is by adding up all the numbers of job applications and job offers provided by all respondents. Table 4.10 presents these totals.

	With Original Qualifications	With Equivalency Document
Total Number of Job Applications	Quest. 10: 934	Quest. 14: 936
Total Number of Job Offers	Quest. 11: 40	Quest. 15: 39

Table 4.10 Comparison Between the Use of Original Qualifications and of Equivalency Documents in Terms of the Number of Job Applications and Offers (results obtained from 34 respondents).

The table shows that whether it was with the use of the original documents or of the equivalency document, the total number of job applications is nearly the same in both cases (934 against 936). The same applies with job offers with a total of 40 with the former document and a total of 39 with the latter one.

To be included here also are the results obtained from those respondents who did not know of any equivalency services. In Questions 5a and 5b, they too were asked about the number of applications sent and the number of job offers received using their original qualification documents. Only eight out of all 12 people provided answers to these questions amongst whom four wrote that they had not sent any applications and had not received any job offers. The remaining 4 respondents' answers are recorded in Table 4.11. Results clearly illustrate their difficulty encountered in finding a job. Now, these individuals may perhaps not have been more successful in their search for a job with official equivalencies of their qualifications, given the conclusions drawn above.

	Number of Job Applications Sent	Number of Job Offers Received
Respondent 1	80	0
Respondent 2	10	0
Respondent 3	7	0
Respondent 4	2	1

Table 4.11 Job Applications Sent and Job Offers Received (results obtained from 4 respondents).

The focus is now on answers to Questions 12 and 13. Table 4.12 summarizes the responses of the 24 individuals who had made at least one job application with their equivalency document.

Potential Employers' Knowledge about the Equivalency Document (Quest. 12)	Potential Employers' Acknowledgment of the Value of the Equivalency Document (Quest. 13)
Number of Respondents who Answered that:	Number of respondents who answered that:
0 pot. empl. knew about it.....3	2.....0 pot. empl. acknowledged its va
1 or more pot. empl. knew about it.....10	11.....1 or more pot. empl. acknowledged it va
all pot empl. knew about it.....8	6.....all pot. empl. acknowledged its va
N.A.....3	5.....N.A.
Total.....24	24.....Total

Table 4.12 Potential Employers' Knowledge about and Acknowledgment of the Value of Equivalency Documents According to Respondents (results obtained from 34 respondents).

As can be seen from the above table, the same pattern appears in both columns. Almost half of the respondents answered that at least one potential employer knew about and acknowledged the value of the equivalency document they presented. One third of respondents said that all people knew about the document while one fourth said that all people acknowledged its value. Just a few respondents (three and two respectively) believed that nobody where they applied for a job either knew about it or acknowledged its value. It is perhaps the official stamp of the Quebec Ministry of Education that appears on the equivalency document issued by the government that makes it recognizable by potential employers and that grants it its value. The extent to which potential employers, in the places where immigrants applied for a job, really accept the document as a replacement of original qualification documents remains a question that cannot be answered through this survey.

The conclusions drawn from the questionnaire results presented in this chapter must be interpreted with caution for a number of reasons. First, difficulties might have

been encountered by respondents in understanding the questions. Certainly, they had not been easy to formulate in the first place. Second, the response was low in comparison to the initial number of respondents. Finally, individual experiences cannot be reduced to such simplified facts as the questions seem to represent.

It is, therefore, with reservation that the following deductions are made. The fact that they used their original qualification documents rather than their equivalency documents did not contribute in any marked way to a better return in job opportunities. Respondents seemed to prefer using both their documents instead of only one in the job search process. Lastly, most respondents believe that potential employers, among the places where they had applied for a job, do know about the equivalency document and do acknowledge its value.

4.5 Respondents' General Comments

At the very end of the questionnaire, respondents were invited to add any comments they wished to share. While 35 wrote something, the remaining 37 left the space blank. This last section explores the 35 comments. The original data are presented in Appendix H, which also provide for the country of birth of respondents and whether they had or had not obtained their Quebec equivalency at the time of the survey.

One particular observation clearly prevailed as several respondents mentioned the "Canadian experience" as a major element influencing one's capacity of getting a job (only one out of seven did not have the equivalency document). According to them, without prior Canadian work experience the equivalency certificate has very little value in the eyes of employers. Two people, from Egypt and Romania respectively, both of whom had their equivalency document, expressed surprise and concern in this respect:

I have obtained the equivalency but the problem is that I need the Canadian experience before working: but how? [T.F.F.]

An equivalency does not represent much because employers are not interested and want Canadian experience! But how do we obtain it?? [T.F.F.]

The problem lies in the fact that "it becomes a vicious circle to get the first job" [T.F.F.] someone from Chile explained. One way out of this vicious circle can be found in another respondent's comment in which he explains that he was "greatly advantaged by participating in an employment integration program... which allowed [him] to make [himself] known in a Quebec working environment" [T.F.F.]. This immigrant from Syria had not attempted to get his equivalency document.

As an obstacle to the process of labour integration, two people pointed to the equivalency certificate itself. While the person from Romania specified that it is because of the lower return he got from the equivalency in comparison to his original qualifications, the other, from Argentina, simply said that he decided no longer to present the document. A third person, from France, made the remark that his admission to the corporation of engineers was being processed, which is what employers are interested in and that he therefore had no use for the Quebec equivalency service. The same situation applied to another respondent who came as a dentist from Romania.

Two individuals, from Romania and Argentina respectively, believe that Quebec's present equivalency service produces an "unequal and unfair evaluation of... original qualifications" [T.F.F.] and that it

should find a way to have more objective equivalencies in relation to immigrants' training without only taking into account the number of years of schooling [T.F.F.].

While the first one did not have the Quebec equivalency document, the second did. Two others found that the process of obtaining equivalencies was too long. Four years was the lapse of time a Peruvian had to wait for the final result. Another individual, from Cuba, is still waiting after more than two years. One person from Turkey said that he always received a negative answer to his request for equivalencies. Unfortunately, he does not indicate on what grounds his demand was refused.

Two people, who were born in Uruguay and in Vietnam, have degrees from Belgium and the United States respectively. The first showed satisfaction with the equivalencies obtained, but the second, who did not have the document, said that he was using his original qualification documents for his job search. The fact that they both specified the origin of their qualification suggest that they believe in the potential "power" of these degrees.

One respondent from Iraq who had his equivalency indicated that he had never used his foreign document in any job search because he had obtained his latest degree, a Masters in Library and Information Studies in Montreal and was relying on this to look for a job. In the same way, a person from Libya said that his equivalency no longer had any value, given that he was applying for jobs in a field other than his original field of qualification.

In terms of labour market integration, two respondents wrote that they got a job through personal contacts. Both came from India and neither of them had equivalencies issued. Two individuals, one from Poland who had his equivalency and the other from Nigeria who did not, put the blame on the economic recession Canada is presently going through to explain labour market integration difficulties. The second one specified that such a recession was even harder on minorities, irrespective of their qualifications or professional experiences. He also added that "another typical disadvantage is if one's social insurance number starts with 909".

The last two comments are very general in nature. A person from Egypt with his equivalency document wrote:

I strongly believe that immigrants represent an asset for Canada because of their ethnic diversity and their culture. [T.F.F.]

Finally, a respondent from Sri Lanka, with his equivalencies, said that the survey should have been done "among recent arrival of immigrants in order to evaluate their labour market experience and their problems".

Most of the comments discussed above mainly relate to the various types of difficulties encountered by immigrants in their attempt to find a job. There does not seem to be any particular relationship between the difficulties encountered and the origin of respondents. The country in which the latest degrees have been obtained do seem, however, to influence the job search process. Still, according to the general comments, the Quebec Ministry's equivalency document appears to have a very limited role, and even a negative role, in the holders' labour market integration process.

4.6 Summary

The analysis conducted in this chapter represents a delicate and audacious task since it implied making an interpretation of the situation on the basis of rather small sample. It is certain that a questionnaire of 16 questions cannot explore all the causes and effects of the issues dealt with in this research. The contribution of this research as a whole is nevertheless meaningful. Not only did it allow to get a generalized idea of immigrants' experiences and perceptions as workers wishing to integrate into the Quebec labour market, but also to see emerge the issues that they considered as the most important.

Most respondents knew about the Quebec equivalency service and made use of it to obtain equivalencies of their qualifications acquired abroad. Among those who made a request, 75% did so within their first year in Canada. It was interesting to note how spontaneously and automatically immigrants applied at the equivalency service. It seems that they viewed this process as a major step in their integration into the labour force. On the other hand, once the equivalency certificate was obtained, a large number of respondents expressed their dissatisfaction about the results obtained, the main reason being the loss of years of schooling.

The paradox between the strong desire to have credentials evaluated and assessed by the service and the general disappointment once the process is completed raises

questions. Are immigrants led to expect too much from the service and from the value of the equivalency certificate itself? Or, is the evaluation of foreign training and qualifications too severe as several respondents believe?

Results obtained from the questions related to labour market integration indicate that immigrants rarely use their equivalency certificate alone to apply for jobs. While some prefer to present only their original qualification documents, most choose to present both. According to the majority of them, though, potential employers generally know about the equivalency certificate and acknowledge its value. Perhaps, the fact that the document often represents a lower return of education and skills acquired abroad leads qualified immigrants to disrespect the document, despite its official nature. Hence, between the option of presenting potential employers an official Quebec equivalency that shows a lower educational level than what was really acquired, or of presenting original qualification documents that employers might not be capable of decoding and evaluating, immigrants generally seem to prefer the latter option.

What obviously emerges here is the crucial question of the actual value of the equivalency certificate on the job market. Does it really act as a tool for an easier employment integration? Are there other equally or more important elements to consider when immigrants try to enter the labour market of a host society?

The general comments collected from the last questions of the questionnaire shed some light on these above questions, from the point of view of respondents. An element often brought up was that Quebec employers often required candidates to have prior "Canadian experience". This obviously means that the first job is usually the hardest one to obtain.

With respect to the equivalency certificate, some saw it as a barrier hindering access to interesting jobs for a number of reasons including extended length of the evaluation process, its unfairness and its non-precise role. The idea that the certificate

can be an efficient tool for labour market integration did not really appear in the respondents' comments.

Although sometimes vague, the results obtained from this survey allowed a number of questions to be raised, perhaps more than they answered. It also offered a different perspective from which to consider the problem of foreign credential recognition and labour market integration in one's field of expertise.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEW SURVEY DATA

5.1 Introduction

There are as many immigration experiences as there are immigrants. Each individual has a personal way of living through the experience. Hence, it is certainly not the story of ten individual immigrants that will provide us with a global picture of what the Quebec immigrant population experiences. Therefore, it cannot be assumed that these ten people will represent the whole immigration population. Nevertheless, as far as their testimony is honest, their experience, opinions and way of perceiving the situation represents a reality that cannot be denied and that is worth considering.

This chapter explores this reality as perceived by the ten interview respondents. (their real names were replaced by other ones for confidentiality purposes). As individuals who have experienced immigration, labour market integration, as well as the process of obtaining recognition of their credentials, they certainly have some valuable messages to transmit. It is hoped that these messages will shed light on credentialism in Quebec and will eventually contribute to the improvement of equivalency systems here and elsewhere.

5.2 General Attributes of Interview Respondents

Who are these ten respondents whose experiences are going to be analyzed here? Their general attributes are presented in Table 5.1. They are five men and five women between the ages of 30 and 59. They immigrated between 1987 and 1992 from nine

different countries. They all speak French fluently with the exception of one who is more fluent in English. While four of them came as refugees, three applied as independent workers, one as an investor, one as an entrepreneur and the last one as a family member after having married a Quebecer.

Respondents	Gender	Age in 1994	Country of Birth	Year of Arrival	Immigration Category	Language of Interview
Maria	F	46	Argentina	1991	Independent worker	French
Anna	F	30	Spain	1987	Family member	French
Manuel	M	46	Cuba	1991	Refugee	French
Amir	M	59	Syria	1988	Independent Investor	French
Sam	M	48	Sri Lanka	1987	Refugee	English
Lea	F	38	Chile	1987	Refugee	French
Sarah	F	47	Syria	1989	Independent Entrepreneur	French
Paul	M	38	Burundi	1992	Refugee	French
John	M	40	Poland	1987	Independent Worker	French
Sonia	F	43	Algeria	1992	Independent Worker	French

Table 5.1 General Attributes of the Ten Interview Respondents.

5.3 The Quebec Equivalency Service

It is not the intention of this paper to conduct a systematic and comprehensive evaluation of the administrative process of the MCCI equivalency service. Instead, the ten respondents' experiences with regard to the recognition process of their credentials and their opinion on the issue will be used here to analyze that system.

5.3.1 Resulting Equivalencies

Table 5.2 provides a descriptive summary of the degree(s)⁵ respondents acquired abroad and the Quebec equivalencies they have obtained from these foreign qualifications.

Respondents	Degree(s) Acquired Abroad / Number of Years of Studies	Country(ies) where Degree was (were) Acquired	Quebec Equivalencies in Post-secondary Years of Studies
Maria	Education, specialization in French Language / 5 years	Argentina	4 years in Education with specialization in French language
Anna	Psychology / 5 years	Spain	3 years in Psychology
Manuel	History of Arts / 6 years	Cuba	-
Amir	Civil Engineering / 4 years	Syria	3 years in Engineering
Sam	Medical Doctor / 5 years	Sri Lanka	3 years in Health Sciences
Lea	Education, specialization in French Language / 6 years	Chile	3 years in Education with specialization in French Language
Sarah	Commerce / 3 years Master's degree in Economics / 2 years	Syria France	3 years in International Business
Paul	Physical Engineering / 5 years	Burundi	3 years in Physics & 2 years in Physical Engineering
John	Physical Education / 3 years Physiotherapy / 1 year	Former U.S.S.R.	2 years in Physical Education
Sonia	Physical Education / 3 years	Former U.S.S.R.	3 years in Physical Education

Table 5.2 Qualifications Acquired Abroad and Equivalencies Obtained from the Quebec Equivalency Service.

Sonia and Paul are the only two individuals who were granted the same number of years of university they had actually acquired abroad. As a matter of fact, they showed a lot of

⁵ The term "degree" is used here in a very broad sense since each respondents' country uses different terms for which translation would perhaps not have been accurate.

satisfaction with the results they obtained from the service. Maria also got full recognition of her foreign degrees. However, her case is different from the others as she also acquired a Master's degree in the province of Quebec as a foreign student prior to immigration and this degree was of course fully recognized by the MCCI. The reason it is not mentioned in the table is because it was not acquired abroad. All the other respondents lost from one to three years of post-secondary schooling through the equivalency process.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, certain trades and professions are ruled by strict entry procedures and have their own means of evaluating degrees acquired outside their jurisdiction. Therefore, the number of years of university granted by the MCCI did not have the same impact for each of the respondents. For example, Amir and Sam, who had practiced as an engineer and as a medical doctor, respectively, in their former country of residence, had to satisfy the corporations' requirements to obtain the right to practice in Quebec, regardless of the MCCI's evaluation of their qualifications.

For Anna, however, the loss of her years of university had a more important impact. In Spain, she had reached the required level to become a psychologist. Here, the Psychologists' Association of Quebec requires a Master's degree before any other step to reach access to the association can be undertaken. Since she was only granted the equivalent of a bachelor degree by the MCCI, she could not think of obtaining the professional title of psychologist in Quebec before having completed her Master's degree here. Similarly, Lea was also told by the Quebec Ministry of Education, after she had submitted her MCCI equivalency document, that she had to do one additional year of university to reach the provincial standards.

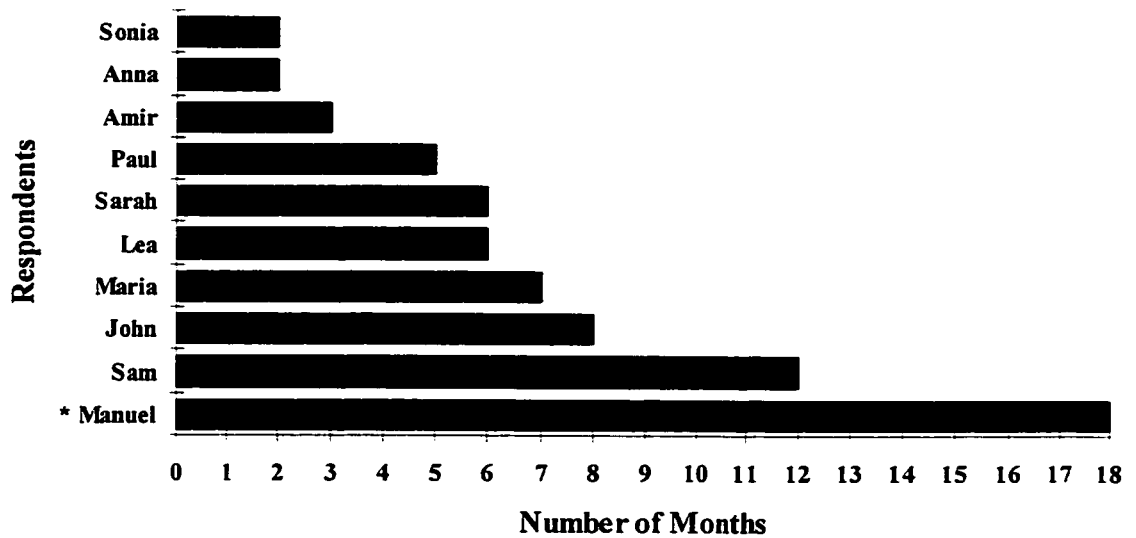
Sarah was particularly upset regarding the equivalencies she received. Although her integration into the labour market in her field of expertise did not require her to access membership to any particular professional group, she was very shocked by the fact that so

few of her years of university had been recognized. Her Master's degree in Economics acquired in Paris received no recognition at all and the reason for this is not known.

John's experience represents a case of inconsistency on the part of the MCCI's equivalency service. Both he and another respondent, Sonia, had acquired the same degree in Physical Education at approximately the same time and at the same university in Moscow. Once here, however, while she got full recognition for her degree, he got recognition for only two years of university. The impact this inconsistency had on their respective ability to work in their field in Quebec was enormous since one had the basic requirements to work while the other had to return to further studies. Manuel had not received his final report at the time of the survey, although he had submitted it more than two years earlier. Thus, his only comment on the process was the long wait imposed on him.

5.3.2 The Service Itself

Apart from their comments on the various results they obtained, the ten respondents made additional remarks about the MCCI's equivalency service. Many of them deplored the fact that the process was taking too long. Graph 5.1 shows the length of time it took for each of them to obtain the equivalency document from the moment they submitted their request.



* Had not yet received his certificate at the time of the interview.

Figure 5.1 Number of Months Between the Equivalency Request to the Quebec *Service d'Équivalence* and the Reception of the *Certificat d'Équivalence*.

An average of approximately seven months was calculated for all ten respondents. Manuel, who has been waiting the longest and still had no response at the time of the interview, had not tried to contact the service to inquire about the delay because other immigrant friends had told him that the process usually took a very long time. This comment of his is an indication of the service's reputation amongst its "clients" with regard to the length of time taken.

Maria mentioned that if she had waited for her equivalency document before looking for work, it would not have been profitable as she would have stayed without employment for several months. All respondents, apart from Sarah and Amir, in fact looked for a job as soon as they arrived in Quebec without having yet received their Quebec equivalencies, even if these jobs were not necessarily in their field of qualifications.

Maria, Anna and Sarah all work in an immigrant service organization where they are continuously in contact with recent immigrants. All three testified that many of them were also discouraged by this long wait to get their equivalencies and tended to wait for their equivalency certificate to start looking for a job. Meanwhile, they either live off social insurance or their own savings.

In short, most of the interview respondents are of the opinion that the equivalency system would gain efficiency by reducing the processing time of credential evaluation and accreditation. Maria also noticed, through her job, that several immigrants could simply not afford to apply for equivalencies upon arrival as the cost was too high for them.

5.3.3 Evaluation and Assessment Process

The aspect of fairness of equivalencies was brought up by many respondents, especially by those, of course, who lost years of schooling through the process. Anna is of the opinion that equivalencies should be based on course content rather than on actual degrees or on the number of years studied. She believes that degree titles cannot be adequately compared if the content is ignored. Amir and Lea were very surprised to realize that work experience in the field of qualification prior to immigration was not taken into consideration at all in the equivalency assessment.

Some went even further with regard to the issue of fairness. Both Maria and Anna added that they did not believe that a governmental body should have the mandate to evaluate foreign credentials and to issue equivalencies. While Maria thinks that professional associations and corporations should have this role through the means of objective examinations that would evaluate competence rather than qualifications, Anna would give the mandate exclusively to universities which, she says, have the best knowledge on qualifications.

Maria reported an anecdote about her experience with the MCCI equivalency service that is worth including here. Finding that the service was taking too long to

process her file, she called and was told that they had written to the university she had attended in Buenos Aires and were waiting for an answer. When she inquired about the address they had sent the letter to, she realized that it was 10 years out dated. She consequently informed the service of the right address and it finally received an answer from the university. After that, the service lost all credibility to her eyes. As can be seen, each individual has his/her own opinion about the weaknesses of the service and about the way it could be improved.

5.3.4 The Value of the Equivalency Certificate

To what extent did the respondents believe in the value of the equivalency certificate they had received? Apart from Paul and Sonia, who were very satisfied with the results they obtained from the service, the others wondered, to a greater or lesser extent, about the value of the document on the labour market. As noted earlier, those who needed the permission of a professional group to practice in their field saw no need for the MCCI equivalency certificate and were questioning its purpose on the job market. This was particularly the case for Amir and Sam.

Sarah had the opportunity to meet with a MCCI official from the equivalency department in the context of her job. During this meeting, she was told by the representative that the only purpose of the equivalency certificate was to identify one's position on the public sector salary scale, according to the total number of years of schooling, in case this individual would happen to work in a governmental sector. This information does not seem to be revealed to the public given that the general role of the *certificat d'équivalence* is still questioned by respondents.

Sam's view on the certificates issued by the service is one that reflects bitterness and frustration. To him, it is a way of preventing immigrants from getting a good job. He based this assertion not only on his own experience, but on the experience of other immigrants he met. He basically considers the document as a barrier, hindering its holder

from integrating into the labour market rather than a tool helping in this integration process. Lea was of the same opinion.

One of the questions asked respondents during the interview was whether they presented their equivalency certificate with their résumé when applying for jobs. As could have been expected, those who had been granted a lesser number of years of schooling than they had studied neither presented nor mentioned their Quebec document in their job applications. They all preferred to use their original qualification documents. The others (such as Maria, Paul and Sonia) said that they were using their equivalency certificate when applying for jobs related to their field. However, it was as a complement to their original documents, and not as a substitute for them. When asked whether potential employers ever required the Quebec equivalency document, all ten respondents answered negatively. Such an answer raises, once more, the question of the actual value of the certificate on the Quebec labour market.

5.4 Other Equivalency Assessment Systems

As noted earlier, the occupation of some of the respondents required them to be accepted in the professional body of their respective field before they could have the right to practice in the province. Have they tried to obtain membership to these bodies? If yes, have their efforts been successful?

Maria, Lea and Sonia were all teachers prior to immigration and all three came with the hope of pursuing their profession. The field of education in Quebec offers an opportunity that other professional fields may not offer. An individual who has all the qualifications, including foreign qualifications, required by the MEC has the possibility of working as a supply-teacher or on the basis of contracts soon after arrival. This was the case for both Maria and Sonia, while Lea was still missing one year of university, according to her MCCI evaluation of qualifications, to be eligible to teach upon arrival. However, in order to obtain their official teaching license and have access to permanent

positions, Maria and Sonia were still required, as all Quebec graduates, to accumulate 360 days of teaching.

When John submitted an equivalency request to the MCCI, it was only for his Physical Education degree. To obtain an evaluation of his Physiotherapy degree, he applied directly to the *Corporation des physiothérapeutes du Québec*. He knew from the beginning that he would have to return to university in this field in order to reach the provincial standards, but was hoping that some of his studies would be recognized. After almost two years of correspondence with the Corporation, his efforts were futile because his secondary education diploma, which was suddenly requested by the Corporation at the end of those two years, had been lost in Poland and was not available. It is John's belief the Corporation made that specific request as a way to refuse him access to the profession.

Like John, Sam and Anna also believe that professional organizations attempt to create subtle barriers to hold immigrants back from accessing membership. Further, Anna thinks that the corporations have strong underlying political power and that the operations are directly linked to what she calls the "Quebec protectionist movement" [T.F.F.]. She believes that they have evolved as such under the pressure of the *Révolution tranquille* and of the 1970's union upsurge.

Amir thought he would have been able to work in Canada as an engineer following a few administrative procedures, given his thirty years' experience in the field. But after he was told about the difficulty of the examination imposed by the *Ordre des ingénieurs du Québec*, and considering that he had not intensively studied for nearly three decades, he gave up on the project of obtaining his papers.

Sam also realized the work and cost involved in obtaining his right to practice here as a medical doctor. He nevertheless persevered through the process and passed his examination. In order to have the right to practice though, he must, as all medical graduates, go through an internship. In fact, this is where the barrier to obtain permission

to practice lies for him, as at the time of the interview, he had been on the waiting list for four years. He admits that the medical field is a very saturated one, and that he was warned of this situation before coming to Canada. However, he was still very upset not to have the slightest chance, despite his absolute readiness to go out in remote regions of Canada where there is, he says, a need for doctors.

5.5 Labour Market Integration

All ten respondents came to Canada with the desire to work in their field of qualification, but not all of them have succeeded. Except for Manuel, they have all been able to work in Quebec. To what extent were their jobs related to their field of expertise? More importantly, what barriers to the labour market integration and/or tools propelling this integration have the respondents identified with regard to their personal experiences?

5.5.1 Work Experience before Immigration to Canada

Before answering the above questions, it is pertinent to look at the qualification related work experience each person had acquired before immigrating. Table 5.3 presents this information. Anna is, in fact, the only one not to have acquired any working experience in her field before coming to Canada since she immigrated right after obtaining her degree in Spain. The others all have at least six years of work experience in their respective field.

Many thought that the greater the number of years of experience, the better their chances to get a job in their field in Quebec. This assumption, however, turned out to be an illusion, according to several respondents' experience, as potential employers seemed to have a tendency to reject over-experienced individuals. Manuel, for example, was surprised not to have been accepted for a job on the basis that he was already in his forties instead of being accepted for his long experience in his field.

Respondents	Jobs	Duration	Country
Maria	French teacher	10 years	Argentina
Anna	-	-	-
Manuel	Spanish & Art teacher University professor in Cinematography	8 years 8 years	Cuba
Amir	Civil engineer Counselor-engineer	23 years 5 years	Syria
Sam	Medical doctor	9 years 3 years 3 years	Sri Lanka Zambia Zimbabwe
Lea	French teacher	8 years	Chile
Sarah	University professor in International Business	18 years	Syria
Paul	Technical engineer Physics teacher	1 year 5 years	Burundi
John	Physiotherapist Gymnastics instructor	6 years 2 years	Algeria
Sonia	Physical Education teacher	9 years	Algeria

Table 5.3 Work Experience Prior Immigration.

Before they came to Canada, Sam and John worked in their respective professions, in countries other than the ones in which they had obtained their degrees. They both stated that their credentials had received full recognition in those countries, which were Zambia and Zimbabwe for Sam and Algeria for John, and where they obtained immediate permission to work. In any instance, Sam and John both expressed their disappointment regarding the difficulties they encountered here in comparison to the above mentioned countries.

5.5.2 Work Experience in Quebec

Apart from Amir and Sarah, who came as business immigrants, the others all looked for a job as soon as they landed in Canada. However, the search was not successful for all of them and if it was, it was not necessarily in their field of interest.

The following table summarizes each respondent's work experience in Quebec after immigrating to Canada.

Respondents	First Job in Quebec			Following Jobs
	Length of Time to get First Job	Occupation	Whether Related to Qualifications	
Maria	4 months	French teacher	Yes	- French teacher - Employment counselor for immigrants
Anna	1 week	Circular distribution	No	- Social worker - Social counselor - Employment counselor for immigrants
Manuel	-	-	-	-
Amir	3 years	Work site inspector	Yes	- Work site inspector
Sam	5 weeks	Factory worker	No	- Factory worker - Clerk
Lea	1 months	House work	No	- House worker - Hostess in immigration service organization - Secretary / receptionist
Sarah	4 years	Bank clerk	Yes	- Director immigrant service organization
Paul	2 years	Teacher as university professor's assistant	Yes	-
John	3 weeks	Janitor	No	- Industrial laundromat worker - Translator
Sonia	1.5 month	Daycare educator	No	- Translator

Table 5.4 Job Experience in Quebec.

Manuel is the only one who had not been able to find a job in Quebec, at the time of the interview, despite his numerous applications to printing shops and as an Art or Spanish teacher. He explained that he was twice very close to being hired but was refused at the last minute on the basis, he believes, of discrimination due to his age and/or to his non-Canadian origin. Nevertheless, he has not given up and devotes himself, during his free time, to his art work which has been exhibited on a few occasions and he is hoping to eventually make a living out of it. Meanwhile, he and his family are living off social insurance.

5.5.3 Jobs and Credentials Relationship

The above table shows that four people managed to find, as their first job, one that is somewhat related to their field of expertise. These four individuals also took the longest time to get their first job. Sarah and Amir were fortunate in the sense that they did not need to find a job quickly, since they both had a comfortable financial cushion to rely on upon arrival. Hence, they could decide when they were ready to work and could take their time to look for an interesting job. Both of them enrolled in a federal program called "Preparation to Work" which consists of several weeks of orientation on the functioning of the Canadian job market followed by several weeks of *stage* in a field of their choice.

They both showed a lot of enthusiasm with regard to this program which gave them both the opportunity to acquire their first "Canadian experience". Although they knew that they could not re-integrate into the job market with the same professional status as in their country of origin due to the non-recognition of their foreign credentials, both saw in the *stage* a very efficient way of penetrating the job environment of their interest. While Sarah worked in a bank during her *stage*, Amir was a work site inspector. These experiences offered them the opportunity to demonstrate their expertise and experience which, they said, could be recognized and appreciated at its real value. In fact, following

their *stage*, Sarah was offered a longer term contract to work on a project for the bank and Amir saw his services requested by a second place where he had originally applied for the *stage*. As he said:

When you present your résumé [job application] that shows that you are part of the course [program] and that you are simply there for a training period, it opens the doors right away which, otherwise, remain closed.
[T.F.F.]

Maria was also fortunate to get, as her first job, a teaching contract. However, her situation is privileged by the fact that her last degree was obtained in Quebec. Hence, she was confident that her job search would eventually lead her to an interesting job position and, therefore, took the necessary time to find it. Consequently, she found a job as a French teacher about four months after having immigrated.

Paul's first job was also in his field of interest, but it took him two years to find it. He was one who needed and wanted to work as soon as he arrived in Canada, irrespective of the type of work. Having a family to support, earning money was his first preoccupation. However, as with Manuel, luck was not on Paul's side, despite his efforts in applying for a wide range of jobs. He even applied for strawberry picking but was turned down. His name was put on a list of supply-teachers, but he was never called. After two years he finally obtained a job as an assistant to a university professor. This was offered to him because he was enrolled in the Physics Master's program, if he had not been a graduate student he would not have had access to it.

Lea's first job in Canada could not be of very high status, she said, because of the fact that she was on "stand-by" for four years before being accepted as a permanent resident status. She believes that the first digit "9" of her social insurance number acted as a barrier to her job search since this number indicates that the holder does not yet have permanent resident status. She, therefore, contented herself with house cleaning and garden maintenance jobs. As soon as she obtained her official status, she enrolled in a Job Development program offered by the federal government which gave her access to a

field she enjoys, office work. She was first hired by an immigrants' service organization and second by a national organization for Refugees. Although this type of work did not correspond to her foreign training, she still developed an interest for it.

Under the necessity of earning money quickly, Anna, Sam, John and Sonia accepted the first jobs that were offered to them. These, as presented in Table 5.4, were not the most rewarding jobs on the market. Anna and Sam tried another job search method called "Extra" offered by the provincial government for social insurance beneficiaries. Through the program, Anna managed to find a social worker's position which was somewhat related to her field of qualification. Sam was not so fortunate. Although he found a job in a hospital, his tasks were limited to clerical work which did not lead him to make further contacts in his field.

John and Sonia never enrolled in any of the programs mentioned earlier. Their jobs were always obtained through word of mouth, but neither of them have ever found a job that was related to their field of qualification. Instead, while John has decided to pursue his non-rewarding but relatively well paying job at an industrial laundromat, Sonia has decided to take a new direction, that of languages and translation, realizing that her knowledge of four languages are a trump on the job market.

5.5.4 Employment Prospects: Barriers and Tools

The first job following immigration seems to be the most difficult one to get as all potential employers require applicants to already have some kind of "Canadian experience". It is perhaps this that makes it so difficult for Paul and Manuel to integrate into the labour market. Further, according to the respondents' experiences, it can be said that the status level of the first job experience will affect the status level of the following jobs. In other words, people like Maria, Sarah, Amir and Paul, whose first experiences were relatively rewarding occupations, can expect a more interesting future in terms of employment prospects than John and Sam, for instance.

The role of governmental programs such as "Preparation to Work", "Job Development" or "Extra" is therefore justified in the sense that it often allows applicants to have access to a gratifying first working experience. Furthermore, it encourages employers to accept and involve foreign workers in their working force.

Another way of upgrading employment prospects for individuals like Sam who could only see a bleak future ahead of him using his original credentials, is to go back to studying and get a Quebec/Canadian degree that will automatically get full recognition on the job market. Realizing the dead end with respect to his future as a doctor, Sam has enrolled in the toxicology program in a Montreal university and hopes that this certificate will finally get him a decent job in Quebec. All of the ten respondents agreed that going back to study and obtaining a Quebec/Canadian degree is clearly one of the most efficient means of obtaining more rewarding jobs since Quebec employers never question the value of domestic qualifications.

Like Sam and Anna, Paul and Sarah have also gone back to university. Paul's decision to enroll in the Physics Master's program has its origin in his inability to find a job despite all his qualifications. He, therefore, came to believe that studying is, by itself, a way of making a living that is at least more fulfilling than to stay unemployed and unoccupied. Sarah's reasons for doing a Master's degree in demography are two-fold: first because she obtained very low return from her foreign qualifications and second because her field of interest has changed over time. Through volunteer work, a person can also get a chance to demonstrate his/her real knowledge and skills. Sarah's second job offer is an example of job integration by the means of volunteer work.

However, such solutions as the three described above might not be appropriate for those who are under financial difficulties and are obliged to earn money immediately. On the other hand, once a person has started working, it becomes difficult for him/her to actively look for another job or to enroll in the above mentioned activities. Sonia found herself in this kind of vicious circle. Once she had started working full time at the

daycare centre, she could no longer accept work as a supply-teacher on call and risk losing her other job by missing many days of work. In order to become a full certified teacher in the Quebec system, one has to be available to work as a substitute whenever a school needs it. Given these circumstances, Sonia abandoned her hopes to become a teacher again. For John, the conclusion is the following:

If you come as an independent immigrant worker, you have to have a lot of money. If you do not, your life as an immigrant is a constant struggle.
[T.F.F.]

Anna experienced another kind of employment barrier. She criticized Psychology research groups for keeping their circle closed and for hindering access to foreign professionals after having felt discriminated against and excluded from those groups because of her Spanish origin and her different ideas on the subject. She thinks that such an attitude is unacceptable in an increasingly multicultural society.

Finally, half of the respondents added that the present economic recession was an important factor affecting labour market integration difficulties they have experienced. Many suggested that it was a dark period for everyone, including Canadian-born.

5.6 General Integration into the Quebec Society

This section will briefly overview the opinions noted by the respondents with regard to the way they perceive their integration into Quebec society. None of the respondents have expressed any regrets about having immigrated to Quebec. They all accept this transition as an experience of life, whether their decision to move to Canada was fully theirs (as it is the case for the Independent immigrants) or partially theirs (as for the Refugees). However, the level of satisfaction with the experience of living in Quebec as an immigrant varies greatly from one individual to another and extends from the desire to stay here indefinitely to the hope to leave the country as soon as possible.

Among those who had, at the time of the interview, no intention of leaving Quebec are Maria, Manuel, Lea, Sarah and Paul. These people see a future here for themselves and for their children. Despite some difficulties they have encountered, they are determined to make the best of their situation here. In some cases, those who have experienced harsh living conditions and/or have seen their lives threatened before being accepted to Canada tend to be more appreciative of their new situation and seem to adapt better than others. In fact, after someone warned Paul (who had lived in a refugee camp for nearly four years) that Quebec was not the paradise he might have expected, he replied: "If you say so, it is because you do not know what hell is." [T.F.F.]

Maria and Sarah did not come as refugees, but experienced some degree of frustration in their homeland and are relieved to be out of it. Sarah said that she was living through more frustration in Syria due to the social context than she is here. Sam, despite the fact that he originally came as a refugee and had to flee three countries for the safety of his family, is still very disappointed about what the host country has to offer. He does see some prospect of a future for his children, but definitely not for himself or for his wife. He plans to return to Sri Lanka as soon as his children are self-sufficient enough to live here on their own. Back there, he knows he will immediately find a position as a doctor.

Like Sam, Amir is thinking of going back to his home country once his three children are settled in Quebec. His reasons are different from Sam's, however, and are based on the fact that he is close to his retirement and feels that he no longer has the energy of youth to adapt to a whole new mentality and way of life. He is nevertheless enjoying his stay in Quebec.

The two respondents who really have no desire to stay in Canada are Anna and John. Anna's bitterness is mainly professional and stems from the fact that she cannot adapt to Quebec's socio-psychological approach and methods of intervention and does not believe that educators, social workers and psychologists should limit themselves to

Quebec's way of dealing with people's problems in an increasingly multicultural society. Although she has finally acquired the right to work in her field of expertise, she no longer has the desire to do so in Quebec since she cannot relate to and does not feel accepted by her academic peers.

John's dissatisfaction with his immigration experience is based on several elements. First is the fact that he cannot work in the field for which he devoted four years of university and which corresponds to his real interest. Second, he does not agree with the values that distinguish, in his opinion, North America from European countries such as, he said, the importance attributed to work to the detriment of the family. Third, he believes that social integration is futile as he never felt accepted by Quebec society. Anna, Sam, Manuel and Maria have also brought up this last point. According to Sam, social integration is a myth:

I feel that immigration is not a solution for anyone, because two different cultures can never be the same. Of course you [immigrants] can be part of the economy, but you can never be part of the society, as the cultural society... even the second generation, even if the French language has been acquired.

Maria who has had both the experiences of coming to Quebec as a foreign student and as an immigrant noted the big difference in people's attitude toward these two types of foreigners. The doors are not as wide open when you are part of the latter group as when you are part of the former, she said.

Manuel noted that the label "immigrant" is a heavy one to carry, but he also strongly believes that one's attitude toward his/her situation can really make a difference between being accepted or rejected by the host society. He referred to his own way of making integration efforts such as taking French courses or making himself known in the artistic world by participating as an example of a positive attitude. He believes that immigrants' unwillingness to make special efforts to adapt, as well as their negative attitude toward their situation, has a direct link with the resentment they may experience.

Lea made the same type of statement, adding that one's level of expectation prior to immigration had a lot to do with one's readiness to accept and overcome various barriers of integration. Considering some of the respondents' experiences, this element is one that seems to emerge as an important factor influencing integration. For example, John's expectations were very high before he left for Quebec. In fact, he condemns all the propaganda surrounding Canada and selling it as a perfect democratic country which led him to build an image of Canada as a wonderful place. He fell from quite high when he came down to the reality of facts. Sam also had a certain level of expectation with regard to his professional future despite the strong warnings he had received before he moved here. On the contrary, Lea, Paul and Manuel, whose attitude was not to expect anything in particular, were more ready to confront the difficulties associated with resettlement in a new country.

Sonia is not sure whether she wishes to stay in Quebec or return to Algeria. She sees many advantages here and enjoys her standard of living. On the other hand, she feels insecure about her job situation. Furthermore, she deplores some of the politics of the Quebec government and cited as an example compulsory French education for children. She perceives such policies as a paradox between the image of a democratic and free society the province exhibits and dictatorial ruling she believes Quebec subtly imposes.

In brief, not all ten respondents are disappointed with their immigration experience and for those who are, they do not have the same reasons to be dissatisfied. For some, the loss of their professional title and of the possibilities to work in their field are the basis of their frustration while others blame it on the socio-political situation of Quebec. While some wish to stay, others do not see an interesting future here for them and wish to leave the country. One's expectations prior immigration or attitude toward the situation may be accountable for these above difference.

5.7 Summary

The above analysis of interview data illustrate very well how varied each individual's experience can be. Furthermore, to these experiences are attached an infinite variety of attitudes, reactions, feelings and opinions, again proper to each respondent. This reality renders difficult any generalizations to be made of the data collected through the interviews. Certain points nevertheless emerge from this chapter.

Most respondents showed dissatisfaction with the Quebec equivalency service. There were complaints about the extended length of time for equivalencies to be processed, and about the lack of fairness at the evaluation stage of foreign credentials. One person also noted that the fees were too high for many immigrants. The main reason, though, was the loss of years of schooling through the equivalency process. This loss had significant consequences for several respondents with respect to their professional opportunities in Quebec. Moreover, this loss affected their personal integrity, lowering their socio-professional status and marginalized the years of study, work and devotion in the field of their interest. The existence of professional organizations imposing their own entry requirements disconcerted a number of the respondents, who saw their foreign credentials partly or fully rejected from these bodies, reducing them to non-qualified persons in the context of the host society.

The labour market experiences of the interview respondents illustrate the difficulties of integration in the labour market in the particular field of foreign training. According to most of them, the equivalency certificate did not prove to be an efficient tool in achieving integration for two major reasons: first, because of the poor representation of one's training the equivalency certificate gives, and second, because potential employers in Quebec did not seem interested in the certificate as a way to evaluate a candidate for a job.

Instead, government employment integration programs proved to be the best solution for job integration into one's field of interest for most of the respondents who

participated in the program. The jobs the respondents got by this means were usually of lower status than the positions they held in other countries before they immigrated to Canada. Nevertheless, they expressed more contentment with their employment situation than the other respondents who had not enrolled in such programs.

In terms of barriers to employment, the "Canadian experience" required by potential employers is, according to the respondents, a much more important obstacle than not having their foreign credentials recognized. This factor makes the first job very difficult to obtain.

The respondents' various experiences on the Quebec job market offers a few possibilities with which to confront employment integration barriers. As mentioned earlier, government employment integration programs are one. Doing volunteer work is also a way of gaining work experience and of infiltrating a particular field of interest. Another option is to return to school in the host country in order to obtain domestic degrees. This last option might not provide the Canadian experience so much required on the job market (although it did for one of the respondents), but will resolve the problem of non-recognition of foreign qualifications.

The respondents' desire to settle in Quebec or not is based on a whole range of factors including experiences and expectations prior to immigration, the circumstances surrounding their immigration, the prospects of professional advancement and their self-esteem in the new society. There is no doubt that for a qualified and/or experienced immigrant worker, their professional occupation is a major factor to consider when settling anywhere.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

6.1 Introduction

In the previous chapters, the attempt was to break down and scrutinize the various aspects of foreign credential recognition and labour market integration of newcomers. Through the review of literature, the results of various studies on the topic were identified. The analysis of the questionnaire survey data led us to raise a number of new questions and concerns with respect to the issue. Finally, in addition to bringing up other elements, the interview survey data analysis led to other insights concerning some of the issues raised in Chapters 2 and 4.

The following constitutes a synthesis of the three above mentioned chapters of this thesis. It aims at linking together each chapter's various components and discussing their outcome. It also attempts to answer the following three questions: Did the two-fold survey uncover new concerns regarding the issue of credentialism and of labour market integration? Were some concerns raised in the literature review that were not raised in the survey? Finally, to what extent are the issues of concern, on the one hand, and the recommendations to resolve these issues on the other, similar or different in the literature review and the two-fold survey?

6.2 Standardized Equivalencies: Is it the Solution?

From both the literature review (Chapter 2) and the survey analysis (Chapters 4 and 5), the problem encountered by immigrants in obtaining either full or partial

recognition of their foreign credentials emerges as an undeniable fact. For most of them, their hope of working in their field of expertise in Canada is eroded by the loss of their educational level as soon as they cross the border to settle. There is also a universal consensus among scholars concerning the need for a "bridge" to link credentials acquired abroad with Canadian occupational standards, in order to allow immigrant workers to practice in their field of qualification once in Canada. Where the literature and the survey findings start diverging, however, lies in the nature of this needed "bridge".

Taken as a whole, the literature suggests that qualifications and related work experience acquired abroad should be processed through a system of assessment and evaluation, and be translated into Canadian (or provincial) equivalent levels of education and qualification. This recommendation is based on the assumption that an official equivalency document will act as a recognizable and acknowledgeable currency to employers in the job market and to accreditation and licensing bodies, which will in turn allow immigrant workers to integrate into the labour market quickly and efficiently in their field of expertise. As seen in an earlier chapter, several institutions have been or are being established in Canada to this end,

These initiatives are generally driven by a need to reduce barriers to full participation in the workforce on the part of those with foreign credentials (Canada, Employment and Immigration 1993b, p. 31).

The survey, which attempted to evaluate the efficacy of an equivalency service in contributing to immigrants' integration into the labour force in their field of prior qualifications, has revealed that priorities in integration strategies must be revised. It was found out not only that the Quebec service contains a number of flaws which can significantly affect immigrants' ability to compete in the job market, but also that other elements considered crucial to the respondent immigrants were not sufficiently treated in the literature.

In short, while the literature has an inclination to deal with the problem of labour market integration into one's field in terms of the root cause of the issue (i.e. at the recognition stage of foreign credentials), the results of the present survey lead to consider treating the problem from the other end of the process, which is job finding. Hence, according to the findings, it is no longer convincing that non-recognition of foreign credentials in Quebec is at the basis of the labour market integration problem for foreign-qualified immigrant workers or that standardized equivalencies of foreign credentials offers a proper solution to this problem.

6.2.1 The Equivalency Service

Many respondents, from both the interview and the questionnaire survey, seemed to believe that they could not start looking for a job without their Quebec equivalency certificate in hand to present to potential employers. This represented a problem since there were many who found that the lapse of time between their request for their equivalency certificate and its receipt was too long. Consequently, these people had either to rely on their own savings or on the government's assistance to sustain themselves in the meantime. Others, who tried to work immediately upon arrival, thought that they could not start looking for a job related to their former training until the reception of their equivalency document. As a consequence, their first jobs often consisted of the least valuable ones on the job market. According to the respondents' experiences, it seems that newcomers are automatically led to believe that no efficient job search can start before they have received the equivalency certificate.

Whether this "belief" arises from the immigrants themselves or from outside sources is a question that cannot be answered here. In the case of the latter possibility, newcomers could have been encouraged to believe in the indispensability of the equivalency document either prior to, or after, immigration. Although it might not be related to the equivalency process at all, there is evidence in both the literature (Mata

1993) and the survey about misleading information on the part of immigrant officials abroad dealing with immigrants to be.

Il y a eu certaines plaintes, peu nombreuses, au sujet des conseils fournis aux immigrants éventuels par les bureaux Canadiens en Europe: quand ils n'étaient pas carrément erronés, ils ne se sont pas révélés très utiles.... En général, ... les immigrants auraient souhaité être mieux informés sur les possibilités d'emplois. C'est d'ailleurs un des aspects de l'information fournie par les bureaux Canadiens en Europe qu'il faudrait songer à améliorer (Canada, Employment and Immigration 1987a, p. 5).

Concurrently, a few interview respondents identified as "propaganda" the set of information they received about professional, economic and social opportunities in Canada/Quebec when applying for immigration from abroad as they found that the reality was bleaker than the embellished picture that was previously drawn for them.

Whether or not the information that is diffused among potential immigrants misrepresents the actual information, the fact remains that many of them fall from high when trying to settle here. It seems that the higher the level of expectation before immigration, the higher the possibilities of experiencing frustration if these expectations are not met. Therefore, in the same way that doctors are carefully advised of the poor possibilities for them to practice in Canada in their profession, all potential immigrants should be clearly informed of the real prospects of settlement in Canada. It is also believed that prior and post immigration information should include explanations about the exact purpose and about the limits of the Quebec equivalency certificate on the labour market.

While several respondents were quite satisfied with the Quebec service, most were not. The two incidents that were reported by interview respondents indicate that the system is not yet at the stage of perfection. First, Maria's story about a ten years old address that the *Service d'équivalence* had of a Buenos Aires university indicates that the service's information may not always be up to date. According to McDade (1988) though,

...the service has the financial and human resources to collect current and comprehensive information on international education programs (McDade 1988, p. 29).

Assuming that McDade's (1988) above statement is correct, the service's financial and human resources are perhaps not exploited at their maximum potential. There is presently no evidence, however, to support this hypothesis. Secondly, the fact that Sonia's and John's identical degrees, that were acquired at the same time and at the same place, did not get the same recognition by the service shows signs of inconsistency in the way equivalencies are granted to applicants. If the initial purpose of such a system is to put all candidates on the same scale of reference in order to ease understanding and comparison of their level of schooling, an error like this one completely beats this purpose. The only difference between Sonia and John, apart from their gender, is their origin which are Algeria and Poland respectively. Could this element have been the factor of difference in the treatment of their respective dossiers? If such is the case, this means that social constructions of racial discrimination are involved in the recognition process of foreign credentials. The question of discrimination has been raised in the literature with regard to certifying bodies' accreditation process (Mata 1993) as well as in employment (Labelle et al. n.d.; Muszynski and Reitz 1982), but the possibility of discrimination within the equivalency process has not been raised in the literature. The above mentioned incidents may consist of isolated cases. Nevertheless, given the significant impact such incidents can have on one's life, they should not be ignored. From the thesis' point of view, then, any public service must be properly and systematically evaluated to make sure standards meet the expectations and before it can be referred to as a model for other similar initiatives.

Immigrants who arrived prior to 1992 benefited from a no cost charge to obtain a Quebec equivalency certificate, but those who came after did not. In the opinion of several respondents, the recent cost is too high for what the document is worth, not mentioning that additional costs must be added if original qualification documents need

to be translated into one of the two official languages. This cost, added to those involved with immigrating, represent a financial hurdle to many newcomers. Further, the currency of Third World countries is often lower in value than the Canadian currency. Hence, the fees associated with an equivalency certificate can appear particularly high for immigrants who come from those countries. There is no discussion in the literature regarding the fees associated with obtaining equivalencies. However,

A major Ontario study in 1988 found... that the cost of academic training and the entrance examination fees were prohibitive for many immigrants. There was inadequate financial support while the applicant obtained the required training (Mata 1993, p. 15).

If an efficient integration of immigrant workers into the labour market is a priority for a government and if the government is convinced that equivalencies represent an adequate tool to reach that goal, then it is argued that the government should be the one absorbing the cost of the equivalency process rather than the applicants.

6.2.2 The Equivalency Certificate

The literature proclaims that a document such as the official equivalency certificate of Quebec will help potential employers to evaluate a newcomer's level of education and qualification since foreign qualification documents may be difficult to assess by employers who do not know the standards associated with them (Canada Employment and Immigration 1993d; Cumming 1989; Labelle et al. n.d.; Mata 1993). From a theoretical point of view, this may appear to be a reasonable idea. From a practical point of view, however, which the survey found, the situation is more complex and involves other problems.

First, the *certificat d'équivalence* states the Quebec level of education that corresponds to the studies pursued outside of Quebec in terms of years of schooling only (Lecourt 1993), even though the literature described it as a "detailed document which compares the studies made abroad with the level of studies in Quebec" (Mata 1993, p.

17). Consequently, a Canadian or Quebec employer who examines one of those certificates will not know what kind of degree the candidate has obtained abroad. This reality upset many respondents who saw their various degrees "disappear" through the equivalency process. Among the interview respondents, Sarah's situation represents the best example as her Master's degree acquired in Paris was stated as "three years of university" on her equivalency certificate. This matter is not discussed in the literature although it appeared as an important element to the survey respondents.

Second, the majority of both surveys respondents calculated a loss in the number of years of schooling from their original number of years of studies to the number they were granted on their equivalency certificate. This phenomenon is not unique to the Quebec service:

Some reported that the evaluation services used by the Ministry of Education and the University of Toronto "sharply de-value" foreign credentials (Seward and McDade 1988, p. 33).

Such loss represents a shock to those qualified immigrants who were just waiting for their equivalency certificate to start looking for a job in their field of expertise, believing that it represented the key document opening doors to job opportunities. Further, John's and Sonia's cases earlier cited, also raise questions about the way the number of years of schooling are granted by the service. For these two above reasons, many of the survey immigrants decided to always present both their original and their equivalency documents to potential employers, instead of using the latter as a replacement of the former.

6.2.3 The Existence of Other Decisional Bodies

...Education institutions and professional organizations have the discretion to disregard the equivalency statement [of the Quebec equivalency service] (McDade 1988, p. 29).

Indeed, many trades and professions have their own rules of access in order to ensure standards of practice in their jurisdiction. Anyone who wishes to obtain the right to

practice in one of those trades or professions in Quebec must submit him/herself to the requirements imposed by the related professional organization. These regulations are said to be in place in order to ensure standards of practice for customer protection. However, a Report of the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Civil Rights

...comments on the authority and power inherent in self-regulation as follows: "...there is a real risk that the power may be exercised in the interests of the profession or occupation rather than in that of the public...." It has often been pointed out that the rationale for controlling access to professions and skilled trades based on the public good does not acknowledge the desire of occupational groups to protect their earnings, working conditions, and "exclusiveness" (Canada, Employment and Immigration 1991a, p. 18).

Alacoque (1977) clearly expressed his point of view about the idea that these kind of organizations limit access to foreigners when he called this a way to protect the French-Canadian "ghetto".

The possibility that foreign trained professionals or trades persons were explicitly restricted by a decisional body from the right to be certified and from the right to practice in the body's jurisdiction has also emerged in the survey. One of the interview respondents used the notion of "Quebec protectionism" to express the same idea as she personally felt she was a victim of one of these corporations' politically oriented ideologies. The possible existence of such segregationist approaches toward non-Canadians (or non-Quebecers) greatly limits the likelihood of them having their foreign degrees recognized in the province.

Another of the interview respondents has become doubtful about the objectivity of the corporation responsible for his profession during the assessment process of his physiotherapy degree acquired in Moscow. Following a two-year correspondence with the organization, recognition of his diploma was finally refused because of the unavailability of his high school diploma that has been requested from him at the very end of those two years. In his opinion, racial discrimination was at the basis of the

corporation's final decision although it made it look like the non-availability of the high school diploma was at the source of the decision.

The fact that foreign credentials are poorly recognized by Canadian or provincial professional and trade organizations is often explained, in the literature, by a lack of proper evaluation and assessment tools.

Most certification systems in Canada were designed to certify those people who followed the "normal" training and examining processes (Canada, Employment and Immigration 1993b, p. 30).

The effect is that foreign-trained workers *must acquire* Canadian qualifications since those earned elsewhere are not "recognized" (Canada, Employment and Immigration 1993d, p. 4).

Although several written documents clearly announced the limits of an official equivalency document within the evaluation and assessment process by a professional or trade body, they did not elaborate on the consequence when one of these bodies decide to disregard or to refuse equivalencies granted by another system, which is that the latter becomes useless. In the survey, it was surprising to realize how many respondents had their equivalencies issued by the *service d'équivalence* without realizing, as this research shows, that it might not be useful to them at all. Instead, from the evidence the survey shows, most respondents seem to have automatically and blindly applied as if it was an absolute step to either access to a further credential evaluation process or to get a job in their field. As a result, several respondents who, given their professional occupation, needed to have their credentials evaluated by a particular professional organization were puzzled about the overall role of the Quebec *certificat d'équivalence*.

6.2.4 The Evaluation and Assessment of Foreign Credentials

Many respondents were dissatisfied with the way their credentials were evaluated at the Quebec equivalency service. Some were surprised that work experience acquired

abroad in their field of expertise was not taken into consideration at all. In fact, one of the recommendations of the 1989 Ontario Task Force was that,

the present "certified-based" system [in Ontario] should be converted into one based on "competencies".... Foreign trained individuals could enter occupations that match education and experience (Mata 1993, p. 18).

Others felt that a system of examination would be more adequate to evaluate one's knowledge in a given field. This last method of evaluation is already being implemented by some certifying bodies as a way to grant the right to practice in certain professions or trades (McDade 1988). However, it would be difficult to implement it in a governmental service, such as the one in Quebec, unless there was a very close cooperation between professional bodies and the governmental equivalency service. The idea of such cooperation has often been, as a matter of fact, the object of previous recommendations (Canada, Employment and Immigration 1992b; Canada, Employment and Immigration 1993d; Canada, Employment and Immigration 1991a).

The question of who would be better positioned to handle the mandate of evaluating and assessing equivalencies of foreign credentials was evoked by several respondents. It was suggested that other bodies, such as universities or professional associations and corporations, should be responsible for this task rather than the government. On the contrary, the literature encourages a greater involvement from the part of the governments (federal or provincial) in this particular matter. For example,

The Standing Committee recommends that the federal government take a lead advocacy role in examining licensing and accreditation practices and in working with professional associations to enable immigrants to establish themselves professionally in Canada (Canada, Employment and Immigration 1987b, p.9).

The above propositions made by respondents are probably based on the idea that experts, given their advanced knowledge in their respective fields, are better positioned to evaluate foreign credentials and further advise applicants on what Quebec and/or Canadian requirements are in those particular fields. However, the cost of maintaining an

up-to-date information bank on all degrees, in all fields and in all countries is enormous. The following quote further explains the difficulty of having the above suggestions implemented on a large scale:

Many certifying bodies do not have the appropriate mechanisms to perform this assessment. Assessment of foreign qualifications requires information on education systems, often including maintenance of a data base on foreign schools, curriculum and assessments procedures. Collecting this information is both time consuming and expensive (Canada, Employment and Immigration 1993d, p. 6).

Hence, in order to gain economies of scale, it is often suggested that "a coordinated approach within Canada would be most effective and efficient" (Canada, Employment and Immigration 1993a, p. 34).

The above discussion of the question of who should handle the mandate of assessing foreign credentials represents only a glimpse of a complex issue that also involves components such as, for example, provincial versus federal rights and responsibilities or the power of professional organizations over their jurisdiction. There is clearly an effort, according to the literature, to come out with the best option to resolve this issue, although among the different options some are highly conditional:

Recognition of qualifications between provinces must exist prior to mutual recognition of professional qualifications between two countries.... As long as provincial initiatives are active, there is no use for a national wide system (Canada, Employment and Immigration 1993d, p. 35).

6.3 On the Labour Market

There is a general agreement among scholars about the fact that Canadian employers (and Quebec employers) are more likely to hire someone from Canada/Quebec rather than foreign workers (Boyd 1985; Brassard et al. 1986; Seward and McDade 1988). However, at issue among academics are the causes of this situation. The following explores the ones most discussed in the literature and the survey.

6.3.1 The Role of the Equivalency Certificate

As it is often explained,

Canadian education experience... is likely to be expressed in a currency which is easily assessed by Canadian employers. In contrast, the education training received by persons completing their education outside of Canada appears undervalued in the Canadian labour market relative to its actual worth (Boyd 1985, p. 415).

If the above statement represents the main reason for employers to not hire immigrant workers, transferring foreign qualifications into domestic standards should, theoretically, resolve the problem. Therefore, the concern here is about employers' perception of and reaction to the Quebec equivalency certificate. Mata (1993) wrote that "Equivalency proofs are required... by employers in Quebec" (Mata 1993, p. 17). However, according to the interview respondents, potential employers do not seem interested in the certificate as a mean of evaluating one's competence for a job. The reasons for this is unknown and is beyond the scope of this research, although there would definitely be room for another survey to inquire on this issue. On the other hand, according to the questionnaire respondents, most potential employers seem to be familiar with the certificate and seem to acknowledge its value. This difference in the results obtained from each of the two surveys may be due to the difference in the degree of depth of the questions asked in each survey. In the questionnaire, the issue of employers' familiarity with and acknowledgment of the equivalency certificate did not imply further concerns such as the acceptance of the certificate as a valid proof of former training. Hence, it is quite realistic that most employers were familiar and acknowledged the document when it was presented to them, given that the official stamp of the Quebec Ministry of Education identifies the certificate. The interview respondents, however, were invited to elaborate on the issue with respect to their personal experiences with potential employers. According to them, employers rarely asked to consult the certificate

and if they did, were not using it as the main tool for evaluating a candidate's competence for a position.

The above discussion raises questions about the actual value of the certificate on the job market. If employers do not really consider the document, then what is it useful for? It is opportune to report here a section of one of the interview respondents' testimony. During a meeting with a representative of the MCCI equivalency service, Sarah was told that the only real purpose of the *certificat d'équivalence* was to identify the position of the certificate's holder on the Quebec government salary scale in case that individual would be employed as a provincial civil servant. According to the MCCI representative, as reported by Sarah, there are no other practical functions to this document. Since there are so few immigrants who are able to take up civil servant positions in Quebec (Labelle et al. n.d.), the overall usefulness of the certificate can seriously be questioned.

6.3.2 Canadian Experience

As mentioned above, the information gathered from the survey revealed that employers give little or no importance to applicants' *certificat d'équivalence*. Instead, the crucial element requested is prior Canadian work experience. Respondents identified the lack of such experience as the main problem of labour market integration even if they had acquired extended work experience in other countries. This research is not equipped with the proper tools here to judge whether the Canadian experience is a justifiable requirement or not. For Karam (1990), it is a sign of mistrust on the part of the host society:

"l'expérience canadienne" requise dans les offres d'emploi est trop souvent l'expression euphémique d'une méfiance (Karam 1990, p. 272).

In the survey, the extent to which this specific request is a legitimate one or not was not particularly discussed by respondents, but the idea that it created an impasse to

employment attainment was brought up by several people. The importance of this issue was in fact more predominant in the survey than in the literature. This fact is one, among others, that led us to believe in the necessity for reestablishing priorities in the initiatives undertaken by governments to assist immigrants in their labour market integration in their field of expertise. Hence, helping them to get their first job, related as close as possible to their field, should be considered a priority over other initiatives, such as the equivalency process for example.

The experience of several survey respondents (Chapters 4 and 5) illustrates how the above proposition is a valuable one. Indeed, those who had enrolled in an employment integration program (federal or provincial) thought that it was the best way for them to acquire their first Canadian work experience. Further, they generally believe that the chances for participants of such program to find work in their field of expertise, in the context of a *stage*, are relatively good. Although one interview respondent found that it had not helped him at all, the others were grateful to the program, as it launched them into finding other interesting jobs. In the literature, the lack of Canadian experience as a job integration barrier was mentioned in a few documents including a report of the Economic Council of Canada (1991b), but there is no elaboration on the possible solutions to alter this problem.

6.3.3 Discrimination

Several published documents identify discrimination as one of the major obstacles for immigrants to find a job (Canada, House of Commons 1984; Labelle et al. n.d.; Muszynski and Reitz 1982; Richmond 1990). The survey confirms this situation as a number of the respondents felt victimized by discriminatory attitudes on the part of potential employers. A few believed that jobs were refused to them because of their origin (it is not possible to be precise whether it was due to the skin colour, the accent or the fact that the person was simply non-Canadian).

There is plenty of evidence to show that employers are still skeptical about hiring foreign workers and many systematically use various means to keep them away from their sector. These means (which may include specific requests such as those mentioned above) may appear absolutely legitimate, but often tend to hide racial and discriminatory practices (Boyd 1987; DeSilva 1992; Labelle et al. n.d.). Hence, employers need to be more adequately informed about how they can confidently hire immigrant workers without fearing for the deterioration of the quality and the level of standard of their service. They should also be encouraged to hire newcomers through incentives initiated by the government through programs designed for that purpose, such as those that include periods of *stage* for immigrant workers.

For some respondents, the problem of racial discrimination extends far beyond access to employment, it also includes integration into society as a whole. Three of the interview respondents strongly believe that integration into the various aspects of Quebec society is impossible due to discriminatory attitudes and practices toward immigrants in general. Samuel (1990) expressed this idea:

Discrimination against certain ethnic groups is not restricted to the labour market alone. It also extends to social, cultural and political areas.... There is little doubt that racial prejudice and discrimination against visible minorities are major obstacles to their achievement of economic and social integration (Samuel 1990, p. 392).

Non-visible minorities can also be discriminated against due to their accent for example, which identifies them as "different" from members of the host society (DeSilva 1992).

The consensus is general in both the literature and the present research that the host society, whether it is Quebec or Canada as a whole, needs to be better prepared and equipped to welcome large numbers of immigrants from all parts of the world. A symposium report on Immigrant Settlement and Integration reported a section of Elliot Tepper's presentation as follows:

Canada is involved in a two-pronged response to increases in racial and cultural diversity. The first is a broad process of helping newcomers and first generation Canadians adapt to life in Canada.... The second dimension is the much broader process of adapting Canadian institutions to the reality of a multiracial and multicultural society (Canada, Employment and Immigration Advisory Council 1991b, p. 33)

Focusing on Quebec province, Comeau (1989) came to a similar conclusion that Quebec society must develop a true will to welcome immigrants. In the interview survey, Anna's testimony also reflects this idea. In her opinion, for example, the *Association des psychologues du Québec* is not adequately trying to adapt to an increasingly multicultural clientele. Furthermore, since employment is one of the most crucial element of integration, it is in that particular sphere that the host society must work harder. In a more general sense, some respondents felt that being an immigrant was a barrier in itself.

6.3.4 Other Factors

There has been extensive research on immigrants' economic performance in Canada and a whole range of influencing factors were noted, in addition to those mentioned earlier in this chapter. Among them are the length of time in Canada, occupation, age, immigration category and gender. Although this study did not use income as an index of success in labour market integration, some of these factors did emerge as elements that could play on one's ability to integrate into the job market.

The length of time in the host country as an influencing element can only be adequately analyzed in longitudinal studies. However, the interview survey did allow to get a "temporal" perspective through the immigration experiences of the 10 respondents. It was found that time could improve one's financial and material situation, but that alone could not always improve one's emotional and mental condition. In other terms, time must be accompanied by positive and encouraging events to ensure a proper adaptation and integration into the new society. It was shown, in Chapter 5, how years of futile efforts have led some of the respondents to a stage of extreme frustration and

discouragement with regard to their professional opportunities in Quebec. In contrast, those who got hold of interesting occupations right from the beginning showed a higher self-esteem and were more enthusiastic with respect to their settlement in Quebec. These life experiences demonstrate very well the importance of one's first work experience which, for even better results, should not occur too long after immigration. This leads, once more, to encourage employment integration programs for newcomers.

One's age also seems to affect employment prospects. One of the interview respondents said that he had been refused a job after answering that he was over 40 years old. If, in fact, there is a tendency among employers to prefer hiring younger people, this may particularly cause a problem to immigrants who usually come as mature adults, with a certain number of years of life experience behind them. Hence, the older the individual at the time of immigration, the less their chances of getting jobs related to their field of expertise, in the host country, despite their work and education experience. This situation represents somewhat of a paradox: on the one hand, the immigration policies encourage the selection of newcomers with education and work experience; on the other hand, the host society's labour market is not interested in such criteria. Here again emerges the need to dismantle certain misconceptions about mature adults who have mainly studied and worked abroad and the need to "educate" Quebec employers on the real potential of these foreign workers.

Some studies of the literature (Samuel and Woloski 1985; Beaujot et al. 1981) state that immigrants of the Independent Worker category are particularly successful in their ability to perform on the job market (with respect to their income). They further suggest that this is partly due to their selection through the Points System which evaluates applicants on the basis of occupation, education and work experience. However, out of the 30 refugees in the questionnaire respondents, 87% had post-secondary qualifications upon arrival to Canada. Hence, if the literature's hypothesis that education is a trump to labour market integration in the host society is correct, it should apply to everyone

regardless of the immigration category. It is therefore believed, after having conducted the survey, that other factors may have played on the outcome of the above studies. As testified by one interview respondent, being an independent immigrant sometimes forces one to work as soon as possible, unlike refugees who can rely on governmental financial assistance upon arrival. This might be one reason why immigrants of the independent category emerged in the literature review as the most successful with respect to their income when compared to those for the refugee category. In the survey, independent immigrants did not prove to be more successful in the labour market than other categories of immigrants.

Since income was not used as an index of success in this research, a straightforward comparison between this study and those which did use this index would be misleading. There was, nevertheless, one occasion when the category of immigration emerged as a direct influential factor in the research which is when it was cross-tabulated with the level of satisfaction with results obtained from the Equivalency service. As noted in Chapter 4, most Refugees were satisfied with the Equivalency service while most Independent Workers were not. This result was interpreted as an indication of the former group's greater readiness to accept what was granted to them. Assuming that the immigration category could, to a certain extent, represent one's prior immigration experiences and the circumstance surrounding his/her immigration, the above results would mean that refugees adapt and integrate more easily than independent workers who tend to expect too much upon arrival and are therefore disappointed with their settlement experience.

As a matter of fact, one's level of expectation prior to immigration turned out, in the interview survey, to have a certain degree of influence on individuals' way of dealing with the various aspects of resettlement. According to the results, the higher respondents' expectations before immigration, the more difficult their experience of integration into

the host society. In the questionnaire survey, however, no particular correlation emerged between the level of prior immigration expectations and the category of immigration.

In short, the level of expectation prior to immigration seems to be a very significant factor of adaptation and integration. It is also DeSilva's (1992) opinion that the concretization of immigrants' expectations has a direct impact on their actual capacity to integrate into society. It is, therefore, crucial to deliver honest, objective and unbiased information to all potential immigrants with respect to the working conditions in specific fields in particular and with respect to the reality of life in Quebec (Canada) as an immigrant in general.

Unlike the findings of certain studies reviewed in Chapter 2, being a female did not prove to be a particular hindering factor in this research. The same applies for the country of birth. However, as discussed in the Methodology Chapter, there are other ways of considering origin (country of citizenship and country of last permanent residence) which were not included in the questionnaire. Furthermore, since education acquired abroad is one of the main focus of this paper, the lack of information on the country of former education prevents from making meaningful assumptions in this respect.

6.4 Summary

The usefulness of the equivalency certificate issued by the service on the Quebec labour market was put into doubt following the analysis of survey results. This finding also tends to contradict the widely held belief that such a document can only help foreign trained newcomers to integrate into the job market in their field of expertise. The earlier analysis also led to conclude that governmental initiatives to help immigrants integrate into the labour market should be structured in a different way. Presently, the tendency in Quebec is to direct newcomers toward the equivalency process right upon arrival.

Instead, it is suggested that priority be set on assisting them in obtaining their first job in a field related to their credentials, soon after arrival.

CHAPTER 7

GENERAL CONCLUSION

7.1 Redefining Priorities

As this thesis has shown, there is no doubt about the need to work on the "missing link" between educational and occupational credentials acquired abroad and employment prospects in related fields in Quebec. As seen earlier, this will have benefits for both newcomers and the host society. There is also a general agreement that the ultimate purpose assigned to this "missing link" is to allow immigrant workers to integrate the labour market in their field of expertise. The leading question that should direct the search for this link is: what is the best way for individuals trained abroad to bring, demonstrate and prove their occupational knowledge, experience and expertise in the host society's job market?

In the literature's point of view, the best way is to start by having equivalencies of foreign credentials issued in the form of a standardized document that is recognizable to the host community. According to this study, priorities have to be redefined, putting the equivalency process in second place. Above all, rapid integration into the labour market is considered as a priority goal for the occupational success of newcomers. Obviously, the closer the occupation to one's field of former training, the more beneficial the experience is for both the foreign worker and the host society's labour market.

Throughout this research, a distinction has emerged between two notions to describe one's position in the labour market: the field of expertise and the level of expertise. Of course, it is everyone's aspiration to find a job that fills these two conditions

at once. On the one hand, for most qualified occupations, the latter condition requires proof of credentials that are recognizable and acceptable by employers of the host society. As seen previously, for most Quebec (Canadian) immigrants, this condition can hardly ever be met. On the other hand, the possibilities of working in a particular field related to one's qualifications, although it might not be at the highest status credentials can lead one to expect, do exist and can be widened with the government's efficient intervention.

This second possibility may represent only half of one's ideal situation, but has proven to be more satisfying than to be completely rejected from the field of one's former learning and experience. Once this first step of working in a particular field has been reached, procedures to reach the second step, that is to work at a particular level of expertise, can always be undertaken. To cite examples of some of the interview respondents, a foreign civil engineer may get a job here as a worksite inspector, a foreign trained psychologist may work as a social worker or a professor of commerce may be employed as a clerk in a bank. These jobs are not conditional on specific standards, certification or right to practice and are, therefore, accessible right upon arrival to foreign trained newcomers. They do, however, require minimum knowledge in the field and are therefore considered more valuable than those jobs which do not require any knowledge at all. Once an individual has found a job in his/her field, nothing stops him/her from engaging in the equivalency process for his/her foreign credentials. Hence, the worksite inspector, for example, might look into trying to obtain the right to practice as a civil engineer in Quebec, or the social worker as a psychologist. From the perspective of the job market, employing qualified immigrants in their field of specialty, even if they are not granted the top positions they used to have prior to immigration, allows the host country to benefit, at least partly, from their education and training acquired abroad.

In summary, the whole idea comes down to employing newcomers as soon as possible in jobs that are related to their field of former learning but that do not require specific rights of practice or specific recognizable certifications. The idea of eliminating

equivalency services is not suggested here for two major reasons. First, this survey is not extensive enough to suggest such an option. Second, it is believed that, if adequately operated, equivalency services can efficiently act as reference centres available to various types of organizations that do not have the time or financial resources to operate a foreign credential equivalency system. However, it is perceived as more important to reinforce employment integration programs that will assist newcomers in finding their first job as closely related to their field as possible and that government spending should focus on this latter option rather than on the former.

7.2 Further Research

As mentioned earlier, this thesis claims that an equivalency service such as the one in Quebec is not very useful in helping immigrant workers integrate into the labour market. However, given that the survey could not cover all aspects of the question of usefulness and efficiency of the service, the results are not sufficient to recommend its complete elimination. Instead, this thesis recommends other lines of research which could shed more light on the issue and justify a decision with regard to the present system.

1- The present lack of information on the efficiency of the Quebec *service d'équivalence* and on the efficacy of its *certificat d'équivalence* on the labour market calls for more research to be done in this respect. Although this thesis recommends reconsidering government programs and initiatives designed for immigrants, no major policy decisions can be made without knowing the real implications of the present system.

2- Given their extended knowledge of immigrants experiences, a survey should be conducted with non-governmental immigrant organizations to inquire about the

organizations' perception of the *service d'équivalence* and of its *certificat d'équivalence* and to inquire about the extent to which they recommend the service to their clients.

3- Similar surveys as the one presented in this thesis should be conducted in other Canadian provinces in order to detect differences and similarities with Quebec with regard to the kind of document immigrants use in their job finding process and with regard to the extent to which they manage to work in their field of foreign qualifications. This would allow one to detect whether the Quebec *certificat d'équivalence* is a useful tool or not.

4- The present research has concentrated on the view of immigrants who became employees. Since the degree of acceptance, by employers, of the foreign credential assessment provided by the Quebec *service d'équivalence* is still unknown, a survey should be conducted with Quebec employers to inquire how they perceive the *certificat d'équivalence* on the one hand, and foreign qualification documents on the other, as well as on their hiring criteria in general.

5- Certain assumptions, according to which Quebec employers tend to discriminate against immigrants and to keep them away from their work force, were raised in this study. There is still room for empirical research to verify these assumptions. A better understanding of the situation will help developing and implementing ways of encouraging Quebec employers to hire newcomers.

6- The present thesis suggests that employment integration programs that include hands-on experience, such as a period of *stage* in the job environment, help newcomers enter occupations related to their field of foreign qualifications. Research needs to be done with immigrant workers who have enrolled in such programs to support this claim.

7- The level of expectation of newcomers prior immigration emerged, in this research, as an important influential factor for adaptation. Hence, studies should be conducted to inquire on whether potential immigrants receive proper information from immigration officials abroad concerning the real prospects of settlement in Canada, and in Quebec if applicable.

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APPENDIX A



Concordia
UNIVERSITY

QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear respondent,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this survey. For questions provided with pre-coded options, you are simply required to answer by checking the proper option (Eg.: (✓)). Other questions require full, but short answers. Since the questionnaire survey is completely anonymous, please feel comfortable to answer as frankly as you wish.

A) GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Please, complete:

Gender	year of birth	country of birth	3 first digits of postal code
M() F()	19__ __	_____	__ __ __

2. What year did you immigrate to Canada?

Year: 19__ __

3. How did you qualify for permanent resident (PR) status ("landed immigrant status")?

- Family member 1()
- Refugee 2()
- Assisted relative 3()
- Entrepreneur 4()
- Self-employed 5()
- Investor 6()
- Independent worker 7()

B) EQUIVALENCIES

4. Did you acquire any post-secondary diplomas/certificates or other types of qualifications before immigrating to Canada?

- Yes 1()
- No 2()

5. Do you know of any organization where you can obtain equivalencies for your education and qualifications that you acquired outside of Canada?

Yes. 1() _____

If yes, please indicate the name of the organization and its location:

Name: _____

City: _____, Province: _____

No 2() _____

If no, do you think that there is a need for immigrants to have access to such a service?

Yes. 1()

No 2()

5a. In approximately how many job applications did you use your original foreign qualification documents in Canada?

Number of job applications: _____

5b. How many jobs approximately were you offered in Canada using your original foreign qualification documents?

Number of jobs: _____

Now please go to question # 16.

6. How did you know of this organization?

From family or friend. 1()

From a non-governmental agency 2()

From a governmental agency 3()

Other, please specify: _____ 4()

7. Did you make use of this organization for your own needs?
Yes. 1() _____ Please go to next question.
No 2() _____

If no, why did you not make use of the organization?

Fees are too high. 1()

I prefer to use my original qualification documents. 2()

Employer(s) understood my original qualification documents. 3()

Other, please specify: _____ 4()

Now, please go to question # 14.

8. What year did you make use of this organization?
Year: 19__ __
9. Were you satisfied with the equivalencies that you obtained from the organization?

Yes. 1() _____

If yes, why were you satisfied? _____

No 2() _____

If no, why were you not satisfied? _____

C) JOB APPLICATIONS

10. In approximately how many job applications did you use or mention your original foreign qualification documents in Canada?

Number of job applications: _____

11. In approximately how many job applications did you use or mention your equivalency document in Canada?

Number of job applications: _____

12. Among all the places where you applied for a job using your equivalency document, how many approximately knew about the equivalency document?

Number of places: _____

13. Among all the places where you applied for a job using your equivalency document, how many approximately acknowledged the value of the document?

Number of places: _____

D) JOB OFFER

14. How many positive answers did you get from your job applications in Canada using your original foreign qualification documents?

Number of positive answers: _____

15. How many positive answers did you get from your job applications in Canada using your equivalency document:?

Number of positive answers: _____

16. Now, you may add any further comments:

Thank you!

APPENDIX B

List of Organizations

Maison internationale de la Rive-Sud (MIRS)
Centre communautaire sud-asiatique du Québec
Service canadien d'assistance aux immigrants juifs
Association des immigrants latino-américains de Côte-des-neiges
Ammicale des pharmaciens vietnamiens
Centre d'accueil des réfugiés et immigrants de St-Laurent (CARD)
Centre social d'aide aux immigrants
La Maisonnée - Service d'aide et de liaison pour immigrants
Service d'aide aux néo-québécois et immigrants (SANQI)
YMCA Centre-ville

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW SURVEY

In order to perform a more in-depth examination of immigrants' experiences with regards to their integration into the Canadian labour market in the field of their qualifications, I will be conducting an interview survey with volunteer respondents.

This survey will be completely confidential and I will be the only person interviewing the respondents on a one-to-one basis, for a period of approximately one hour and, as much as possible, at a place and time of the respondents' convenience.

If you are interested in participating in this particular survey, please fill in the box below and I will contact you to give you full information.

Family name: _____

Given Name: _____

Phone number: (_____) _____

Thank you in advance for your cooperation!

APPENDIX D

CONSENT FORM TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

This is to state that I agree to participate in a program of research being conducted by Myriam Mansour of the Geography Department at Concordia University.

I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and discontinue my participation at anytime without negative consequences.

I understand that my participation in this study is confidential.

I understand the purpose of this study and know that there is no hidden motive of which I have not been informed.

I HAVE CAREFULLY STUDIED THE ABOVE AND UNDERSTAND THIS AGREEMENT.
I FREELY CONSENT AND AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY.

NAME (please print): _____

SIGNATURE: _____

WITNESS SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW STRATEGY AND QUESTIONNAIRE

The one hour interview is designed to get a general idea of the respondents' experience in integrating the Canadian (Ontario or Quebec) labour market with his/her credentials. It will consist of very general questions to allow respondents maximum freedom of expression. However, a guideline will be referred to to assure the consistency of information obtained from the respondents. Please find below the two sets of questions respondents will be asked to elaborate on, according to their respective experience. Once the questions will have been discussed, I (as the interviewer) will go through the checklist (see below) to make sure all the necessary information was collected.

General Questions

Part A: The facts (about 1/2 hour)

- 1- Year of immigration
- 2- Brief history of prior immigration experience (country of birth, countries of residence, countries of studies, etc.)
- 3- Immigration itself (category, reasons)
- 4- After immigration: activities in a chronological order until now (work, studies, etc. as well as duration, nature, etc. of these activities)
- 5- What happened with foreign credentials (used or not?)

Part B: Their perception (about 1/2 hour)

- 1- Satisfaction with immigration experience (degree, reasons, expectations versus reality, etc.)
- 2- Satisfaction with labour market experience in Canada (degree, reasons, expectations versus reality in terms of field and level of qualifications, etc.)
- 3- Integration barriers (linguistic, cultural, economic, social, professional, etc.)
- 4- Equivalency services (known or not, used or not, good or not, etc.)
- 5- Further comments

Checklist

- year of immigration
- country of birth, of citizenship
- qualifications obtained abroad, in which country
- qualifications obtained in Canada, in which province
- period of time before first job was found in Canada
- for each job (prior & after immigration):
 - where
 - for how long & number of hours/week
 - relation to field of studies, to level of qualification
 - how rewarding
 - reasons for leaving/ for staying
- intent to find another job:
 - reasons
 - field
- immigrant category
- language proficiency upon arrival
- other spoken languages
- intentions prior to immigration:
 - of working in field of qualifications
 - of working at level of qualification
 - of studying
- comparison of job situations:
 - before & after immigration
 - first job in Canada & now
 - with other immigrants

APPENDIX F

Reasons for Satisfaction and Non-Satisfaction with Equivalency Services

Note: The answers that were given in French were translated into English (*) and grammatical errors were corrected to facilitate reading.

	Organizations	Reasons	Country of birth
1	Equivalency service	*Because three years of my university were recognized.	Peru
2	Equivalency service	*Because I have obtained the equivalency of my diploma.	Uruguay
3	McGill University	With the case of McGill, I was admitted right away to the Master's Degree Program.	Iraq
4	Medical Council of Canada	My qualifications were accepted as equivalent to that of Canada.	Sri Lanka
5	Equivalency service	*It was correct.	Turkey
6	Equivalency service	*I obtained the equivalency.	Egypt
7	Equivalency service	*Exact equivalencies.	Spain
8	Alliance française	-	France
9	MEQ	-	El Salvador
10	Equivalency service	It was well done.	Panama
11	Equivalency service	*Because I obtained quite good equivalencies.	Nicaragua
12	Equivalency service	*Because it gave exactly what I had done before.	Vietnam
13	Equivalency service	-	Vietnam
14	Equivalency service	-	Vietnam
15	MEQ	*Correct.	Vietnam
16	Equivalency service	*Same diploma.	Burundi

Table 1. Responses given by the 16 respondents who were satisfied with equivalencies they obtained from the organizations they made use of .

	Organizations	Reasons	Country of birth
1	Equivalency service	*I lost some years of schooling.	Argentina
2	Equivalency service	*I lost four years of studies from my country of origin.	Lebanon
3	Equivalency service	*Because employers do not accept them.	Turkey
4	Equivalency service	The level of schooling I have is much higher.	Mexico
5	MEQ	*There is a loss of 1 1/2 year because certain courses do not have a translation.	Chili
6	MEQ	*Because the equivalency did not give an idea of my training.	Chili
7	Equivalency service	*My request for equivalencies was refused, I did not have with me a description of my courses.	Lebanon
8	Equivalency service	*Because I lost 2 years that were not recognized.	Syria
9	Equivalency service	*Because I consider that I have level higher than the one that I was recognized.	Cuba
10	Equivalency service	*In Romania, I have 5 years of university and the Master's degree in mechanical engineering. Here they gave me an equivalency of 3 years of university.	Romania
11	Equivalency service	*I did 13 years of studies and they only recognized 12.	Romania
12	Equivalency service	*Because the university diploma of my country is the same as here.	Romania
13	Equivalency service	*Because the equivalency is not fair.	Romania
14	Equivalency service	*Because the equivalency of studies is not the same as the equivalency of a diploma.	Romania
15	Equivalency service	*Because they have decreased my level of schooling.	Chili
16	Equivalency service	*17 years of schooling = a diploma of 1st cycle [bachelor degree]	Romania
17	Equivalency service	The time to get the result was too long.	Sri Lanka
18	Equivalency service	*I have 5 years of university, they only recognized 2 - not even a bachelor degree!	Poland
19	Equivalency service	*Because they recognized less years of university that I have done.	Algeria
20	Equivalency service	*Because my 4 years of university were reduced to 3 years.	Syria
21	Equivalency service	*I have graduated from a Pilot Academy and I was only recognized a secondary five level.	Nicaragua
22	Equivalency service	*For my second title, they only recognized 2 years.	El Salvador

Table 2. Responses given by the 22 respondents who were not satisfied with equivalencies they obtained from the organizations they made use of.

	Organizations	Reasons	Country of birth
1	Equivalency service	Satisfied: because it has become my only diploma (having lost my own documents). Dissatisfied: I would have hope for a system of exams in order to evaluate the real potential of newcomers and to make the best of what they have.	Egypt
2	Equivalency service	Satisfied: because it was more than others. Dissatisfied: because I could not work and they [equivalencies] did not correspond to university criteria, which means that they were not very useful.	Spain

Table 3. Responses given by the 2 respondents who were both satisfied and not satisfied with equivalencies they obtained from the organizations they made use of.

APPENDIX G

Compilation of Results Obtained for Questions 10 to 15 by 34 Respondents

Note: For computation purposes, certain answers given by respondents had to be altered: "a few" was replaced by the number 2; "several" was replaced by the number 5; whenever a number was followed by a "+" this symbol was ignored; and whenever two numbers were given, (eg. "30 to 40"), the middle value was used (eg. 35). All these knew values are indicated in brackets.

Gender	Immigration Category	Country of Birth	Original Documents		Equivalency Documents			
			Number of Job Applications (Quest. 10)	Number of Job Offers (Quest. 14)	Number of Job Applications (Quest. 11)	Number of Job Offers (Quest. 15)	Number of People who Knew about (Quest. 12)	Number of People Acknowledged (Quest. 13)
F	Indep. Worker	Argentina	0	0	~150	4	all school board	
F	Ass. Relative	Libya	1	1	0	0	0	0
F	Refugee	Peru	8	-	0	-	0	0
M	Indep. Worker	Turkey	0	0	several (5)	1	0	0
F	Indep. Worker	Uruguay	-	-	60	-	I don't know	
M	Refugee	Mexico	40	0	40	0	0	0
F	Fam. Member	Chile	0	4	20	0	3	5
F	Indep. Worker	Chile	20+	2	0	-	-	-
F	Fam. Member	Spain	50+	10-15 (12)	50+	10-15 (12)	a few (2)	all
M	Refugee	Sri Lanka	200	0	100	0	100	-
M	Indep. Worker	Lebanon	70	-	0	-	0	-
F	Entrepreneur	Syria	-	-	25	1	20	20
M	Refugee	Cuba	4	0	4	0	4	2
M	Indep. Worker	Romania	3	0	0	0	-	-
M	Indep. Worker	Romania	30	1	0	1	20	I don't know
F	-	Romania	20	-	-	-	-	-
M	Indep. Worker	Romania	-	-	80	-	-	-
F	Refugee	Chile	5	3	0	0	-	-
F	Fam. Member	Spain	0	0	4-10 (7)	6	0	all
M	Self-Employed	France	20	-	30	-	2	1
M	Indep. Worker	France	5	-	-	-	-	-
M	-	Sri Lanka	10	-	-	-	-	-
M	Fam. Member	Egypt	200	1	200	0	all	all
M	Refugee	Romania	100-120 (110)	3	30-40 (35)	1	2	2
F	Refugee	Sri Lanka	3	1	2	1	2	1
M	Refugee	Panama	100	a few (2)	50	a few (2)	all	a few (2)
M	Indep. Worker	Poland	12	0	12	0	several (5)	1
F	Fam. Member	Algeria	1	1	1	1	1	1
M	Investor	Syria	3	2	0	-	-	-
M	Refugee	Peru	6	-	2	-	-	-
M	Refugee	El Salvador	0	0	30	2	10	10
F	Refugee	Vietnam	2	3	2	3	2	2
M	Fam. Member	Vietnam	10	2	10	2	3	4
M	Refugee	Burundi	1	1	1	1	1	1

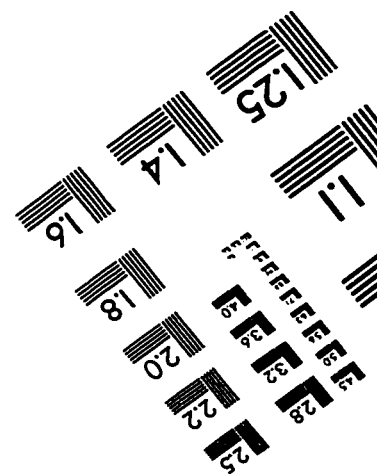
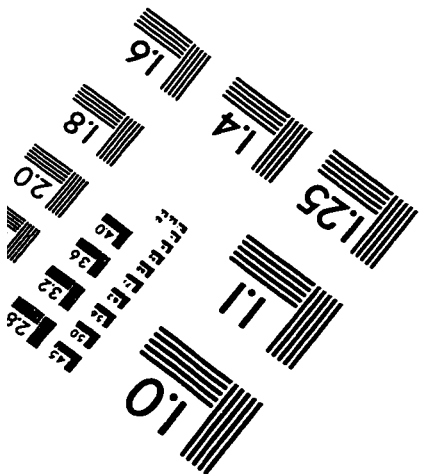
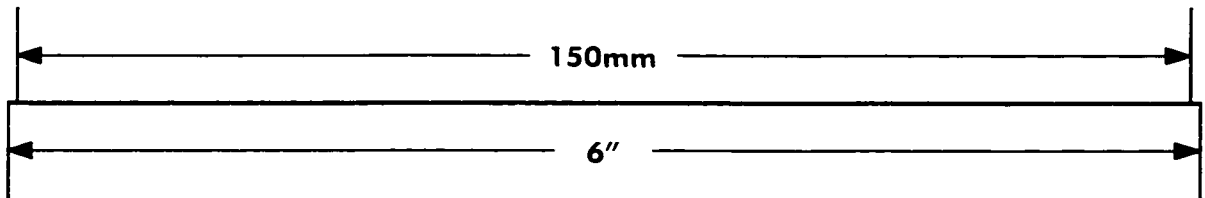
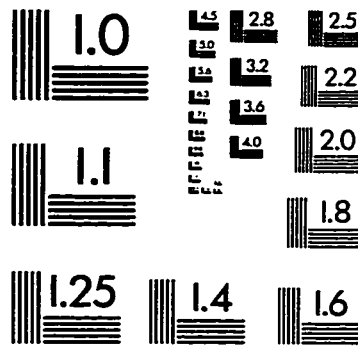
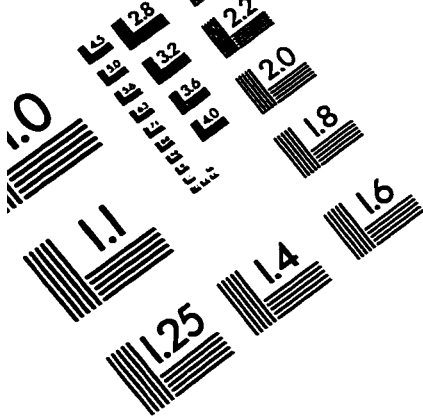
APPENDIX H

General Comments provided by 35 Respondents

Note: The answers that were given in French were translated in English (*) and grammatical errors were corrected to facilitate reading.

	Country of Birth	With Quebec Equivalency	Comments
1	Argentina	yes	[Should] find a way to give more objective equivalencies in relation to immigrants' training without only taking into account the number of years of schooling. *
2	Turkey	no	I have original documents for an experience of 12 years. I have made a request for equivalencies but the answer is always negative. *
3	Uruguay	yes	I have a diploma from Belgium; this perhaps explains the good equivalencies [I have] and the speed [of the process] (6 weeks). *
4	Mexico	yes	I feel that having a Equivalency is a good thing. But in my case, instead of being a support, it is a barrier because the schooling level I have it seems to be lower than what I have. Even though I consider to know much more things - and have much more experience on the field, it does not help at all to mention that I have my Canadian equivalency.
5	Chile	yes	Equivalencies are important, but the Canadian experience is a priority for employers, so it becomes a vicious circle to get the first job. *
6	Chile	yes	Equivalencies are not really considered by employers, unless you prove that you have a Canadian experience. This happens to be (in my opinion) the most important obstacle in the quest for a job. *
7	Spain	yes	I have always presented original documents with my equivalencies. *
8	Iraq	yes	1) Some questions left unanswered because they do not apply to my case. 2) I spent 2 years waiting for my landed immigrant status, then almost 1 year for French courses. 3) Then 3 years to obtain the Masters Degree in Library and Information Studies. 4) I worked only twice using McGill degree documents (in Library): they were short times on Government Challenge Program. 5) I worked as a telephone sales person until a while ago when I was unemployed. 6) Trying hard to find a job using my Canadian Masters Degree. I never used my foreign documents in any job search.
9	Nigeria	no	The present austerity measures or the recession has made it difficult for people, especially we minorities to get any job irrespective of one's qualifications or professional experiences. Another typical disadvantage is if one's social insurance number starts with 909.
10	Vietnam	no	I used my original qualification documents issued by American and Swiss universities for my job search.
11	Sri Lanka	yes	Canada is not the place to immigrate if you have skilled qualifications as a doctor.
12	Lebanon	yes	My job applications were in other fields than the field of my qualifications, therefore the fact that I have my equivalencies or not did not influence the answers. *
13	Lebanon	no	Even if I had equivalencies, major element was missing: "the Canadian experience". It is the first question asked and is, in my opinion, far too important. *
14	Cuba	no	At present, I am waiting for the final answer from the <i>Division des équivalences</i> , because my dossier has been there for 1 year. *
15	Romania	yes	I was told that I did not have Canadian (Quebec) work experience. *

16	Romania	no	The education system of Quebec requires unequal and unfair evaluation of original education.
17	Egypt	yes	I have obtained the equivalency but the problem is that I need the Canadian experience before working: but who? *
18	Romania	yes	Asked to occupy a job position: Canadian experience and equivalency of diploma. *
19	Romania	no	I am a dentist, I am not allowed to work before having obtained my equivalencies. I must pass 4 exams and than I can work as a dentist. *
20	France	no	I wish to precise that in my case my membership application to the <i>Order des Ingénieurs du Québec</i> is being processed and this is what employers are interested in. I have not used the equivalency proposed by the Quebec equivalency service. *
21	Sri Lanka	yes	Ten years ago, the equivalency document was not a big issue. Many of them were able to find jobs in Toronto and in other provinces using foreign qualifications. To find the real performance, you have to make a survey among recent arrival of immigrants in order to evaluate their labour market experience and their problem.
22	Mali	no	The creation of an autonomous organization which could offer these services to immigrants could be useful. *
23	Burundi	no	I did not have equivalencies issued because I did not have my documents (burnt in my country), but I think it is necessary that organizations issuing equivalencies exist in large number for those who have some because employers here require diplomas obtained in Quebec (therefore equivalencies or diplomas received here). *
24	Honduras	no	I have not yet started to send job applications because I am studying French.
25	Egypt	yes	I strongly believe that immigrants represent a richness [an asset] for Canada because of their ethnical diversity and their culture. *
26	India	no	I got two jobs with my personal contacts.
27	Romania	yes	An equivalency does not represent much because employers are not interested and want Canadian experience! But how do we obtain this?? *
28	India	no	I got three jobs through personal influence.
29	Panama	yes	I hope I can help with this survey.
30	Poland	yes	In my opinion, everything is linked to the economic crisis. *
31	Algeria	yes	As a matter of fact, I did not have any problems in terms of job since the first time I applied for a position I was chosen. Perhaps it is a question of luck. *
32	Syria	yes	I was greatly advantage by participating to an employment integration program (10 weeks of courses and 10 weeks of stage) which allowed me to make myself known in a Quebec working environment. *
33	Mexico	no	I think we might have the opportunity to go to university whatever the status of the person in the city (refugee, illegal, etc.)
34	Peru	yes	In my case, it is the MCCI that did my equivalencies and it took almost 4 years! *
35	El Salvador	yes	After a while, I decided not to present my equivalencies, because they were an obstacle for my job quest, especially for non-qualified jobs. *



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