How Visible Minority Immigrant Professionals Experience their Employment Settlement in Winnipeg: Looking through a Practice-based Lens, Seeking Solutions

By

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ABSTRACT

This research study seeks to learn from the experiences of visible minority professional immigrants, "internationally educated professionals" (IEPs), often described simply as "newcomers," who have migrated to Canada and settled in Winnipeg. The findings present and document the self-perceptions and understanding these individuals have of their migration journeys as contextualised through seeking employment settlement and overall integration in Canada, specifically in Winnipeg. While the sample is small, and deeply experiential, the objective of the research is that emergent insights form the basis of a theoretical-applied framework that can be used to support individuals figure out good strategies to enhance their employability, agency, and resiliency. In addition, the findings can be utilised by community stakeholders to create programming that addresses some gaps, creating social innovation–based resources that are well-coordinated, and also to develop their potential to be more customised, responsive and inclusive.

Qualitative enquiry–based mixed methods, including auto-ethnography, were employed to gather and analyse data. One of the core elements of this research is that it is strongly informed by the researcher's practitioner experience in the newcomer settlement sector, one of its objectives being to help bring the often separate worlds of theory and praxis closer by strengthening the feedback loop between them. The study brings together the following interdisciplinary worlds in conversation with each other: PACS; economic migration; career practice in the context of employment transition; and auto-ethnography. It is hoped that by bringing the above perspectives and practitioner tools to the field of migration, as applied to employment and career transitions, unexplored avenues and paradigms of research, analysis and praxis will open that can in turn help move the interdisciplinary field of conflict transformation and peacebuilding in new theoretical, methodological, and practise-based directions.

Acknowledgements

It took more than a village to raise this child! My first note of gratitude goes to the participants in this study, immigrant professionals who walked hand in hand with me on this research journey, as well as key informants, who shared with me their expertise. The power of moving stories shared with me in trust, by these highly qualified newcomers, and others, told by individuals who were part of their support network system, has brought me to this milestone. In all humility I carry their voices to the world.

In addition to these women and men I interviewed, there were others like them with whom I worked, with the objective of supporting them in their employment integration. I learnt through them lessons in courage, resilience, and empathy, and for this I feel blessed. I acknowledge the learning and warmth I found at Success Skills Centre, my first professional home in Winnipeg. Monika Feist, my boss and mentor, was always generous in sharing her knowledge and spirit of commitment she brought to immigrant settlement, as did my co-workers. Rany, a colleague first, now a caring friend, indulged my queries even when the hour was inappropriate. The few months working at N.E.E.D.S. Centre with refugee and immigrant youth, and with the dedicated staff, were enriching and gratifying, and I thank Margaret von Lau both for the opportunity, and for making sure I went back to complete my dissertation.

I acknowledge the generosity of Jessica Senehi, my advisor, for her insights, her patience and her enduring encouragement. I am grateful to esteemed members of my committee, Ellen Judd, Emma Alexander, and Maureen Flaherty for their continuous support, and for sharing with me the riches of their perspectives. Finding a learning community early on, with PACS co-conspirators, Sandra, Jodi, and Robin, was affirming, special thanks to Sandra. I found the gift of laughter with friends: Edna, Diana, Melanie, Lily; stimulating intellectual conversations with Amit, my brother, an academic who always understood.Thanks dear family for helping me see the reason for striving, and for keeping me grounded: my husband Rajat for walking on this difficult path with me, role-modeling single-minded devotion to your work, urging me to do the same; my gratitude to Pooja, Maanav, and Tara, (my grown children, now professionals in their own right). You inspired me by making me see that my bringing this project to successful closure meant the world to you and that it was indeed the most precious gift I could give you.

Dedication

This is for my father who would have been so happy to see me done with this long chapter

of my life. He would always ask me,

"How long will you be so busy, and keep studying?

Can't you lead a normal life?"

I dedicate this work also to all those "newcomers," immigrants and refugees, who travel to

an elsewhere away from home, with our bags and our hearts full with that same simple striving

to lead a "normal life…"

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CHAPTER ONE: Setting the Stage

By Way of a Prelude...and how this came to be....

The world has so much verisimilitude that all lives can be rich with competing stories, and we may sometimes wonder if we were always meant to be at the place where we find ourselves. The well-known poem by Robert Frost eloquently expresses this dilemma: "Two roads diverged in a yellow wood, and sorry I could not travel both, and be one traveler." In the poem the narrator chose the road less travelled by "and that has made all the difference."

The relevance of Frost's poem "The Road Less Travelled" can hardly be lost in the context of migration so it seemed appropriate to use his words to open this study which is situated among stories of migration journeys, and infused with travels that seemed like they were ongoing and relentless. It is also about transitions and tribulations as well as hopes and dreams; about settlement, life changes, losses and gains; and a lot more. It gives voice to experiences of having to make choices without knowing where they will lead, or simply about not having the luxury of making considered decisions. For individuals and families who move from one established home to create another new or alternative one elsewhere, settlement is often about questioning the very idea of home, (is it a place or a feeling?), reconfiguring it, perhaps even re-inventing it. But I get ahead of myself...

Our lives are often a tapestry of multiple stories cohabiting in tiny spaces, intersecting, crisscrossing while challenging each other's authorial voices to assert their dominance. Lives impacted by migration journeys are even more intensely so, densely woven and more layered as they often are. How I came to this story or how it sneaked up behind me almost serendipitously is also one of its curious elements.

It is partly my story of moving from a previous home to a new one in Winnipeg. The theme of being a professional in another geographical context and becoming one (or the journey of achieving that) here in Canada is a significant aspect of it. However, if it were my story alone it would not merit place in a PhD dissertation but be better suited elsewhere in another genre. Autobiography, memoir, or work of fiction it is not. It is a qualitative and auto-ethnographic research study that gives voice to the story of migration and settlement as experienced by visible minority men and women with international education and work experience. The geographical context of its location is Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Personal Story Archives

Introducing the Research: The What, the Why, and the How

This research study listens to, and learns from, the experiences of visible minority[1] newcomer professionals who have migrated to Winnipeg, Canada. Numbers of newcomers in this category have been growing and are expected to rise exponentially in the next few years. Hence, this study is timely. Through this study I explore how the "lived experience" (Abu-lughod, 1991; Akkaymak, 2017; Branker, 2017; Lobban, 2013) of seeking labour market integration through finding employment in one's own profession, or closely allied occupations (and interests) impacts processes of holistic settlement in Canada and personal wellbeing. The

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[1] Any number of sources will provide detailed information on this term, and only a few select examples are highlighted below.Statistics Canada (2009). Data and definitions http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/21-006-x/2008002/def-eng.htm. Dictionary, Census of Population, 2016 - Visible minority https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/pop. 'Visible minority:' A misleading concept that ought to be retired. *Visible Minority and Population Group Reference Guide, Census of Population, 2016*. https://www.catalyst.org/knowledge/visible-minorities-canada. Statistics Canada (2009). Data and definitions http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/21-006-x/2008002/def-eng.htm. https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/visible-minority-a-misleading-concept-that-ought-to-be-retired/article12445364/

following theoretical considerations inform this study: immigrant identities and intersectionality in the context of migration; labour market integration; barriers to inclusion, such as structural conflict and solution-making frameworks (inclusive peace building); and a constructivist and social justice–inspired approach to counselling.

This is a multi-method qualitative study that utilizes participant-observation, semi-structured interviews, and focus groups to gather data. Grounded theory, ethnography, and auto-ethnography are the methodological approaches that guide the process of data collection and analysis. The study is significant as it collects in-depth and nuanced qualitative data relating to individual, societal, and policy factors that impact integration and inclusion processes for newcomers in Winnipeg.

The main goal throughout was to utilize new insights that emerge from this research to create a theoretical-applied framework to (a) help individuals figure out good strategies that help enhance their employability, agency, and resiliency; (b) support settlement services and community-based agencies to develop more targeted and measurable services; and (c) foster social innovation–based policy that applies research for improving systems that are better coordinated while being more responsive and inclusive.

Situated-ness of the Researcher in the Context of Migration Research

It is important for me to state at the outset that the lens through which this research is theoretically conceptualised, positioned, and undertaken is that of a "prac-ademic" (Miller, & Rudnick, 2010; Oberg, 2008) or a researcher-practitioner (Anderson, 2006; Ku, 2011). This perspective is the core piece as well as the rationale for this research as only then would it align with desired outcomes as outlined in my research proposal (see above paragraph). However,

what this experience feels like for my research participants and the way they express it is at the heart of this study.

Further, this research is also richly informed by my "participant observation" (Spradley, 1980; Tedlock, 1991) of the settlement environment due to my positioning in it as front-line staff. As such, the articulation of thoughts and emotions, of dilemmas and dreams of numerous newcomer clients have all been invaluable sources of information that have shaped my understanding, and these undergird this study. My front-line role is further detailed below.

In a kind of osmotic act, my story and numerous stories of other professional immigrants from across the world come together and speak with each other through the medium of this research. On the following pages, our many stories sometimes intertwine and braid themselves involuntarily around each other while at other times they play out separately on parallel paths. At all times though, they learn to speak with each other, and always with mutual respect and empathy, but also with critical open-ness and questioning.

At the time when individuals participated in interviews and focus groups for this research, they had been in Winnipeg between two and ten years. The study is a medium through which I hope to communicate the flavours, the specificity, and the uncertainties of migration journeys as well as trials and triumphs, joys and sorrows of leaving old homes and settling in new ones. Seeking and finding meaningful employment and economic integration that aligns with an individual's life aspirations and professional goals can often be the make-or-break element in the migration journey.

In my capacity and role as front line staff in the employment sector I have worked with two distinct cohorts of newcomers in Winnipeg during 2013–2017. One of the cohorts was newcomer professionals and skilled workers with international education and work experience in a range of

fields. The other group that I had the privilege of working with were immigrant and refugee youth, ages 16–29. I believe that the power of stories they told came from being "lived" and shared by those who had experienced these lives. Working hands-on with all these courageous and diverse individuals in a multicultural setting has considerably shaped any knowledge and (empathetic) understanding I have of the field of migration and settlement. My understanding and interest in facilitating the telling of these stories through this interdisciplinary social science research comes also from my previous background as an educator in the humanities, where my teaching and researching was in diaspora writing although more from a literary and representational perspective. Additionally, the personal "lived" moments and years of my own migration and settlement journey in the last few years, as an internationally educated migrant professional, have been an additional experiential dimension that has also shaped my perspectives.

Visible Minority Identity: Location of Study Participants

This research study focuses on the experiences of visible minority immigrant professionals, particularly in relation to economic settlement and integration in Winnipeg. As the vast literature in this field affirms, individuals who fall under the category of "immigrant," and within that "visible minority," are a heterogeneous group. The Statistics Canada definition of visible minority is as follows: "The *Employment Equity Act* defines visible minorities as "persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour." The visible minority population consists mainly of the following groups: South Asian, Chinese, Black, Filipino, Latin American, Arab, Southeast Asian, West Asian, Korean and Japanese" (Statistics Canada, 2017).

Profile of Research Participants

Individuals who participated in this study belong to the white-collar career-oriented class of professionals, including engineers, lawyers, healthcare professionals, human resources personnel, social scientists, educators, and counsellors. There were others with experience at middle and high management sectors; as well as those who had been employers in international companies they had owned, and in many cases still did, in an international context. Most but not all belonged to occupations that require certifications and licensing in Canada, and some were from the skilled trades. Further details regarding their occupational affiliations and demographic profile are provided in the methodology section.

Having migrated to Canada, their goal now was to find meaningful employment in their pre-migration area of work, or otherwise preferred occupational fields. However, the actuality of "settling" optimally in a chosen field was a multi-faceted process for this cohort of newcomers. Since for the majority of migrants, whatever category or immigration stream for migration they may utilise to make their way to Canada, the task of making a new home goes beyond finding a job to include family settlement.

The intersectional nature of overall tasks to be completed successfully in a timely manner, and in a short span of time, adds further complexity, and anxiety, to this challenging process. In the early settlement stage, the journey can appear confusing, time-consuming and nerve-wracking. Sadly, for many, the multiple barriers of job search—professional licensing and credential recognition, passing exams and becoming overall employment ready, and cracking the secret codes of the hidden job market while managing one's own expectations—can be an experience coloured by negative experiences like disappointment and frustration.

Research Rationale, Goal, and Design

Although extremely preoccupied with individual and family settlement, individuals who agreed to participate in this study were excited to do so and gave generously of their time because they hoped that something practical and concrete would be generated as a result of it. It is their hope that transforms into my goal, and during times of personal struggles when this study seeing the light of day felt like "mission impossible," the need of my research participants to find solutions to some root problems in their lives, or at least have their voices and stories heard, has kept me marching on. Although the study addresses barriers and challenges as experienced and expressed by the research participants, their interest in and enthusiasm for participation was sparked by the solution-focused goal and intentionality of the study.

In line with the above description, and aligning with the rationale and purpose driving this study, a solution-focused approach is inherent in and organic to the research and permeates it at many levels. For example, the presence of gaps and barriers to employment integration for professional immigrants are perceived and experienced by them (as evidenced in the data and its analysis) at multiple levels. For this reason, solutions too need to be targeted at each of these different sites, both separately and together, to be effective.

As an example, the following breakdown highlights some general directions where solutions could come from: (a) strategies and actions individuals can themselves initiate and perform that help enhance their employability and agency, resiliency, and ability to transfer skills; (b) the role settlement services and community-based agencies can play to ensure targeted and measurable services, utilising research for professional development to target building staff and client capacity to achieve desired outcomes; and (c) the application of relevant research insights to foster social innovation–based policy and fund programming that builds systems that

are better coordinated and more responsive, including teaching practices that incorporate a constructivist approach in employment and career-transition counselling. Further, in sync with the above conceptualising and positioning, this study proposes to help generate practice-based solutions at each of these three tiers so that an integrated perspective may emerge, and holistic settlement be feasible. It is hoped that, based on the knowledge produced, and recommendations made, various forms of hands-on capacity building solutions can be created by those with interest and expertise in this area, including, importantly, newcomer professionals themselves.

Boundary Crossing: An Interdisciplinary and Cross-sectoral Approach

My full-time job as front-line staff in the service sector had made me aware of some glaring gaps, and I had some thoughts on directions we could have pursued to seek solutions. My work as researcher in the interdisciplinary areas of migration/settlement and Peace and Conflict Studies (PACS), and my interest in ethnography brought more clarity regarding how the above moving parts could hang together. The conversations I had with clients and my research participants, and the data I gathered, further confirmed that unless all these moving parts worked efficiently on their own as well as in a well-coordinated manner, solutions would not be enduring, and at best they would be quick-fix, temporary, and unsustainable.

Lastly, and significantly, it is important to note that this research is situated in the inter-disciplinary field of PACS, and that social justice and grassroots-based paradigms are its core tenets. Apart from taking a holistic view, the interdisciplinary nature of this field of enquiry assumes that several disciplinary strands will come together with interfaces and crossovers in between them so that multiple theoretical and methodological approaches become available for

the purpose of analysis and "conflict transformation."[2] It is important to note at this early

juncture in the study, that PACS as a disciplinary umbrella, and the interdisciplinary paradigm

within which it operates, offers me a lens and a framework that can go beyond single theoretical

and methodological approaches that must always agree with each other. Further, applied and

practice-based frameworks are central to PACS as the focus in the field is to move beyond

academic analysis and critical theory to make ideas operative and look outside the box for

creative strategies (and synergies) that can be utilised to effect transformative social change.

Problem-solving, solution-building, and other action-oriented paradigms are grounding

principles within the PACS field. Situating my research under this umbrella, particularly in a

practitioner-academic capacity, helps me realise my research and practice goals in this current

study on migration. Crossing boundaries among the fields of migration, ethnography, and PACS,

and initiating meaningful dialogue among these multiple-disciplinary trajectories has enriched

me both as a human being and a professional. I can only hope that this study conveys a small part

of what I have learned.

Significance of Study, and Relevance Beyond the Local Winnipeg Context

The study is significant and timely as gaps exist in qualitative studies in the context of

immigrant groups described above, particularly gaps situated in an experiential paradigm and

that are rooted in narrative storytelling. The goal of this research is to document experiences of

"professional" newcomer women and men in their own voices thereby creating a contemporary

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[2] Although the world of migration and settlement is usually not configured and conceptualised using the framework of "conflict" and "resolution/transformation," this study contextualizes struggles and systemic barriers to optimal settlement, as experienced by IEPs in the host country Canada (in this case locally in Winnipeg), using the lens of PACS in general, and structural conflict more specifically. The rationale for employing such a theoretical approach is explored in detail in the literature review chapter. In fact, there is a consistent argument articulating and affirming such a position throughout the study, including in the introduction.

archive in the context of urban immigrant settlement in Manitoba. However, while it is important to note that research for this study was conducted in the "local" Winnipeg context, the literature reviewed includes studies where relevant issues and contexts are raised as they apply more broadly in the context of migration transition in a pan-Canadian context too.

This research is significant also because it builds interdisciplinary bridges among several fields that have hitherto not been much in conversation with each other, such as, migration and constructivist career-counseling; and auto-ethnography, conflict transformation, and migration studies. In doing so it contributes to developing new approaches for better understanding of migration-related conflicts. Further, due to the study's situated-ness in a practice-based setting and approach, one of its key objectives is that, going forward, knowledge produced be applied in a hands-on manner to strengthen economic integration structures for migrant professionals.

Overview of Chapters

This research study is segmented using the following chapter divisions:

Following this introductory chapter that positions the study, there is Chapter Two, a detailed Context chapter. Chapter Two provides an overview of the context, i.e., participant profile, geographical location of the research, as well as the labour market contexts within which the study is situated. It also provides some detail regarding primary approaches this interdisciplinary study uses to study this topic.

Chapter Three focuses upon research methodology, describing not just the research process and specific methods employed to conduct the study in terms of gathering and analysing data, but it also provides the rationale for using such a methodological approach. This chapter shaped itself in the telling, in a sort of back and forth format that moves in- between two genres, one

being a kind-of creative (read auto-ethnographic) narrative telling, and the other a more straightforward description of methods that were employed.

Chapters Four and Five review relevant literature in the fields wherein this study is located, exploring and discussing theoretical parameters found useful to understand the world of migration and settlement as it applies to visible minority immigrant professionals in the context of their migration, settlement, and economic and social inclusion in Winnipeg, Canada. These core approaches and theoretical frameworks undergird this current research study, and literature relating to these is reviewed in these two chapters. The review of literature in Chapter Four introduces broad and general themes in the field of boundary crossing and migration, as well as concepts, terminology, and recurring tropes that play a central role in this study. Chapter Five gets more targeted and specific, going deeper. It reviews studies that relate with more focus to findings in the data, as well as those targeted towards solution-making.

Chapters Six, Seven, and Eight discuss and analyse findings that emerge from data collected. All three Findings chapters are set up slightly differently in terms of format. In Chapter Six, the first findings chapter, interview questions and responses received by participants set up the context for the research study. Their narration of "lived experience" provides thick description and leads interview conversations into descriptions of situations study participants encounter in their employment related migration experience. This leads individuals to tell their stories, often movingly, and always authentically and powerfully, leading them to speak of moments in their settlement migration journey they did not expect to find and that surprised them, and issues they believe arise for them as a result of challenges they faced.

Chapter Seven, the second findings chapter, presents both a generic migration-settlement narrative that emerges from the specific stories told by research participants while it showcases a

few specific stories to highlight the study's methodological focus on the particular within the general. Voice and storytelling are important components of this process, and themes that emerge from data collected are listed. This chapter explores these emergent themes in some detail.

Chapter Eight is the final findings chapter, and it goes further in depth, picking and highlighting a few salient issues that were often found to be common denominators in the migration story in the context of immigrant professionals even when each of their specific stories is quite different. It would be helpful to remind ourselves though that the goal of this study is to provide a nuanced self-perception based narrative of participants' "lived experience." The objective is not to produce an archive about how things "actually" are, or to extrapolate and expound more broadly, based on this small sample, about lives of other individuals from the same cohort.

Chapter Nine is the section that concludes the study. It both summarises findings as well as makes recommendations going forward. Chapter Ten is the final section, more of a creative and auto-ethnography-inspired vignette that wraps up the study.

By Way of Chapter Summary: An Epilogue…

This chapter sets the stage for the study, using both descriptive strategies and auto-ethnographic genres to provide preliminary information on purpose of research, themes, participants and methods. It introduces the research focus, rationale, methods used, and it highlights other significant aspects like significance and relevance. It also provides an overview of chapter divisions and content. The vignette below is in the nature of summary too, using as it

does a creative (and auto-ethnographic) genre to further encapsulate themes and tones that are central to this study.

Migration, Wanderlust, Storytelling ...

Migration, founded in wanderlust, may be one of the primeval and visceral human urges, and so it is no surprise that it is one of the most well-known tropes written about by scholars across disciplines as well as by creative writers. While thousands of tomes populate libraries on themes relating to this age-old theme, as readers and researchers we know well that even when the topic is the same, each story has the potential to be unique.

For me, when I look back on the road I have travelled as far back in my past as I can see, especially with the privilege of hindsight bias, it seems to me like my many previous lives have been a precursor to the current moment of telling this particular story. I migrated to Canada from India a decade ago, and I must acknowledge that my life trajectory prior to that, as an educator in the humanities and, more specifically, in literary studies, has been central in shaping my critical thinking and my humanist values. However, it also seems now that many of those life experiences were also a kind of preparation, in the nature of rites de passage perhaps, that I was going through so as to enable myself to tell such a story in a certain way.

This does not mean that others cannot or will not tell similar stories, but it makes us alert one more time to elements like specificity, nuance, and perspective that lie within the inherent nature of the story. And in observing that, we begin to note the ability of the story to have plotlines, characters, as well as twists and turns that will make it different and new each time, not only in the experiencing and in the telling, but also ways in which it is received by those who fall under its spell. Its significance becomes at once more powerful and poignant when it begins

to speak truth to power as it inevitably does, simply by being itself. It does that not for you or for me but because it cannot help itself, and because such is its inherent nature.

Personal Story Archives

CHAPTER TWO: "Everything is Different Here!" [3]

As a Prologue to My Story

I redo my resume, over and over again, even in my sleep. Related skills, transferrable skills, yadayadayada, and some others I believe I have, but they won't translate into this new country and culture, at least not well enough for me to find work here and utilize them. What then?

I network, aggressively and shamelessly because they tell me that's the way to go to land a job here. I find it so difficult, as that's not me. I was timid and quiet back home, often shy, even self-deprecatory, as humility and modesty were considered virtues, and tooting your horn meant you were bragging, a sign of brazen unbecoming.

Serendipity, they tell me, is how it will come about. You don't have to beg anybody for work but just let them know that this will be a mutually beneficial arrangement, that you are the right candidate for this job and you have something unique to offer them that you alone possess. Be confident, believe in yourself, you must be culturally appropriate, they advise. One day, they reiterate, you will be in the right place at the right time.

And miraculously, mysteriously, my qualifications, my experience, skills set, this brand new Canadian degree, my networking for the last few years, all this amazing stuff I possess will come together, my efforts will bear fruit, and I too will find my dream job, I repeat to myself, endlessly, trying so desperately to believe it. But what about all these years gone by while I tried and toiled tirelessly, losing myself little by little every day?

Personal Story Archives

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[3] Words used by one of the the study participants during an interview.

Situating the Research in its Geographical, Thematic, and other Contexts

This chapter maps the broad contextual terrain that visible minority immigrant professionals find themselves in once they move from their home country to Canada, specifically Winnipeg. The chapter has five sections, the first providing preliminary information about the topic and the cohort being studied, geographical location where the research was conducted, methods used, and theoretical approaches employed. The next two sections dig deeper into the two cognate areas that are at its centre, one, ground realities and policy-making in the world of settlement and integration for the target cohort in the study; and two, intersectional contexts of the labour market into which participants are keen to integrate to pursue their dreams. This is followed by the next section that highlights the practice-based focus of the study, steering it in the direction of its vision and purpose, of seeking solutions leading to better labour market inclusion for immigrant professionals. The concluding segment of this chapter deepens this solution-based thrust of the study further by pulling together its many parts and exploring ways of holistically framing the issues so that paths leading towards solutions may be seen more clearly.

This research study seeks to learn from the experiences of visible minority professional migrants, often described as "newcomers" or "internationally educated professionals" (IEPs), who have migrated to Canada and settled in Winnipeg (Cheng et al., 2012; Feldman, 1996; Mchugh, 2000; Thomas, 2015). The geographic location of this study is Winnipeg, and qualitative research methods were used to gather data. Being an immigrant in the economic class and a person of color, i.e., visible minority, I share the demographic profile of my participants as well as the "lived experience" of migration. As a researcher studying the experience of migration, settlement, and economic integration, and having shared this common ground with

my research participants at some generic level, in a similar timeline too, has been insightful and special. It has also been a great privilege both personally and professionally while it has been an advantage for the research process. This aspect of researcher-situatedness is a recurrent and pervasive motif in the research process and is further discussed at various junctures in the study.

Approaches to migration studies, just like the fact of immigration, must take into account socio-historical contexts, the specificities of causes leading to movement, geographical spaces traversed, and articulations of home among many other factors if we are to make sense of lived experiences of communities across the globe and come to any theoretical understanding of migrant subjectivities. Insights from such theorizing have implications that can help further policy models that can be used to develop resources and strategies to facilitate better integration through enhancing forms of social capital and cultural citizenship (Andrew, Gattinger, Jeannotte, & Straw, 2005). Discussions around integration and assimilation as models of acculturation within the multicultural nation-state in Canada are another important aspect of approaches to migration studies.

Deconstructing Context

Qualitative research methods based in paradigms of post-positivist and feminist research, including autoethnography, were used to ask questions of participants that helped locate context-specific common denominators of shared experiences, perceptions, assumptions, and perspectives out of which commonalities may be deduced. These will be discussed in detail in Chapter Three.

The findings, methodology, and theoretical parameters that are this study's framework and its flesh and bones will add the missing dimensions of description, nuance, and evocative voice to rich quantitative data already existing in the field (Basch, 1994; Caidi & Allard, 2005;

Kazemipur & Nakhaie 2013; McCoy & Masuch, 2007; Ngo & Este, 2006; Ogbuagu, 2012);

Wilkinson, 2013; Wilkinson et al., 2016) .

Visible Minority as Employment Equity Category

As indicated in the introductory chapter, this research study focuses upon the experiences

of visible minority immigrant professionals, particularly in relation to economic settlement and

integration in Winnipeg. Visible minority individuals are among four designated groups eligible

for employment equity status and benefits. Employment equity is the provision of working

conditions free of barriers which in turn corrects conditions of disadvantage in employment and

helps promote the principle that employment equity requires special measures and the

accommodation of differences.

For example, the Government of Manitoba posts the following statement on their

advertised Employment Opportunities:

> Employment Equity is a factor in selection. Applicants are requested to indicate in their
> covering letter or résumé if they are from any of the following groups: women, Aboriginal
> people, visible minorities and persons with disabilities (Government of Manitoba, 2009).
> Employment equity is mandated for federally regulated industries, Crown corporations and
> other federal organizations with 100 employees or more, as well as portions of the federal
> public administration identified in Schedules I or IV and V of the Financial Administration
> Act by order of the Governor in Council, which includes the Canadian Forces and the
> RCMP.[4]

Obviously, variances exist among individuals who have membership in this category, based on a

range of factors, for example, country of origin, race and ethnicity, specific identity markers like

age, gender, occupation, to other factors like socio-economic status, levels of education, work

experience, family circumstances, and other considerations. However, the common ground that

defines all participants is their non-Caucasian ancestry, their foreign-born status, and their visible

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[4] See https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/employment-equity.html

minority identity. The term "visible minority" originates from an employment equity context, and in that sense is designed to create a policy framework through which systems of governance are enabled to provide accommodation to minority groups. The objective is to redress prevailing imbalances. However, the same terminology, "visible minorities," used in the Employment Act (1986, c.31) adopted to discuss the "social worthiness of "race" and "non-whites" can be seen to be going against the principle of racial equality as defined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (section 15), which states:

> Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, sex, age, or mental or physical disability (S.C. 1982, c.11).

This is so because inherent in this is the assumption and acknowledgement of minority status in relation to certain population cohorts, and therefore the term becomes a signifier of their "lesser" status—in other words, their minority identity. These traits also become a badge of "different-ness"[5] from the so-called mainstream and a label that signifies ethnicity and racialization. More often than not, individuals get viewed by others, and even by themselves, through these "colored lenses" and these identity-locations become triggers for experiences of discrimination, marginalization and exclusion.

The above discussion is not just highly relevant but assumes greater significance in light of the following statistics and population ratios as they relate to current population cohorts in Canada. According to the Statistics Canada January 2017 Report *Immigration and Diversity: Population projections for Canada and its Regions, 2011 to 2036*, immigrants will represent

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[5] Notions of being "different" from the mainstream (read European) as a result of being ethnic and "visible" are problematic in view of high statistics of visible minority populations in Canada today, and even more so based on projections regarding increases in the future. These factual details theoretically should transform understanding of "mainstream" too and, when that does not happen, assumptions (and issues) around colonialism and embedded racism become an important part of the conversation.

between 24.5% and 30.0% of Canada's population in 2036, compared with 20.7% in 2011. Among these, in 2036, visible minority figures in this group and among them the working-age population (15 to 64 years) would be between 34.7% and 39.9%, compared with 19.6% in 2011. Regional analysis projections indicate that the proportion of visible minority working age population (15-64) would surpass 40% in Toronto, Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Winnipeg Winnipeg, and Abbotsford-Mission. In 2006, 101,900 people, or 16.3%, of Winnipeg's population were racialized people (City of Winnipeg, 2009). It is projected that by 2031, 27% of Winnipeg's population will be those designated visible minority (City of Winnipeg, 2009; Rabson, 2010, as cited in See-toh, 2012). According to the 2016 Census, 705 million foreign-born people came to Canada through the immigration process. They represented more than 1 in 5 people in Canada (https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-627-m/11-627-m2017028-eng.htm).

About Winnipeg, Geographical Location of the Study

Winnipeg, the largest city and urban centre in the province of Manitoba, is the geographical location for this research. Whether it is experiences individuals have and situations they face in relation to their job-search, or barriers to employment integration they encounter, all scenarios play out locally, and as such must first be understood within that context. As a mid-sized Canadian city, Winnipeg has its own specific scenarios and issues, as well as challenges, problems, and success stories, as they relate to internationally educated professionals. For one, the labour market realities for different occupations vary based on geographical location. Secondly, availability of infrastructural facilities also varies from one centre to the next. Lastly, cultures of inclusion and discrimination get constructed in local contexts. All these factors form the backdrop within and against which settlement takes place, and so these are critical to the experiencing of integration journeys for migrant individuals.

Unfortunately, much of the immigration-related conversations and policy imperatives in relation to mid-sized Canadian cities get articulated through the lens of "attraction, recruitment, and retention" (Briks, 1999) of immigrants. The Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) too was seen "as a way to deal with existing and impending skill shortages and as a vehicle to increase population growth—in both Winnipeg and rural areas" (Carter and Amoyaw, 2011, 172). For example, in 1999, when settlement services went through a re-configuration phase and responsibility for settlement service delivery shifted from the federal government to the province, Manitoba saw settlement delivery well aligned with its Provincial Nominee Program (PNP).

However, the problem with a focus on immigration being a strategy for population growth, including in smaller towns of the province and in rural areas, is that other objectives that are also part and parcel of its imperative get lost somewhere. For example terms, like "attraction, recruitment and retention," are a staple in any discussion on economic implications of Canada's population growth, and its reliance on immigration. Analysis of labor market shortfalls, and unavailability of a skilled workforce to match these gaps also loop right back to the acute need Canada has for a skilled workforce, and for this reason, immigrant professionals from different parts of the world must be lured to Canada, including in far flung regions where population growth for economic purposes is proving to be even more of a challenge. As such, the objective of Canadian immigration policy is to "attract, recruit, and retain" immigrants in the country so that the Canadian economy may get a boost, and flourish. See Kareem El-Assal, (2017, 2018).

Unfortunately, in terms of policy, in focusing single-mindedly upon "attraction, recruitment and retention," it also forgets to think about the interests of the very immigrants it invites after detailed assessments of their skills. Such an attitude is offensive and problematic as

it renders invisible and makes insignificant the problems individuals encounter, especially those in the economic category. It is also short sighted as it compromises integrational capacities of newcomers, thus negatively impacting one of the important long term goals of immigration and settlement policy.

Studies from psychology, such as Busic (2017), investigate the adaptive coping of immigrant professionals in the context of life-career ("interactional relationship between personal and professional spheres," Chen, 1998; 2011, cited on p. 1). In her research, Busic notes the lack of attention paid in psychology to the implications of multi-dimensional and complex barriers faced by migrant professionals, and the direct linkage this has to immigration policy. She quotes the observations of Melba Vasquez, president of the American Psychological Association (APA), in her role on the APA Presidential Task Force on Immigration in 2011, where she emphasises the importance of immigration research:

> Our hope is that increased understanding of the psychological factors related to various aspects of the immigrant experience will improve decision making with regard to immigration. The effective integration of immigrants in educational, work, and community settings is essential to the well-being of this country and its future. (American Psychological Association, Presidential Task on Immigration, 2011, p. V) (cited in Busic, p.5).

Lack of well-being and mental health issues in the case of migrant professionals have potential for serious consequences in the future, like higher burdens on the health care system.

A word about Theoretical Approaches

This research study draws broadly upon the following bodies of literature to understand issues that emerge around this topic:

1. Identity and intersectionality in migration studies

2. Social exclusion factors and labor market integration

3. Migration, conflict resolution and peace-building

4. Constructivist approaches for solution-based strategies

Issues and themes in employment integration as they relate to immigrant professionals are explored from a holistic perspective, and using a practitioner-oriented perspective. The rationale for using such a methodological approach is to attain the goal of problem solving and solution-making.

Relationships among migration, Peace and Conflict Studies, and ethnography (including auto-ethnography), as conceptualized and understood in the context of this study are explored in some depth. This helps to highlight commonalities shared between these three fields, for example, the significant role of relationships and relationality, situated-ness, and reflective practice. All of these themes, both independently as well as through conversations that emerge at the intersections of these disciplinary approaches, are significant to the way this study addresses challenges and solutions in the context of career and employment transition and economic integration for immigrant professionals in Winnipeg.

Immigration, Settlement and Integration Policy

Migrants currently come to Canada broadly under the following immigration streams: Federal Skilled Worker Program (FSWP), (i.e, economic migrants who are part of regulated professions and skilled trades), Provincial Nominee Program (PNP), Family Class, and Express Entry (EE). There is Canadian Experience Class (CEC), a category through which Temporary Foreign Workers (TFW) and International Students can transition into permanent residency. Another visa program is the Canada Business/Investor Program. There is a separate category for immigration on humanitarian grounds, as in relation to refugees, asylum seekers, and exceptional cases.

Some programs are managed federally and others fall under provincial jurisdictions. In the case of the latter, guidelines and regulations are often variable depending on provincial mandates, local needs and priorities, and availability of funding. The specifics around immigration programs that award permanent residency to individuals are dynamic, and policies and numbers change from time to time based on targets set by immigration policy at any given time.

Human Capital Focus in Canadian Immigration Policy

The focus in Canadian immigration policy shifted to the human capital (Branker, 2017; Reitz, 2001) approach in the 1990s. As a result, immigrants with high levels of education were favored, and this led to a significant increase in the education levels of new entrants. In 2001, more than 40% of recent immigrants had at least a bachelor's degree, compared with 22% in 1991. As a consequence, they accounted for 6% of all persons in Canada with a university degree in 2001, up from 4% in 1991.

In 2001, Canada passed a new immigration bill called the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (Bill C-11), and this replaced the 1976 Immigration Act, and the multiple amendments that had been made to it. This new Act makes a clear distinction between immigration and refugee protection, and it is under this broad framework that regulations relating to immigration and refugee matters can be made.

The Act lists eleven objectives with respect to immigration, for example, "to permit Canada to pursue the maximum social, cultural, and economic benefits of immigration" and "to enrich and strengthen the social and cultural fabric of Canadian society" (Statutes of Canada 2001, c. 27, s. 3.1). Further, the importance of skilled immigrants and economic benefits to

Canada is clearly stated in a document published by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) to justify the new Act:

> Canada needs young, dynamic, and well-educated skilled people. It needs innovation, ideas, and talents. Canadian employers want to take advantage of opportunities offered by the fast-moving pool of skilled workers. The global labour force can benefit Canadians through job creation and the transfer of skills. Immigration legislation must be adapted to enhance Canada's advantage in the global competition for skilled workers (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2001).

As per *Canada Gazette* 2002, the updated point system used for selecting skilled or economic immigrants places a strong emphasis on human capital or educational credentials, and the fact that immigrants need flexible skills and substantial credentials to adapt to Canada's changing labour market. In accordance with the assessment scale, based on a point system, up until 2001, as noted by Li (2003), "16 units out of 100 could be assigned to education, 8 units to experience, 10 units to occupation, and 18 units to education and training" (as cited in Li, S. & Li, E.X, 2008). In 2002 another grid was established to quantify human capital, and this allowed a maximum of 25 points to be awarded for formal education, 20 points to knowledge of official languages, 21 points to a skilled worker's experience, and 35 points to experience for investors and entrepreneurs. In all, 66 to 75 points out of 100 are used to ascertain that a migrant enters Canada with human capital. In addition, for skilled worker applications, the new grid allows points to be given to education and work experience acquired in Canada, as well as to the educational qualifications of the applicant's spouse (Li, P.S. & Li, 2008).

It is clear from the selection criteria that the screening of economic immigrants places substantial emphasis on educational and occupational qualifications, official language ability, as well as age. The system is designed to select working age immigrants with substantial human capital. In terms of numbers, compared to the 1980s, when economic immigrants constituted

30–36% of total annual immigration, during the period 2000–2004, approximately 60% of newcomers were admitted in this class (Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), 2004.[6] In the context of overall population growth, Canadian immigrants account for two-thirds of it (Statistics Canada, 2016), and it is expected that by 2030 all Canadian population growth will come from immigration (Reitz, 2013).

Canadian Immigration: A Brief History of Policy

Whitaker (1987) tells the "untold" (p.4) story of the history of long-standing bias in Canadian policy and practice, analysing that the apparatus for national security put in place in Canada in the 1940s and 50s post–Cold War years shaped immigration practices, and this continued into the 1960s, 70s, and 80s. Although, even back then, "compared with other countries, immigration was very significant for Canada, its economy, culture and its people," the policy was based in excluding and walling off people, "natural justice and procedural fairness mocked by arbitrary power and the state's pursuit of a discriminatory course in dark and silent corridors unlit by publicity and untouched by criticism" (p.8).

The category of "undesirable" immigrant and the exclusionary discourse surrounding it that was codified in the restrictive McCarran-Walter Immigration and Nationality Act in 1952. This created inequalities of selection, was based in ideology not ethnicity at that time, and excluded those who would bring in "germs of communism" and other subversive ideas that would, in the words of Senator Pat McCarran, "pollute the stream, and infect our institutions and our way of life" (p.22.

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[6] Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) is now called Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, (IRCC).

Further, with regard to ethnicity as a factor for exclusion, the first phase of South Asian migration to Canada is a story of slavery, indenture, and racism. Sources such as official documents, court cases, and personal testimonies highlight the harsh treatment meted out to the migrants who went to Canada to work primarily on the railroad and the sawmills, likening the punitive structures to a new system of slavery (cited in Brown, 2006, 32). Initially the numbers were low and migrants were here in response to a need for labour so things were not so challenging at least for the first few who landed in British Columbia from the subcontinent between 1903 and 1907 (less than three hundred) (Buchignani, 1985). However, as numbers began to grow so did opposition to flooding the country with "cheap Asiatic labor" (Buchignani, 18).

Several legal restrictions were put in place, for instance, the denial of voting rights, bans on immigration (so as to make family life for South Asians impossible), and the continuous passage regulation. This regulation, part of stringent immigration laws meant to deter South Asians from migrating to Canada, directed that migrants would be permitted to enter Canada only if they traveled on a continuous voyage from their country of origin (Cohen, 1987). Since no such form of uninterrupted passage from the subcontinent existed, as thoroughfare tickets for travel to Canada were not issued in India, this rule worked as an effective ploy not just to discourage migrations but to actively prevent them.

These early immigrants who moved to British Columbia from the subcontinent were Sikhs from the Punjab and strong religion-based solidarity networks soon developed that helped the community deal to some extent with racial discrimination and negative stereotyping. The

Komagata Maru incident [7] in 1914, a notorious landmark in the history of South Asian migration

to Canada, and an embarrassment to the Canadian state for which an official apology was

rendered in 2008, was the tipping point in race relations during this early phase.

Things changed during later decades post World War I due to Canada's need for technical,

skilled, and managerial workers. As a result immigration policy became not only de-racialized

but also more geared to need. Thus, foreign workers who came in large numbers from the

subcontinent in the 1960s and 1970s were educated, professional-skilled as well as from more

diverse backgrounds (Bolaria and Li, 1988; Basran, 2003). In 1976 a non-discrimination clause

was added to the immigration act stating that "race, nationality or ethnic origin, colour, religion,

or sex" would not be part of criteria for migration (Li, 1999, 60). Further, the act restructured the

point system for entry and included the business immigrant program, while focusing upon other

factors like labor market needs, family reunification, and provision of safe haven for refugees

(Li, 60).

There is little documentation of pioneer settlement stories on the Prairies and while the

following passage is long its presence indicates just such an absence:

> When I first came to Winnipeg in 1962 it seemed as if there were no South Asian people
> here at all […] a few Sikhs, a few Muslims from India and Pakistan […] not more than a
> hundred of us. In some ways it was harder on us new immigrants than it was later,
> especially because so many of us had to figure everything out on our own. Take the winter,
> for instance. Most of us hadn't ever seen snow up close before! There wasn't really a South
> Asian community in Winnipeg in those days. We came from different countries, practised
> different religions, spoke different languages. What we had in common was a sense of
> being South Asian, somewhat similar family and educational backgrounds, and the English
> language. Already, though, people were beginning to encourage their relatives to

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[7] The SS Komagata Maru incident was the infamous chartered ship that docked in the Port of Vancouver on the eve of the First World War. The passengers were all South Asians, Indians, mostly Punjabis, and they were not only denied entry but were treated badly, denied food, water, and initially also the right to appeal for legal entry, and finally when the case went to court they were denied the right to enter Canada and were shipped back to India. An official apology for this mistreatment was provided in May 2008 by the then Prime Minister Stephen Harper . See also https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/komagata-maru.

immigrate to Winnipeg or to come here from other parts of Canada. Out of this arose the many communities we have here today (Buchignani, 111–112).

The negative (racist) back story of Canadian immigration told above, as well as the history of immigration policy and practices, may be viewed as a kind of backdrop to better understand the binary scenarios that play out in the implementation of immigration and refugee policy in current times.

On the one hand, there is immigration in the economic class that is grounded in opportunistic self-interest (on the part of the state), the blind spot resulting in immigrants being invited in but not welcomed through timely and optimal integration into the system. On the other side is Canada's place in the world as a humanitarian safe haven, applauded for welcoming roughly fifty thousand refugees since the beginning of the Syrian crisis, and with previous success stories of receiving and integrating the Vietnamese boat people after the Vietnam-war in 1975.

Twice-migrant and Chain-migration

The phenomenon of secondary and chain migration, described above in the example about migration to the Prairies, began back in the 1960s and continues in the present, now somewhat formalised through the provincial nominee program within immigration policy. According to Statistics Canada, Canadians of South Asian ethnicities are one of the largest non-European ethnic origin groups in Canada. In 2001, almost a million people of South Asian origin lived in Canada, representing about 3% of the total Canadian population. There is also the third category of migrants in Canada, of South Asian ethnicity, known in the literature as "twice-migrant" (Bhachu, 1985). The term refers to forced migrations of East African Indians, from Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, from countries in the Caribbean, like Surinam, and Fiji, and from Burma and Sri Lanka. Many of these were traumatic migratory movements, leading to forcible and sudden

uprooting of large populations that had gone through prior dislocations through indenture processes in the late 1800s to early 1900s. In addition, there was also a great deal of voluntary migration particularly in the Indo-Caribbean community (but also in other community groups) that was not triggered by explusion, but rather was based in a search for more security and better economic prospects (Roopnarine, 2016).

Brown describes these second time migrations that turned thousands into refugees, even when they had assets in millions in their countries of first settlement:

> (These) "occurred in the aftermath of the European colonial empires, particularly the British Empire, in places where South Asians had become significant groups of newcomers who now for various reasons were seen as a threat to the new nation state and its indigenous peoples, and denied citizenship in their new homelands" (Brown, 45).

Compared to 26,600 in the decade 1961–1970, the numbers of South Asian immigrants in Canada rose to 77,230 in the next decade. In 1981–1990 the numbers rose further to 101,110 going up to 295,110 in the period between 1991 and 2000. According to the 2001 census figures for the South Asian population, including those born in Canada, the figures are 917,075, making communities from the subcontinent the second largest visible minority group in Canada after the Chinese (Brown, 54).

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Labor Market Integration

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In light of research that highlights evidence of an ageing population demographic in Canada (El-Assal & Fields, 2018), immigrants are projected to be the largest cohort of employees in the workforce. Nearly 62% of migrants to Canada arrive through the economic category of the immigration program (Statistics Canada, 2016). This research examines labour market challenges for visible minority immigrant professionals, and for the skilled category of newcomers who come to Canada. Since they come with good educational qualifications and

work experience from their home countries, their goals and expectations are quite dissimilar to immigrants who have profiles with lower levels of education, as well as lower English benchmarks.

When they come to Canada—and in the case of this study, to Winnipeg— many individuals find that working in survival jobs and transition jobs (Baert, Cockx, & Verhaest, 2013) are often the only options available to them. Despite their high levels of competency and motivation, migrants encounter complex challenges like underemployment and de-skilling, based, for instance, on certain systemic factors like the "Canadian Experience" barrier, and difficulties inherent in credential-recognition processes. As a result, instead of being recognised, the human capital of internationally trained migrants is disregarded and devalued, and this leads to a downward spiral for them. These issues, of professional dissatisfaction, and lack of self-actualisation, are problematic in and of themselves, but also have deeper emotional impacts.

The literature, referenced in detail in Chapter Five, pointedly suggests that encountering discouragement, and frustration at this stage has negative implications for personal wellbeing, overall mental health and inter-generational integration (Frank & Hou, 2018; Gupta, 2013). The context of the job market for professional and skilled class immigrants is complex, and includes, for example, how the Credential Recognition processes in different occupations work and, sometimes, a lack of clarity regarding where the gaps and problems are (Guo & Shan, 2013). Further, the circuitous and uncertain nature of processes individuals encounter to achieve their goal of meaningful labour market integration often present insurmountable barriers. This leaves newcomers with much debt, leading to scarce resources left over after family settlement for re-training and upgrading their skills.

Most significantly—as evidenced through the accounts of study participants and further highlighted in the literature review, Chapter Five, —in the case of professional migrants, the absence of clear-cut and predictable career pathways leads to uncertainty regarding timely or positive outcomes. Further, the fact that the task is so strewn with barriers and challenges makes it seem so daunting and uphill that many give up before even starting, preferring to stay in any jobs that come their way more easily. These jobs are often minimum wage survival jobs, or they could be transitional[8] employment. They are satisfying in the short-term for paying the bills, helping to achieve the goals of family settlement, and for getting the much sought-after Canadian experience on the resume. In the long term though, as the findings in this study highlight, for many individuals they become a cause for disillusionment, and individuals begin to feel trapped in circumstances beyond their control. The literature review also underscores the role these jobs can play as one of the root causes for multi-generational poverty for newcomer families while they signify the unattainability of optimal career advancement that many professional immigrants seek.

The extended time the above processes take in the case of certain occupations and ways of seeking out work while negotiating a cross-cultural environment—one that often varies radically from that in the home country—all add up to create barriers that turn out to be insurmountable in many cases. Add confusion to frustration (like insult to injury) as a majority of immigrant professionals struggle to make sense of the mismatch between their expectations of a "soft

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[8] In general, there are commonalities and differences between "survival" and "transitional" jobs although the two terms are also used indistinguishably, to mean employment taken up by migrant individuals in early stages of migration as a means to meet their short term goal of being financially self-reliant to take care of immediate needs of their family and to acquire Canadian experience in some form. The difference is that survival job may be any job that they can find, and it would be unrelated to their training. Transitional jobs are usually employment that is in a related occupation, and could potentially be part of a career pathway to get to their long term goal of returning to more meaningful employment.

landing"[9] (as they came to Canada in the economic class with world-class international training, excited to contribute to the economy) and the contradictory reality of their lived experience.

As discussed earlier in this section, the point system of entry in the economic and skilled class in Canada is understood to be a process of fair prior assessment based upon a successful match between needs and shortages in the Canadian economy and skill sets of professional and skilled immigrants who receive rights for permanent residency. Why this discrepancy then, between their expectations of employment settlement and the reality they encounter, is another question that creates in minds of individuals further frustration and questioning. As the findings chapters demonstrate, in their perceptions, these gaps and mismatches within immigration policy and the reality of their experience create an impossible quandary in their minds which they now have to navigate in addition to their other struggles.

Labour Market in General

Some trends are applicable regionally in a certain historical time, like industry-based jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities, or positions in certain manufacturing and professional sectors, and these have relevance locally within the province, in urban or rural areas. Other labour market realities that may be relevant nationally, or globally, as well as manifest in different forms within the local scenario, for example, job market currently being more contractual and based in short-term or part-time positions than it was five to ten years ago; instabilities arising from funding constraints in certain sectors; and shifting needs as a result of technological advances, seasonal work or other relevant factors. In any case, most of the above are likely to impact not just those new to the city but all job aspirants, and so realistically, the experiences IEPs have should be

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[9] Phrase used by one of the study participants.

viewed and understood objectively as situated within the broader context of this dynamic and evolving labour market context.[10]

Labour Market Context for Internationally Educated Professionals (IEPs)

While applicable in general to all cohorts of job-seekers, it is logical and expected that challenges prevalent in a difficult economy will only be exacerbated in the case of newcomers due to additional barriers like their lack of Canadian education and work experience as well as absence of social capital and other exclusion factors like racism and discrimination. These factors have significant (and enhanced) potential to negatively impact the employment related settlement experiences of newcomer immigrant professionals (Bhuyan, et al., 2015; Danso, 2007; George & Chaze, 2009; Reitz, Curtis, & Elrick, 2014). Literature reviewed in this field (in the literature review chapters) provides ample evidence of relentless economic integration related struggles and barriers as manifest in relation to this cohort.

Empirical data gathered through qualitative research methods confirmed many of the stories my professional cohort of newcomers professional clients shared with me. Nearly forty research participants voicing the perceptions they have of their experience are documented through the three findings chapters. The views they expressed were based on their own experiences as well as those of other members of their family, their peers or circle of friends and members of their ethnic communities, colleagues, and casual acquaintances.

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[10]See regular and updated information and statistical Reports on current Manitoba based immigration, jobs and employment, labour market trends, and economic analysis (*Manitoba Immigration Facts: 2014 Statistical Report*, 2015), including differentiated based on occupations.

Job Search Experiences: Hidden Job Market

For example, labour market information openly claims that 80-85% (Akkaymak, 2017) of the job market is hidden, and majority of Canadian employers clearly (or by implication) state that Canadian work experience is an essential prerequisite for finding a job. While the reason (excuse) of not having Canadian experience that some employers provide is a human rights violation in some provinces, like Ontario (Ontario Human Rights Commission, July 15, 2013), this is not yet the case in Manitoba. Oftentimes though, apart from absence of legislation, problems arise due to rigid and discriminatory mindsets (Li, 2008, 2012). There is a clear preference for internal hires as it saves time and money. Resumes are not assessed in ways that can be described as objective, impartial, and detailed, often due to time and money considerations, but also processes that emerge from biases and risk-averse behaviors on the part of employers who prefer to rely upon set patterns in which things have been done that have worked in the past (Wong & Tezli, 2013). These factors make the job search process for newcomer professionals long-drawn out and arduous, and individuals lose their skills and morale as they struggle and wait.

Lacking "Soft Skills" and Other Forms of Discrimination

One of the significant barriers to labor market integration for newcomers is at the level of soft skills and transferable skills; as well as issues around cross-cultural fitting-in; and intercultural communication skills. Thus, despite having technical expertise, and in many cases, years of experience in their occupations back in their home countries, newcomers face challenges finding their right and meaningful place within the Canadian workplace. This is problematic for several reasons. Firstly, in and of itself, such a scenario devalues previous knowledge, experience, and expertise of professional migrants, the very grounds upon which the Canadian

point system of immigration assessed their applications and granted them entry to Canada. This situation is one of the stressors for individuals, leading to negative impacts on holistic integration outcomes for families (Danso, 2007; Guerrero & Rothstein, 2012). Secondly, as emphasised at several stages in the study, this lack of meaningful labour market integration does not serve the interests of the Canadian state either as much tax revenue is lost when human capital is left unused or underutilised (Javdani, Jacks, & Pendakur, 2012).

As the "lived experience" of skilled immigrants highlights, even in cases where professionals are relocating to Canada from similar (western) professional/cultural contexts, and they feel fairly confident about their ability to work and contribute in the context of the Canadian workplace, employers still assume and decide that they will not fit-in without even giving them a chance to prove themselves. The fact that the labour market is set up differently from other parts of the world, and works through using structural inequalities and unfamiliar processes like the hidden job market, or prescriptive ways of resume writing, does not make things any easier. Further, this causes disillusionment, frustration, and a lack of affirmation for the individual, which becomes one of the first barriers to integration into the new environment. As Kazemipur & Nakhaie (2014) note, "the nature of economic experiences (of immigrants) have a heavy influence on the kind of perceptions that they develop about Canada and their own future in the country [...] [they] may develop a strong attachment to Canada or may feel alienated from it" (p.611).

Cross-cultural Communication and Fitting-in

Although there will always be lucky exceptions, the systemic outcome of all this is that, in general, it is not easy for newcomers to find work that is commensurate with their qualifications, experience, or expertise, and they are not able to access opportunities to become contributing

members of the workforce in an optimal sense (Slack & Jensen, 2007a; Thompson et al., 2013). The time taken for economic placement in the case of different occupations is variable, and issues of over-qualification, underemployment, unemployment, remaining always in low level jobs, and deskilling continue to exist. The fact that the labour market is not the same in different parts of the world is an important factor too. This in turn leads to challenges of finding easy equivalency and direct transference. Employer biases and preferences in overt and subtle ways point to the fact that their perceptions are determined by racialization processes (Hochbaum, 2013, Lightman & Gingrich, 2013).

Despite their high levels of education, other challenges immigrant professionals face in Canada relate to soft skills. This is in the context of "soft skills" being a term that relates to expectations of appropriate cross-cultural communication and behaviours on the part of employers. This makes sense when compared with living in the comfort zone of one's home country environment before moving to Canada, being "insiders," in one's own cultural context, soft skills would be a less likely consideration as a discriminatory variable due to individuals having "equal" access to culturally acceptable behaviours and norms. As job seekers then, these individuals had to consider being assessed only on the basis of their technical and hard skills, and the competitive edge of the "soft skill" factor was not a factor thrown into the mix.

Having said the above, I hasten to add that scenarios vary depending on the geographical and professional context, and a statement cannot ring true in all situations. Besides, in a rapidly changing globalised and digitalised era where common denominators prevail across geographical distances, cross-cultural communication styles and soft skills have become more and more relevant everywhere. Even so, forms of communication become notable issues for many migrants as a result of cross-cultural variances they experience on moving to Canada. Adapting

to the cross cultural workplace, including problems of fitting in, and learning to communicate "differently," and appropriately, adapting to the new environment in order to gain and maintain employment become important considerations (Bhuyan et al., 2011; *Building Skills Together,* 2015).

However, as mentioned above, oftentimes professional immigrants come to Canada armed with international training received in Europe and other parts of North America where educational systems and work environments are similar to Canada. They too face the same criticism and stereotyping through experiences they face[11] and then it becomes increasingly obvious that the problem is not with inadequacies or communication gaps in individuals themselves, but rather in discriminatory perceptions and mindsets on the part of hiring managers and employers who assume visible minority migrants as being lesser and inferior and are not willing to give them an opportunity to demonstrate what they can do to prove themselves.

Impact on Overall Well-being and Mental Health

Although the focus of this research is on employment and economic integration issues, they are contextualised within overall holistic integration into Canada. Further, particularly in the case of individuals with high levels of education and with optimal levels of pre-migration success, based on their complex and high professional aspirations, job search experiences in the country of migration have serious potential to impact overall well-being not just for the individual but for the entire family (Frank & Hou, 2018; Gupta, 2013). While the above discussion is a resonant one in the case of all new migrants to a city and country, the scenarios

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[11] In the agency where I worked we had clients who had trained and worked in the US, UK and different parts of Europe, including completing their doctoral studies in these `western' international contexts. They encountered similar challenges to those individuals who migrated to Canada with a non-western education and work experience. They shared racial similarities though as they were all non-Caucasian by race, and non-white in ethnicity, and in the context of Canada, all of them fell into the catogory named visible minority.

presented in this study, and challenges highlighted, focus on the context and issues as they apply to the specific experiences of IEPs.

Employment-related Supports

A whole body of literature, and practitioner-based tools are available, that use the interactive workshop facilitation model to provide hands-on cross cultural training to service providers who work with new Canadians. The goal of this genre of training is to assist newcomers in enabling themselves to become employable in a different cultural environment. For example, Holmes (2012) and Laroche (2003, 2007) are well known and popular for the skill-training, employment-support resources and cross-cultural competency training they provide. From the employer perspective, the soft skills aspect is often more important than technical knowledge as the latter can be more easily compensated through targeted training programs (Bimrose & McNair, 2011; *Summary Report*, 2012). Intercultural counselling that provides cross-cultural training fills this soft skills gap. However, culturally appropriate counselling in this area, or counselling provided by mainstream service providers, is often not adequate or nuanced enough to address the key issues and problems (Abouguendia & Noels, 2010; Aycan & Berry, 1996). Additionally, funding constraints limit the number of individuals who can benefit from this training.[12]

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[12] The following information was shared by the top management of one of the settlement agencies in Winnipeg that provides employment supports to skilled and professional immigrants. As part of their funding agreements, they are contracted to serve just 10% percent of the total number of skilled immigrants who come to the city. For example, in terms of total numbers, 10,000–12,000 newcomer immigrants enter the city every year, 3000 of whom are skilled immigrants. The city has capacity to serve approximately 20% of these individuals in targeted ways to be able to access their occupational or related pathways while the rest do receive support but it is not customised to their specific needs. As long as they find some job, "any" job, those numbers get reported back to funders to meet their requirements.

There are other regulations within immigration and settlement policy that limit employment and settlement assistance on the basis of the number of years an individual has been in Canada. For example, guidelines for funding are variable, and specific to contribution agreements with funders, and programs are subject to different regulations which change based on available funding, political dispensations, and cuts, etc. A lot of programs that receive federal funding have a time cap, and individuals are cut off from funding after five years, in some cases, seven years, in others. Additionally, for most programs, once the immigration status of persons changes from permanent resident to citizen, they are no longer eligible to receive settlement programing. "Integration" is a slow process, and is anything but time-bound. As a result of hard deadlines, many individuals are cut off before they have fully "integrated" into the labour market.

Problematic Nature of Employability Supports (although useful)

Government funded agencies that provide settlement and employment targeted supports that work towards helping newcomers navigate unfamiliar systems and processes do provide useful guidance that for many turn out to be perfect recipes and training models for successful labour market outcomes. These organizations offer guidance relating to employability skills, career transition counseling, and the nuts and bolts of the job search process itself, including strategies for preparing and marketing oneself appropriately. These services include interpreting policies that can open up new work experience opportunities, and assisting with internships, mostly unpaid, but with possibility of future job placements. There are special programs that also facilitate limited paid internships opportunities though. This kind of guidance, including hands-on internship-based opportunities to gain Canadian work-experience, available at the right time,

can shape the entire settlement and integration journey of an individual in significant and positive directions.[13]

However, based on my experience of direct service provision as well as conversations I have had with colleagues, clients, and participants of this study, there is an expressed concern that while employment services that provide supports to skilled immigrants are extremely useful, they may have certain problematic elements that may not work in the best interests of professional migrants. One, there is a tendency that it could, and often does, devalue previous knowledge, experience, expertise, and ways of doing things that highly qualified individuals come with, by pushing a prescriptive way of doing things to achieve success, in a kind of "one size fits all" format. Additionally, through providing prescriptive advice, it can lead to infantilizing professionals who have high qualifications, expertise, and years of work-experience in their fields and overall life experience too. This obviously does not always sit well with some individulas, and sets a tone for their understanding and expectations from the settlement service sector as a whole. Cultural constraints, like lack of cultural sensitivity or cross-cultural competency in service providers, and top-down service delivery methods used add further layers that have potential to create added barriers and conflicts.

The immigrant settlement sector, too, is a dynamic and changing space, mostly based on low-paid, contractual, and insecure employment as funding is limited and unpredictable. From the perspective of job seekers, this sector is appealing to cohorts like youth enrolled in an educational program or newcomers themselves as a short-term pit stop to train and learn front line work. Through working with real people and understanding situations and issues deeply while gaining relevant skills, and achieving personal growth, their goal often is to move on to

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[13] An example of such employer-targeted funding is the Canada Job Grant: https://www.gov.mb.ca/wd/ites/is/cjg.html

jobs that might have better pay and may be more stable. Professionalization of the sector has been discussed and has been happening, slowly though surely, in the last few years though, with cross-cultural and diversity training being an important part of it (Türegün, 2013). Sensitivity to issues inherent in racism and exclusion, and intercultural and multicultural contexts are important aspects of the sector. Further, inclusion of a social justice lens into counseling could provide a means to address some current gaps (Coyne & Bemak, 2005).

Moreover, it is not part of a mandatory system that all newcomers must go through an agency that provides employment and settlement assistance. Many lose time and the skills they arrive with while they struggle to find their way through an arbitrary, unpredictable, unknown, and unreliable system. And yet, those who are fortunate enough to chance upon settlement and employment support services (available through federal and provincial funding) through a formal or informal referral do have the potential to gain, for the most part. The fact that the labour market is set up differently from other parts of the world, has unfamiliar processes of job search, including aspects like the hidden job market or prescriptive ways of resume writing does not make things any easier.

Several significant changes have taken place in the structures through which service delivery happens, for example, the "settlement realignment" that happened in 1999 as a result of which Manitoba began delivering settlement services provincially. Despite this transfer of responsibilities, the Federal Government saw itself continuing to play an "enduring federal role" that would include involvement in priority setting, encouragement of research on integration and a return to offering counseling to immigrants prior to their departure for Canada, ensuring that both Canada and Manitoba abide by the principle that "Settlement and integration services across the country will be flexible, responsive and reasonably comparable" (Annex A, 1.3.f) (Clement,

et al., 2013). Currently, immigrant services are provided to newcomers directly through the federal program though many agencies do have diversified funding structures too, and receive provincial funding for certain programs. It is beyond the scope of this study to go into detailed nitty-gritty of structures of settlement delivery as this aspect is only one small part of this study. However, the above note is relevant as it demonstrates the dynamic and fluctuating formations and modalities through which settlement programming is delivered in Manitoba. An example of one of the federally funded pan-Canadian programs that gets delivered in all provinces is the Local Immigration Partnership Program. In Winnipeg, it is called Immigration Partnership Winnipeg. The section below discusses it in some detail.

Local Immigration Partnerships (LIPs) and Immigration Partnership Winnipeg (IPW)

Based on principles of integration, innovation, and multi-sectoral collaboration; a policy initiative titled Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) was introduced in 2008, and it started in 2010. A pan-Canadian project and a model of settlement based in the Welcoming Communities paradigm, it is funded federally through Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and operated in local contexts in response to specific needs in communities. Research was initially done and data gathered from scholarly literature and documents sourced from all levels of government, and private, public and community sectors. This led to a study authored by Victoria Esses, Leah Hamilton, Caroline Bennett-AbuAyyash and Meyer Burstein in 2010, titled *Characteristics of a Welcoming Community* (Esses, et al., 2010).

Several significant findings were highlighted in the study, including that integration must be conceptualised as a two-way process if it is to be actualised in receiving communities. This is important as it ceases to solely hold migrants responsible for their integration, making a case for why integration can only be realised when circumstances for successful integration are created in

receiving communities, and these responsibilities are shared equally by members of the host society. The study details 17 factors necessary to build inclusive practices within local communities and in the broader societal system that would in turn help facilitate a welcoming and inclusive environment for immigrants:

- employment opportunities
- fostering of social capital
- affordable and suitable housing
- positive attitudes toward immigrants
- cultural diversity and the presence of newcomers in the community
- presence of newcomer-serving agencies that can successfully meet the needs of newcomers
- links between main actors working toward welcoming communities
- municipal features and services sensitive to the presence and needs of newcomers
- educational opportunities
- accessible and suitable health care
- available and accessible public transit
- presence of diverse religious organizations
- social engagement opportunities
- political participation opportunities
- positive relationships with the police and the justice system
- safety
- opportunities for use of public space and recreation facilities
- favourable media coverage and representation (Esses et al., pp.5-6).

Immigration Partnerships, of which there are now more than 70 across Canada, are based in a paradigm that includes multi-sectoral partnerships, and collaborations, as well as a systems-thinking approach. The Local Immigrant Partnership (LIP), in Manitoba, called Immigration partnership Winnipeg (IPW) is housed in the Social Planning Council and the description on the website of SPCW reads as follows:

Local Immigration Partnerships (LIPs) are multi-sectoral collectives that bring a new form of collaboration, at the community-level, to newcomer settlement and integration. They are designed to establish, facilitate and implement a community-wide strategy for improving the settlement and integration of immigrants. The LIP model is having success across Canada with more than 40 LIPs in four Canadian provinces now. [14]

This model of conceptualizing and operationalizing integration, based in inclusion and a welcoming-communities paradigm, is grounded in an approach where partnership, integration, relationship-building, and a dialogic process are central. Its objective is to bring together stakeholders from different sectors with the intention of facilitating the development and implementation of sustainable local solutions for the successful integration of newcomers.

In the case of Immigration Partnership Winnipeg (IPW), stakeholders represent employers and other employment related bodies like the Chamber of Commerce, educational bodies, social services, various levels of governments, faith based groups, ethno-cultural associations, Aboriginal community leaders, and community organizations that serve newcomers. The overall objective of the IPW initiative is to increase the economic and social inclusion of newcomers into the city of Winnipeg by coordinating community-level planning, communication among stakeholders, and identifying needs of newcomers through consultations with decision makers in community organizations and institutions. For experiences from other LIPs and more detailed analysis of this program, see (George, et al, 2017; Pero, 2017).

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[14]See https://www.ipwinnipeg.org/ The latest on number of Immigration Partnerships across Canada is more like 70 now. For background and more information on the Local Immigration Partnerships in Canada, see: http://www.cnmag.ca/local-immigration-partnerships/1292-lips-across-canada-local-immigration-partnerships-go-national, see also research consortium for more information Pathways to Prosperity, http://p2pcanada.ca/

A Practice-based Approach

Areas of focus central to this study are its practitioner-oriented and solution-focused approaches. To this end, this section highlights some of the challenges with the objective of making preliminary suggestions for directions in which solutions may lie. These directions are followed up and explored in more detail in later chapters.

Need for Person-centred Approach for Inclusion

Downward mobility issues caused by structural barriers for racialized economic migrants in the professional and skilled classes have been well researched (Bonikowska, et al, 2015; Ferrer, et al, 2014; Li, 2012; Reitz & Banerjee, 2003; Reitz, 2005; Reitz & Banerjee, 2006), and yet in the case of many challenges (like foreign qualification recognition (FQR), critical barriers still remain, taking on the nature of intractable or "wicked"[15] (Buchanan, 1992; Cukier & Gagnon, 2017) problems. The human capital approach is a useful one to help document the actual plight of professionals and the negative experiences they face. This is evidence that brings into sharp focus labour market related trends and issues, pitting them against objectives of the Canadian economy that immigration is intended to fulfil. The actual situation on the ground is obvious too through research and stories shared by individuals that speak to obvious mismatches between labor market shortages and skilled available job seekers who can't find employment. The toll on individuals' integration and well-being this takes, as well as losses of tax revenue to the Canadian economy make this situation one that is the opposite of win-win for both parties.

Grant (2007) makes a case for person-centred policies for meaningful inclusion of skilled migrants into the Canadian labour market, arguing for the developing of flexibility in

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[15]Social innovation literature is discussed in the literature review chapter, and although notions of "wicked" problems vary based on disciplinary contexts, one simple definition, might be "grand challenges" (Cukier & Gagnon, 2017).

immigration so that policy initiatives can more easily target career goals and life-circumstances of migrants themselves. To be able to do this, policy objectives must shift from paradigms where the singular focus is on recruitment, retention and mobilization of migrants to areas in Canada where there is need for population growth. In fact, policy should and indeed can (must) have this simultaneous dual focus to align with the following principles and objectives, for example, achieving win-win situations for individuals and the state, fulfilling the social contract based on which migrants are selected for permanent residency, working in the best interests of the economy including not having to use resources for mental health in the long term, as well as a value-orientation that emerges from social justice ideology.[16]

Employer Engagement for Creating Better Solutions

Goals of achieving integration and inclusion, in the interests both of the individual and the Canadian state, are central to this discussion, as is approaching the situation and issues from a solution based and peace-building perspective. It is also true that there is a lack of sufficient and appropriate job opportunities in Winnipeg for immigrants with certain qualifications and experience, and mismatches exist between employer expectations and ability of immigrant (professional) clients to satisfactorily meet these. It is here that issues of bias, discrimination, and racism also become relevant. Personality traits too can work either as constraints or enablers for individuals. Adapting to the cross cultural workplace, including problems of fitting in, and learning to communicate "differently" and "appropriately" in order to gain and maintain employment become important considerations in such a scenario (Hofstede, 2005).

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[16]For more on person-centred approach, see special issue of *Journal of International Migration and Integration* (2007, 8 (2), on Foreign Training and Work Experience: The Skilled Immigrants' Perspective. See link http://transactionpub.metapress.com/link.asp?id=120165 or www.jimi.metropolis.net

Having said that, if employers were less risk-averse and less discriminatory in their attitudes, more positively inclined and proactive, taking initiative to hire more newcomers, the situation would improve significantly. In a city the size of Winnipeg (rich in traditions of grassroots activism and progressive thinking in many sectors), although many employers are on side, supporting and encouraging the hiring of newcomer professionals, as well as volunteering their time to mentor them, at the level of systems and policies more can be done to help implement inclusive practices. Although employment support agencies incorporate employer engagement activities and events that further employer education in these matters, more can be done to upscale employer learning and participation in these matters.

Employers, who really should be important stakeholders in creating better solutions, taking up ownership of both the problems and their solutions, are not part of the process to the extent they should or could be. It is understandable though that there is a need to be realistic and objective when considering possible solutions, and to understand that lofty ideals of social justice cannot be expected to work and that businesses and companies will be governed primarily by the profit motive. Corporate social responsibility can only go so far. For this reason compelling arguments that provide good data on the economic benefits of well qualified newcomers paying taxes that bring good returns on investment must be made more visible in mainstream understanding if the goal is to change mindsets, including minimising populist anti-immigrant rhetoric. This can be done by knowledge sharing and creating visibility about the many economic benefits and socio-cultural advantages of hiring newcomers with expertise in all job sectors.

Settlement Sector Supports for Employment Preparation

The official settlement sector, funded with federal and provincial dollars also plays an important role to facilitate preparation of newcomer professionals for these job-sector changes, career transitions and skill-transference that can lead to better employability options for individuals in their own or related occupations. There are not-for-profit service agencies in the city that provide free job search training as well as skills and employability development workshops to assist immigrant professionals to feel supported and better prepared during their economic integration journey.[17]

Employment assistance agencies often use an integrated practicum model that works through group workshops and one-on one support that provides more targeted employment and career transition counseling. These hands-on programs that walk newcomers through the different steps of the job search journey, as well as other aspects of career transition and employment maintenance, helping them learn ways around navigating complex processes that are unfamiliar to them are often the difference and clinching factor that leads them towards achieving their goals and attaining success. The one-on-one counselling sessions assist them in formulating their goals and specific short and long term action plans that help them to work towards the objective of finding the right job, one that is related to their previous occupation, as well as closely aligned with their profile, skill set, and work experience.

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[17] Overall settlement supports are available too through government funded and community-based agencies that address needs related to housing, health and other potential requirements newcomers have for their settlement in the new host country. Their numbers though change according to funding and other factors. The link below though provides general and baseline information.

https://mansomanitoba.ca/wp-content/uploads/.../MANSO-Settlement-Service-Map.pdf

The above description may communicate the impression that all newcomers have equal and fair access to these programs. This is not the case and this is one of the limitations that must be highlighted. Due to funding constraints, limited numbers of immigrants are able to access and utilise these programs. For one, employment assistance agencies providing these free services to newcomers have maximum numbers required to be served annually built into their project-funding agreements (see footnote 14, on page 39). These requirements often are met through word of mouth transmission of information regarding availability of their services. This makes it difficult and unsustainable for them to advertise their services widely as they do not have adequate staffing to fulfil needs that go beyond a certain number.

Funding structures though, instrumental for making funding available to agencies, are set up in ways that often set them up in competition with each other. Resources are misused as the wheel is reinvented by each one separately while it would be in the interests of efficiency, and certainly helpful for newcomer clients, if they collaborated and worked in sync with each other.

This funding model where everyone competes for the same pot of funding makes settlement sector organizations and community agencies in the social sector territorial and self-interest driven instead of being incentivised to work together to achieve common goals of optimal settlement for newcomers (Mukhtar, et al., 2016). The research study by Reinke (2017) is a detailed exploration of the structures and gaps in the not-for-profit sector, and the helpful policy based solutions she suggests are based on her situated-ness and experience as a practitioner in the sector. However, although a similar funding model operates in the context of the settlement sector, the study referenced above relates more broadly to the non-profit sector and in that sense is not directly relevant.

Policy Gaps in Immigration Policy, and Barriers to Working in Pre-Migration Occupations

Further, since the cohort of professional and skilled immigrants has been selected in the economic category on the basis of their educational and other qualifications, the skill gap and employer-employee mismatch of expectation and reality appears to be counterintuitive in the context of Canadian immigration policy. An unfolding job search model (Guerrero & Rothstein, 2012); structural barriers (Ngo & Este, 2006), factors like management and organizational perspectives on motivation, self-esteem, and self-determination (Graves, et al., 2010); and lack of meaningful labour market integration leads to mental health concerns and impact on families (Dean & Wilson, 2009b).

Interdisciplinary research from a range of locations is relevant and can enhance insights in the context of issues central to migrant transitions and settlement. The literature review section highlights some of the relevant research on professional migrant settlement and integration from the following fields: Resource Management; Vocational Behavior; Career Development and Practice, Lifelong Education, and Life-Design; Ethnicity, Health Management, and Nursing; Applied Psychology, Business and Social Innovation. There is need to address gaps in Immigration Policy. Since immigration is one of the biggest Canadian projects as well as a means to achieve the country's population growth targets, settlement dollars are a big part of the government's infrastructure budget.

Even so, glaring gaps in policy remain that take on the nature of intractable conflicts for new migrants, and solutions are not easy to find or create. More discussion on this follows in the literature review section.

Searching for Solutions

Now that the many facets of this topic, and issues that emerge from it, have been mapped through the above discussion that provides the context, perhaps the time is right to think about how this "problem" can be framed so that pathways to solutions can become clearer.

Looking Through a Holistic Lens

As noted early on in this chapter, although economic integration is at the heart of settlement for newcomers migrating to a new country, this experience of seeking and finding meaningful employment does not exist by itself. Rather it impacts, indeed colors and shapes, the overall experiencing of life in the host country to the extent that it has consequences and ramifications for family settlement and well-being of the individual and their family. This is one of the reasons for employing a holistic paradigm to explore and understand this topic.

Another aspect of a holistic paradigm is the practitioner approach this research study employs. As described in detail in the chapter on methodology, during the time of living with this dissertation topic, prior to collecting data, my researcher-self was immersed in the field as a front line service provider. Not only did this situated-ness provide me with opportunities to listen to the stories of my study participants but also learn about and imbibe their lived realities, and to help them navigate these troubled waters.

The autoethnographic perspective added another layer to my understanding as I too had lived the migration journey, and in fact realised then that in some form or other I would always continue to do so. In fact it helped me be aware and reflective about the multiplicity of my own location both in my personal migration journey, and in the trajectory that was this research. I see this dissertation coming from a holistic place also because it was a complete engagement in the coming together of my head and heart as a pracademic (practitioner and academic) appreciating

opportunities to analyse, as well as take that knowledge and learning back to the field for applied practice.

The practitioner-led framework of research and analysis as well as its insistence on valuing all elements as critical to economic integration is its unique contribution to migration-related research. Positioned within research and practice paradigms as described above, the research study straddles and transcends disciplinary boundaries through utilising synergies that emerge from multiple theories, ideas, and methods.

Locating Migration in an Interdisciplinary Paradigm

Reitz (2005) shows the trend of highly qualified immigrants' inability to optimally connect their foreign acquired skills to the needs of the labor market and knowledge economy in Canada as a serious and chronic challenge (3). Further, economic marginalization of this kind naturally has repercussions in social and political terms, and Reitz's study reiterates ways in which racial prejudices interface with economic disparities to produce potential for intergroup tensions, cultural differences and misunderstandings that negatively impact race relations, highlighting the issue as one that relates to social justice (2005). A labor market integration study on newcomers concludes: "They risk entering a perilous cycle in which poverty, a lack of job opportunities, concentration in low income neighborhoods, discrimination and racism leading to long term exclusion conditions, even for the next generation" (Groupil, 2004, 9, cited in Moodley & Adam, 433).

This research study is located within an interdisciplinary context, conducted under the aegis of a Peace and Conflict Studies (PACS) paradigm. The study is rigorously directed by the PACS field, an interdisciplinary area of inquiry that is fast establishing its value and core relevance in today's complex world. The context also highlights and focuses upon the problem

solving and solution-making aspect and demonstrates how this is operationalized through the study.

Connecting the dots in this manner, through exploring the relationship and shared values between diverse fields like migration, PACS, and ethnography (including autoethnography), is another way to approach holism. It is also a unique way to make sense of the experiential in the case of immigrant professionals and their journey to achieve employment success and economic integration. Finally, this coming together of fields that may appear previously as completely divergent also helps highlight commonalities shared between them, like relationship-building, positionality, and reflective practice. All of these approaches and themes, both independently as well as through conversations that emerge at their intersections, are significant to the way this study addresses challenges and solutions in the context of employment integration for immigrant professionals in Winnipeg.

Working Together: Roles Played by Individual, Programing Supports, and Policy Making

For the settlement experience, with employment integration at its centre, to "'feel" successful for the individual, many factors must align and work in tandem. The individual has an important role to play to make things work, as do systems that work with credentialing, for instance. On the part of the individual, as expressed by several study participants, being proactive; open and willing to learn and embrace the new and unfamiliar; being persistent and persevering, positive, hopeful and resilient despite encountering relentless challenges is about having determination and goal-orientedness.

The above traits could be wrapped up together to view the package as being the "right attitude" or it could be characterized as "resilience." However, such a view may end up putting too much responsibility, even blame, on the individual, letting systems off the hook for the role

they play. However, if the objective is to move beyond critique to explore a solution-based approach, then a combination of strategies may need to be considered.

Thomas (2015) began her research in the settlement sector in Winnipeg, examining employment preparation programs through which immigrant service provision is delivered. She noted that these processes, with the goal of "improvement of individuals as an effective solution to immigrant underemployment" (p.160) at their centre, were problematic as the challenges faced by immigrant individuals were based in systemic factors rather than being individualistic in nature. She categorised these skills training workshops as evidence of neoliberal ideology that speaks the language of empowerment, and critiqued them for expecting individuals and communities to take responsibility to address "market inadequacies." She suggested instead that agencies work together with individuals to play an advocacy role.

However, having spent sufficient time immersed in researching the sector, Thomas voices her dilemmas, challenging her own assumptions, as she observes the successes of employment programs for many individuals, acknowledging that they do help in building understanding of the labour market, and this facilitates better outcomes. It is true that for many individuals, this sense of empowerment and agency they feel, which often leads them to successes like finding meaningful and sustainable work, happens as a result of receiving employment preparation services delivered by the settlement sector.

It is indeed a coming together of several factors that impact settlement and integration processes for individuals. Supports play an important role, and these could come from the formal settlement sector or community networks. If programming supports that deal with an individual's employment related needs are targeted, multi-faceted, non-prescriptive, and they also include a

holistic approach that takes into account the personality of the newcomer, they can provide valuable guidance.

Finally, policy gaps often create overwhelming barriers, especially for the cohort of immigrant professionals. Credential recognition requirements are stringent and time consuming, and they vary based on the profession and the province of location. Further, for those individuals who are highly qualified but do not belong to regulated professions but do have a lot to offer, if there were clearer career pathways to employment in their field, it would be a great asset as these individuals would then be able to contribute their expertise and tax dollars to the Canadian economy in a timely manner while retaining their self-esteem and well-being.

By Way of Chapter Summary: Raising Some Questions

This chapter provides a contextual introduction to the study through highlighting the main components of this research, where it was done and how, who the main actors and players are, and in a nutshell what the broad strokes of their stories are. It tries to build a sense of anticipation by offering a hint of their life trajectories and the dilemmas they face.

Another form in which discussion in this chapter may be summarised, and deepened, is to leave behind some lurking sample questions to reflect upon. One of the tasks of this dissertation is to add more questions to these. How do different individuals deal with the barriers they encounter, and what qualities and knowledge from their previous experiences do they bring to bear on their present situation that helps in the coping process? What are the parameters for understanding and conceptualizing success and failure? What role does personality play in their attainment of success, and fulfillment of aspirations, or not being able to do so? Settlement agencies insist on the need for preparation and marketing oneself, being fairly prescriptive and

pushy with regard to ways in which individuals need to change, how they need to modify attitudes and behaviors in order to adapt to the new cultural and professional environment if they want to be hired. Is this appropriate or is there another better way? Certain personality traits, behaviors, and attitudes are seen as being more aligned with possibilities of "making it" in the cross cultural environment in comparison with others that could prove to be obstacles. What are these and is it fair to expect newcomers to transform themselves to fit into the new environment?

Given that adaptation can only work if conceptualised as a two-way process, how can such a constructing of it be implemented and operationalised, even enforced? Is such enforcement possible, or even desirable?

CHAPTER THREE: Methodological Frames, and the Nuts and Bolts

In-between Spaces

For me, the researcher-self, this study is a journey of passion and commitment, anger, and compassion. I know the story well as it is mine. I know the tears as they have moistened my cheeks. But it is not "my" story in the manner of autobiography, or memoir. The fact that this is my story, and that I have lived it for myself, thereby having owned it, is important in the research context only because it helps me understand at a visceral level the social and economic, political, and cultural, as well as policy contexts as they relate both to the master narrative of migration, and the specific stories I have encountered through the lives of my clients and research participants. The autoethnographic method gives me permission to sometimes interweave my personal story into the narratives of those of my participants. At other times it helps me be the empathetic ear with which I have listened closely, with a keen desire to understand. It also provides me a theoretical rationale and a lens that gives me clarity regarding why I believe this method is the right one for me in the pursuit of this study.

I feel I have connected authentically with my research participants and I believe being certain and upfront about my methodology and my purpose has supported me in establishing relationships that have in turn made possible the collection of what I see as raw and honest data. This I have strived to do respectfully, walking on the empathetic bridge, but not with the objective of taking sides. I believe that I have communicated to them that I believe their story, and that I deeply respect and care about who they are. In return, I feel they have felt enabled to share with me their truth. This sense of trust between us has helped us speak with each other as

equal partners and friends, our relationships based not in a power over paradigm but rather in a mode best described as power-with each other.

My research topic is a path I have selected to facilitate several boundary crossings. As I undertook multiple journeys, back and forth, between India and Canada, some deeply buried schemas of identity inside me were destabilized. This research then, grew organically in response to involuntary triggers and conceptualized itself as a bridge. It became a bridge between theory and praxis, between literature with its focus on the story and the word that had always been my world, and the real world of social sciences that I now inhabit.

Also, it became a bridge between thought and action, between academe and community, between research and activism. This bridge has helped me connect my story to the stories of my study participants, and although the trajectories of our migrations have been varied, we have found common ground, shared goals, and convergent pathways. It has helped us become courageous together, honest too, and authentic. Through sharing our stories we have found not only strength, but also a supportive embrace, and some solutions and strategies for the common good.

<div align="right">

Personal Story Archives

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An Overview of Research Methodology, and Methods

This chapter has four sections, and together, these provide an overall landscape of research purpose and design, methods used to pursue the study, as well as the methodological frameworks underlying it. The first section provides an overview of the research study from a methodological perspective, highlighting broadly the methods that were used, as well as the rationale for employing them. Next, this chapter goes on to discuss methods and strategies that

were utilised to gather and analyse data, including highlighting other methods-related aspects like ethical considerations and significance of the research.

This is followed by a mapping of the overall research journey in a kind of embodied manner, through simultaneous narration of the "situated" story of the researcher moving back and forth between her story of "being ethnographic" and the "how-to" of conducting the research. Thus the manner in which this story is told is as significant as the story itself as it demonstrates the auto-ethnographic approach. Finally, the chapter highlights the significance of the research study, including discussing the expected implications for practice and policy making.

Research Purpose and Design

As described previously, this research explores the immigrant experience from the perspective of visible minority professionals and skilled workers who migrate to Canada and settle in Winnipeg. In addition to stories of migration-transitions told by immigrant professionals through interviews and focus groups, key informants also provided good data that was useful for the purpose of triangulation.

Broadly, the aim of the study was to build better conceptual and empirical understanding around processes of migration, settlement, adaptation and integration into Canadian society, as experienced by internationally educated professionals. In particular, it focuses upon the "lived experience" of individuals as they seek labour market integration through finding employment in their own professions, or closely allied occupations. The researcher seeks to learn from the data collected, to get a better sense of challenges and triumphs on this journey, and to insightfully understand how this experience impacts processes of holistic settlement in Canada, and personal

well-being, for men and women who have been in the city for at least two years, and up to a maximum of ten years.

This is a multi-method, qualitative study; and several ethnographic methods and tools were employed to conduct the research. My interest in this particular topic emerged partly out of my own positionality, and it grew deeper through being embedded in my work environment in the role I played as front line staff supporting immigrant professionals navigate their migration transitions to attain the goal of meaningful employment integration. Additionally, previous to such a personal and professional location, as an academic and a literary critic, I had pursued my research interests in diaspora studies, and more broadly, issues around identity including ethnicity, dual identities and identity-making, and inclusion; displacement, and conceptualizations around home and loss; and questions related to representation of racism and colonialism in literary texts.

Coming from such an orientation into research in migration-related issues, I was aware that I wanted to understand and study, with as much nuance as possible, the many ways in which immigrant professionals made sense of (or constructed) their own "lived experience" of their migration transitions, particularly how they saw their professional identities being impacted (and being re-constructed) in light of their employment-related experiences. The persona of the researcher then had to be an important aspect of the research, not only as an objective data-gathering recorder who would play the role of simply documenting and describing what they saw and heard.

Further, it was instinctive to my understanding that meaning-making was about constructing reality in a certain way, not just about discovering or receiving passively what was out there.

My efforts to seek the right methodology for my study revealed several versions of grounded theory, as well as its many dynamic faces. A preliminary word about what caught my attention in the way Charmaz described the role of the researcher. Charmaz states, "The researcher's perspective consists of more than philosophical stance, school of thought, and methodological strategies. It also consists of experiences, values, and priorities." (Charmaz, 1990, 1165). In addition to leading me to explore methodological directions that would help me understand grounded theorizing better, these words pointed me in the direction of auto-ethnography too.

Ellis (1995) describes her own research trajectory by telling the story of her encounters with auto-ethnography, describing it variously, based on specific approaches, as follows, "self-ethnography, ethnographic novel, interpretive ethnography, experimental ethnography, autobiographical sociology, introspective novel, introspective ethnography, impressionistic tale, and personal narrative" (p. 310).

I explored the relevance of this methodology too to gather my data . This was done through making my positionality explicit in the research process at all stages, from data gathering, to analysis, and writing-up of the data. It helped me build relationships and rapport with my research participants, including helping me be reflexive about my role as researcher, both in engaging with them, while being a kind of quasi-participant myself. I utilized my own experiences by story-ing them as interludes, integrating into their voices, my professional struggles and ongoing process of integration as a visible minority professional, who also moved to Winnipeg like my participants, and in a similar timeline. These seemed natural and organic starting points for me, aligning well with the social constructionist's version of grounded theory (Charmaz, 2012), which resonated with my overall ideological and methodological perspectives.

I have interwoven and interspersed my personal story into the narratives of those of my participants, thus actualizing the auto-ethnographic method and process.

Methodology

The study pulled together several methodological perspectives to collect and analyse data. Research methods employed in this qualitative study rely upon inductive strategies including grounded theory (Aldiabat & Le Navenec, 2018; Busic, 2017; Lai, et al., 2017), narrative interviews (Hampshire et al., 2012; Gubrium, & Holstein, 2008; Riessman & Quinney, 2005), as well as genres of new ethnography rooted in feminist and critical ethnography, researcher positionality and auto-ethnography (Anderson, 2006; Ellis, 2004; Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011).

These range from feminist methodologies, approaches situated in the inter-disciplinary PACS field, and ethnography, including auto-ethnographic research methods (Coffey, 1999; K. Davis & Nencel, 2011; Ellis & Bochner, 1996; John, 1996; Kennedy, 2012). According to DeVault (1999, p. 3) feminist research provides ''smaller, more tailored, and more intensely pointed truths than the discredited "Truth" of grand theory and master narratives. These are truths that illuminate varied experiences rather than insist on one reality." Feminist ethnography and auto-ethnography align with the above paradigm, moving beyond post-positivist forms of thinking, with focus sharply on narrative enquiry. Through such an approach, auto-ethnographic narrative becomes research as the writer's story connects to the social structure (Denzin, 2003) not just exploring it, but heightening the relationship between the personal and the political.

As previously mentioned, auto-ethnography, in the forms of "self-ethnography" and "interpretive-ethnography" is present in this study both at an organic level through being part of the study's conceptualisation, data collection and analysis strategies, as well as manifest in the

researcher-participant's personal migration story told in her voice through vignettes interspersed throughout the study. This is also in line with Anderson's view where he proposes the term analytic auto-ethnography to refer to research in which the researcher is (1) a full member in the research group or setting, (2) visible as such a member in published texts, and (3) committed to developing theoretical understandings of broader social phenomena (Anderson, 2006).

This is a qualitative, multi-method study and the following strategies of data gathering were employed to conduct it: participant observation**,** grounded theory**,** in-depth semi-structured interviews using guiding questions, conversation based interviews, focus groups, and auto-ethnography. Keeping in view the following statement about qualitative enquiry was central to my study,

> Qualitative inquiry has been promoted as having intrinsic political and ethical value, in giving voice to marginalized and otherwise muted groups and/or in challenging the powerful (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. x).

Hammersley and Atkinson (2007), among other more detailed descriptions, broadly summarise the many shifting shapes of the term grounded theorising as follows: a " general perspective on analysis and theory-production," "general precepts resembling a set of formulae and protocols," "a distinctive approach to data analysis."

Moreover, there are many phases in these debates on grounded theory, from the initial formulation by Glaser and Strauss (1967), to later re-configurations by Strauss (1990), Strauss & Corbin (1990, 1998), Charmaz (2005, 2006), Clarke (2005), Denzin (1997, 2003), to name a few important proponents. This current study is methodologically situated in the in-between realms of deductive and inductive research methods.

 It does not follow the grounded theory paradigm, as initially articulated by Glaser and Strauss in 1967, which states that "an effective strategy is, at first, literally to ignore the literature

of theory and fact on the area under study, in order to assure that the emergence of categories will not be contaminated by concepts more suited to different areas" (p. 37), proposing that the researcher have no prior knowledge of the research field. This is contrary to my situated-ness as in my role as researcher I had adequate familiarity with the basic literature in the field, as well as work- experience as front line staff supporting clients with the same profile as my research participants.

Additionally, as mentioned above, as an immigrant professional myself, I had experienced similar struggles and challenges, and it was this research interest and goal that drove my study. The objective was to help develop a deepened understanding so, in my capacity as a researcher practitioner, I could impact and enhance solution-building paradigms.

The methodology then, used in this study, is more aligned with tenets of a more interpretive approach to grounded theory, described by Charmaz as "flexible and heuristic" (2005). Further, as argued by (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007), Clarke's (2005) focus on "situational analysis," takes the situation, in all its complexity, as unit of analysis. This view is in line with the postmodern turn within social science research, and such ideas are inspired by the interactionist grounded theory, not separated from them.

In this study I use inter-active, conversation based interviews, an inductive bottom up methodology that values grounded knowledge, and perspectives of participants. Further, the pursuit of such a method creates non-hierarchical relationships and spaces so that "power over" paradigms do not interrupt mutuality and reciprocity in the interview environment. Participants can then speak more candidly and authentically about their experiential journeys.

Research Participants

As indicated previously in the study, participants in two categories-immigrant professionals, and key informants- were invited to participate in this research. The sampling was purposive, (though at times based on convenience, that is, availability of participants), and differential variables based on occupation, gender, age, economic status and class, and duration of stay in Canada, were considered so as to have an inclusive sample. Requests were sent via email, regular mail, telephonically, or verbally. Participants were recruited through the settlement sector or service and community agencies, or individually, using personal networks.

The first category of participants is newcomers whose immigrant experiences are the subject of the study, and they were recruited either through emails sent out through service providing agencies; community organizations; ethno-cultural bodies; and more broadly too, through word of mouth among individuals, as well as community networks, and the snowballing process. In-depth, semi structured interviews, of about 60-90 minutes duration, conversation based, and using guiding questions, were conducted with each participant (see Appendix A). The total number of immigrant professionals interviewed, both men and women, were nineteen.

In addition, two focus groups were conducted, and each group had eleven participants. Interviews and focus group conversations were transcribed, and read several times to get an accurate understanding of participants' views in their own voices. They were color coded to segregate and categorise themes before analysis.

The second group of participants who were invited to participate were key informants who play a role in the settlement, employment, and integration of new Canadians, for example, policy makers, service providers, employers, researchers and academics, a s well as recruiters and human resource personnel. Ten individuals participated in the key informant category.

All that Nitty-gritty of Research Methods and Process

This section provides a discussion of the actual processes used to gather and analyse data for this study. The appendices at the end of the dissertation contain question-sets that were used to gather research data. Appendix A has the broad research questions that frame and structure the study; Appendix B and C list questions that were used with migrant professionals to guide the data collection process, during semi-structured interviews and focus groups respectively; and, Appendix D is comprised of questions that were asked directly to guide conversations with key informants.

Participant Observation

Formal participant observation was conducted after permissions were obtained from the Ethics Board. However, prior to obtaining these, for approximately six months, due to my staff position in the organisation in the role of Labor Market Specialist, I was facilitating workshop sessions with IEPs (Internationally Educated Professionals), and conducting one-on-one employment assistance and career transition counseling sessions with clients assigned to me. These activities were very helpful as they provided a natural work environment for my knowledge and understanding of the immigration and settlement sector to grow in and deepen.

As part of my responsibilities as an employee I had access to policy documents and other empirical data in relation to immigration, settlement and the labor market that I was supposed to review. Moreover, working in the settlement sector in this position was meaningful as it opened up opportunities of being located as an insider and active participant to new research studies and frontline work practices, and this further helped me understand gaps and needs, as well as forthcoming policy developments. I had everyday interactions with other service providers, and I

sat on committees where I could voice my views based on my understanding of issues in this area.

However, on receiving required permissions from the Ethics Review Board, I was more deliberate, formal, and sensitive to research protocols while gathering research data using Participant Observation techniques. Madden describes "participant observation" as a "whole-of-body experience that has us observing with our eyes as we participate, but we also "observe" with all our senses, touch, smell, taste, sound and sight, (all coming together) to form the framework of our memories, jottings and consolidated notes that form the evidentiary basis of ethnographic writing" (2012:19) I found it affirming to have Madden acknowledge challenges and strengths of the processes of participant observation as using this whole body as an "organic recording device," to "adequately record these senses as data and then be able to stand back from the bodily experience and analyse, interpret and draw conclusions from these ethnographic experiences." (19).

Reflections on the Research Process

Madden points to an element I was highly conscious of during the pursuit of my research. This was the simultaneous presence of dualities of "emic" and "etic" perspectives in my own positioning. I might even say multiplicities as I was situated in "insider-outsider ways" in multiple contexts, being a researcher as well as a settlement worker in the same context while also carrying inside myself my own lived experience of migration-transition as a professional. It was for this reason too that I decided to make these multiplicities explicit through including auto-ethnography as an additional methodological tool for my research.

With a co-existence of such an "emic" or insider perspective, (reflective of points of view and experiences of my participants), as well as "etic" or outsider-researcher's lens, it was often

about balancing my roles and responsibilities to the task on hand. Although not exactly for the same variables that Abu-Lughod highlights, [18] even so, in terms of a theoretical paradigm, I certainly see myself sitting in the category of "halfie" as described by her. Further, it was helpful to keep reminding myself of the bigger goal, even the rationale, from which my study was drawing its life-blood, and this was to understand, with respect and empathy, what my research participants were telling me. And for this to be actualised in the field, the first step was to create conditions where they could safely share honest and authentic experiential data with me.

Ensuring Research Rigour

Research rigour was maintained, firstly, by being acutely aware and self-reflective about the multiple levels at which my situated-ness existed within the research field, and secondly, by being conscious about my responsibilities and role as a researcher. One of the other ways of ensuring research rigour was to be open, direct, and clear about my researcher positionality and research goals, maintaining communication as well as an "honest relationship" with my research participants (Klein, 1983, 95). Certainly the words and voices of my research participants are presented in the study only through being being mediated and filtered by the subjectivity of my own persona, but as argued by Ciriviri-Gjuric, is it not true that "while the researcher/ethnographer ultimately seeks to present different "voices," he or she still has the control over their representation. On the issue of positionality, Abu-lughod observes also that "every view is a view from somewhere," (1991,p. 141), and they are "positioned truths" (1991, p 142). In the study I have ensured that respondents' voices find space and opportunities to be heard in their fullness and nuance.

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[18] Abu-Lughod uses the term "halfie" to describe individuals whose "national or cultural identity is mixed by virtue of migration, overseas education, or parentage" (1991, p.137)

Field Notes

I maintained field notes during the above timeline, both during the six-month period before the start of formal research as I was maintaining notes for my professional work, for learning purposes, and to complete month-end reports; and later too, in compliance with research based requirements. While the former were not technically research notes, both due to my work role and my research interests, it was important to do this and they did help me internalise the environment I was immersed in while preparing me for deliberate and purposeful participant observation once ethics-related permissions were granted.

However, the fluidity and seamlessness with which fieldwork can happen, and "field notes" be kept in today's hyper-digitised and connected world is important to note. Conceptualizations of "the field" and the ethnographic researcher "being there" have been shifting and changing in the last many years. What Deborah D'Amico-Samuels observes is resonant when she questions "where does the field begin and end, if ever" in a " high-tech, postmodern, and globalized world where even the research participants in the remotest areas are accessible by telephone"? (cited in Robben, & Sluka, 2007, 24). For example, while my research is ongoing, when one of my research participants sends me an email or calls me, long after formal data has been gathered and analysed, as some do, and I end up learning something new about their "lived experience," is that long term fieldwork then, and a case of the "field (being) everywhere" (p. 25)?

When one of my research participants calls requesting for a reference, or just simply checking in to ask how I'm doing and we chat for an hour based on a relationship of care and friendship that was established during fieldwork, isn't it that, in our role as anthropologists and

researchers, we carry inside of us our cumulative experiences and our relationships with our study participants that change over time and in significance?

Qualitative Interviews

Qualitative data was gathered for the purpose of this study. The focus was to get information on the experiential aspect of "lived experience." There is paucity of data of this nature with regard to this cohort. Interviews were held with two sets of participants.

Interviews with Immigrant Professionals

Conversation based in-depth semi-structured interviews were held with nineteen (19) IEPs. The numbers were equally divided gender-wise, ten participants being men while nine were women. All participants were racialized individuals, belonging to the visible minority group, and they were all migrant professionals who had been in Winnipeg for a minimum of two years and a maximum of ten. The majority among this group belonged to professionals among a range of regulated professions while some were from unregulated occupations.

The study did not differentiate or select research participants on the basis of any specific immigration stream they entered the country through. As a result, there was a range from that perspective, some having migrated to Canada through the federal Skilled Immigrant Worker stream; others through the Manitoba Provincial Nominee program; and one of the study participants arrived through the Refugee program. All however were highly educated individuals with work experience in their field of training, and met the two years to ten years time-duration requirement for minimum/maximum stay in Winnipeg.

Although the goal, as articulated in the research proposal, was to recruit a purposive sample, at times I had to go with the convenience principle, interviewing individuals who were interested and available at the time. Even so there was a diverse and interesting mix in terms of

geographical locations and countries; age; ethnicities; and professions the participants came from. From among a total of nineteen immigrant professionals who participated in the study, nine were from African countries, mostly from Nigeria, but also from Zimbabwe, and Ghana; four from South Asia, i.e., India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka; and the others had migrated from the Philippines, and the Ukraine.

With respect to age as a variable, it was not possible to collect exact or accurate data due to reluctance on the part of participants to share this information. Relating to their approximate age profile, the range was diverse, majority of participants being in their forties, some in late thirties, including almost a quarter being in their mid-fifties. They were variously situated with regard to their background and occupational affiliations too, ranging from previously having worked as lawyers, and computer professionals, engineers and counselors, social scientists and academics.

Each interview lasted approximately 60-90 mins. Although guiding questions (see Appendix B) were used to direct the conversation, oftentimes the format turned out to be free flowing. This was the goal as it prompted dialogue that was natural and easy-going rather than in the form of rigidly structured question-answer sessions. For this reason, Appendix B contains two research instruments, 1 (a) and I (b). The former consists of questions that were submitted to the ethics board, while the latter has the actual questions that were asked to guide the interview process. Both 1 (a) and (b) contain the same content although the question format in 1 (b) at times is slightly different to communicate a conversational style.

Most interviews were held in my office as that location seemed to be mutually convenient. This did not interfere with or impact the relationship in any negative manner as there was sharing of full information regarding my multiple sites of situated-ness. Some interviews were held in coffee shops, and a few in restaurants downtown near my office due to time preferences.

Participants were offered $10 Tim Hortons gift cards. However, a few of them did not accept these. As noted in another section of the study, I did not recruit any participants from among those individuals with whom I was working individually. Participants for the study were recruited from among previous agency clients, and some were current clients but were seeing other staff members for employment assistance counseling. An email was sent out to enlist interested individuals both in the case of those who were recruited from among the agency and outsiders too. Snowballing (Reay, 1995; Browne, 2005; Lewis, 2008; Samuel, 2009) was utilised too and some individuals who were from a completely different context, i.e., non-users of settlement services, were also among the participants.

However, use of settlemnt services (or if individuals did not use them) was not one of the variables I used to differentiate, or focus a question around as it was not one of my research questions. Interactive, conversation based interviews were used as this bottom up methodology values grounded knowledge and perspectives of participants, creating non-hierarchical spaces so that "power over" paradigms do not interrupt mutuality and reciprocity in the interview environment (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Lake, 2015; Shim, 2018).

In their introduction Sluka and Robben note (2007) new orientations in fieldwork in the 1980s and 1990s, like narrative ethnography and testimonio, and values that form an important grounding principle in the research process, like reciprocity, compassion and active collaborations with participants, as examples. Although relationships fostered between researcher and participant have always been an important part of the qualitative research process as crucial to gathering honest and authentic data, their specific dynamics, theorising around the topic, and understanding around it has been shifting and changing over time.

Relationality was an integral part of my research process and I wanted to make sure that participants felt safe to speak candidly and authentically about their experiential journeys. In this I utilized one of the basic tenets and tools of feminist research, i.e., building a participatory relationship between participants and researchers. As (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003) note, such a stance encourages researchers to conduct research "with" participants rather than researching subjects and not allowing them to influence the meaning making process.

Interviews were recorded with full consent and wherever there was discomfort with the use of a recording device alternative preferences of participants were respected in full, and only hand written field notes were taken. In those situations, complete and detailed note taking immediately after the interview was the method used for accurate data-gathering.

Focus Groups with Immigrant Professionals

Two focus groups were conducted, and the participants in these were migrant professionals only. There were eleven (11) participants in each group, so a total of twenty two individuals participated. Among these thirteen (13) were men and nine (9) were women. There are two identity-based factors shared by all research participants in this study. One: ethnically all belonged to the visible-minority category as they are non-European in origin. Two: they are all IEPs, i.e., professional immigrants who have been in Winnipeg for a minimum of two years, and a maximum of ten years.

There were a range of identity variables too among individuals in these groups as they were from diverse geographical locations, as well as age and occupation based differentials. Their ethnic and other identity-location profiles were very similar to the participants who were interviewed (see above) although majority of individuals in the focus group cohort were older, as in the late forties and fifties, many with previous work-experience in human resources and

senior management; some had held high positions as government officials in finance and policy matters; others had owned businesses, or had been employers in large companies.

Focus group participants were recruited through the agency where I was employed at the time, and they were all participants during employment preparation workshops here. I had facilitated some of these workshops on specific topics that were targeted to suit my interests and expertise. Hence there was already a sense of some pre-established rapport and we had discussed employment-related concerns and issues in professional settings prior to these focus group interactions. The participants were aware of my status and interest in employment integration based topics from the lens of researcher and graduate student.

The information sharing during these two sessions was rich and meaningful as the participants were engaged, participatory and effortlessly communicative. The group dynamics was effective as participants built on each other's responses, feeling that they learnt new perspectives, and benefited from each other's experiences of migration, job search, and settlement, including strategies that would help them deal better with their own situations in the future.

Each focus group was approximately ninety minutes in its duration. Focus groups provide the opportunity through a group discussion session to engage in an interactive data-gathering process for participants and researchers (Stringer, 2008; Wilkinson, 1998, 1999). By engaging with other participants in focus groups, participants often trigger new insights building upon each other's experiences (Stringer, 2008) and knowledge, while engaging in a collective meaning-making and data-gathering process (Kitzinger, 1994; Wilkinson, 1999). Moreover, some participants may be more comfortable sharing in a group setting, taking courage from each other, and being comfortable seeing the environment as a safe space for sharing difficult experiences.

I had not facilitated a focus group prior to this experience. However, my hands-on experience of workshop facilitation as part of my job seemed similar to the group interaction in the focus group format, and this helped me anticipate that the dynamics of sharing experiences and perspectives in the group moment would be a mutual learning and relationship building opportunity, the outcome being somewhat unpredictable, but enriching, and invaluable. I was keen to use the focus group methodology both to gather data and to use the process to assist individuals so that they may move towards opportunities of learning from and supporting each other, and thus go forward in their job search and integration journeys using this collaborative approach for shared peer learning.

The focus group was an open and dynamic sharing forum and participants responded to open ended leading questions that allowed them to share experiences openly and authentically without feeling like they might be on the spot. Typically the process was that I would throw out a question, make sure it was understood by all group members, and aim to have a go round the table for responses. Before starting out, I clarified that there was no compulsion for any member to express their views, and they should only do so if they feel completely comfortable, safe, and interested in sharing their thoughts and experiences.

I also assured them that if they preferred we could, at the start and together, establish a consensus around the format we should use to have this group conversation so everyone can feel equal ownership of creating and sustaining a safe sharing space. If I were to summarise the focus group process and feel, I would say we were able to create an environment where participants felt a sense of mutual trust and safety in expressing themselves. Besides, it became a productive and successful opportunity for mutual and co-learning facilitated through the sharing of personal and professional experiences.

Interviews with Key Informants

As part of this research study, ten additional interviews were conducted with "key informants." These are individuals diversely located in the immigrant settlement sector, and they ranged from being front line service providers with experience in program development and delivery; to coordinators of indirect service programs like the Local Immigration Partnership; executive directors with long years of experience in the employment and labour market sector; employers who believe in hiring, supporting and mentoring professional migrants.

The group also included researchers and academics with wide and deep experience of teaching and conducting big data driven quantitative and qualitative studies in migration; individuals in the government sector working in program development and coordination of services; as well as consultants and others responsible for developing policy frameworks for licensing and credential recognition.

Each interview lasted 60-90 minutes, and questions that were used to guide these interview conversations can be found in Appendix D at the end of this study. These individuals were recruited to participate in this study due to their positionality, and as a researcher and front line worker in this field I was aware of their experience and their areas of expertise. I communicated individually with them via email or phone to invite them to participate in the research.

Their observations and recommendations have been a valuable contribution to the research, and this data is included in the findings chapter.

Data Analysis

I listened repeatedly to the recordings of the interviews and focus group. These were transcribed, and read several times to get an accurate understanding of participants' views in their own voices. They were color coded to segregate and categorise themes before analysis. An

inductive approach to data analysis, also known as a grounded theory approach, was utilised for purposes of analysis. The primary purpose of the inductive approach is to allow research findings to emerge from the frequent, dominant or significant themes inherent in raw data, without the restraints imposed by structured methodologies.

The themes that emerged from narrative analysis of interviews were integrated with the rest of the data gathered through focus groups. All themes that emerged were coded. After completion of research, the typed transcripts and any handwritten field notes, and journals will be destroyed.

Ethical Considerations

I explained and described to my potential participants as fully as possible what my research is about, what its objectives are, and what to expect from the interview. I invited them for their participation, verbally, and through email. Once they had assented in principle I went ahead to the process of getting written informed consent (see Appendix E), signing a confidentiality form approved through Human Subjects. Participants signed two copies of the form, one for the researcher and the other for their personal records.

As part of our agreement I reassured them of confidentiality issues, letting them know of options to withdraw from the study at any time, if they so wished, without any consequences. The real names of participants are not used anywhere in this study. I asked them if they wanted to pick pseudonyms and a few individuals did. The others wanted me to go ahead and pick any names I would like to for the purpose of concealing their participation. I have complied with all ethical considerations so far, and will continue to do so in the future.

Dissemination and Knowledge Mobilization of Findings and Hands-on tools

Research findings will be shared with the larger public by way of presentations, relevant reports, and other research publications. These will be shared with interested stakeholders like settlement agencies, policy makers, and others who express interest, and those who might find them beneficial for service providers, including in a professional development context. As the objective and rationale of this study is to help enhance the capacity of newcomer individuals and organizations that work with them, I hope to produce a practitioner's handbook that can serve as a toolkit highlighting strategies to ease migration, career and employment transitions for them. Other online formats like blogs and short articles for non-academic but popular consumption will be part of knowledge dissemination and mainstreaming strategies too.

"Being Ethnographic": Connecting the Dots

This section discusses the general methodological framework within which this study is situated. Researcher-positionality and "situated-ness" are critical elements in my research journey, and operate both as theoretical frameworks and methodological tools that hold this study together.

For almost five years I have worked as front line staff with not-for-profit agencies within the newcomer settlement sector in Winnipeg. My jobs have been specifically in the area of supporting newcomers through their job search and employment-transition journeys, the first four years in my position as Labour Market Specialist working with immigrant professionals, and for seven months as Employer Liaison with a youth serving agency mandated to support employment and educational development for refugee and immigrant youth. These places of regular employment, and my role within them, provided me a professional environment and a practitioner lens through which to understand newcomer experiences in nuanced and multi-

faceted ways. Additionally, this dual practitioner/researcher location was a significant milestone in my own personal developmental journey as a professional immigrant, much like the clients I served.

During this time I have observed and facilitated employment training workshops with newcomer clients; having initially shadowed career practitioner colleagues for learning on the job, and later managed one on one career exploration/job-transition counseling sessions with my clients. My day jobs have required me to assist both adults (immigrant professionals) and youth (immigrants and refugees ages 16-29) navigate their employment related challenges and barriers, requiring me to support them in finding holistic solutions to the problems they encounter as newcomers to the city.

Working with individuals from varied international and professional backgrounds made it possible for me to gain exposure to a range of attitudes, personality traits, and skills people have, and see for myself how easily these qualities become factors that are either conducive or detrimental to finding and sustaining employment in a socio-cultural environment that is new and unfamiliar to them. Additionally, my work positions have provided options for me to work with supportive employers/businesses as well as those resistant to hiring newcomers. I have been on newcomer advocacy committees and policy-making bodies, and these responsibilities in turn have been enriching opportunities to engage and understand programming and policy related gaps and issues, including learning about underlying funding and governance related structures.

My search for a methodology that could help me to make sense of my multiple realities and ways in which they impacted me led me to ethnography. This supported me in the process of acknowledging through my work now in the present who I was in the past. Besides, in trying to make sense of the struggles my immigrant professional clients were facing, (the same cohort to

which later my research participants belonged), I found O'Reilly's description of ethnography very helpful. She states,

> Ethnography is then more a theory about how research should be conducted than a recipe for techniques that can be employed. It draws on a family of methods, usually including participant observation, in-depth interviews, and conversations. It gains its understanding of the social world through involvement in the daily practice of human agents, and it involves immersion in the context, the building of trust and rapport with agents, both phenomenological and hermeneutic interpretations, and recognition of the complexity of the social world. It does not attempt to reduce this complexity to a few statistical or typological representations. It is reflexive about the role of the researcher and the messiness of the research process. And, if it is faithful to practice theory, then it will ensure that it employs a macro approach to gain knowledge of the wider context of action, as well as maintaining a close eye on the various ways that structures are taking effect within and through agents in the practice of daily life (2005, p.11).

Many pieces of the jigsaw fell into place when I saw such a methodological lens being described as "approaches to research and writing that seek to describe and systematically analyze (graphy) personal experience (auto) in order to understand cultural experience (ethno), challenging canonical ways of doing research and representing others (Spry, 2001) treating research as a political, socially-just and socially-conscious act" (Adams & Jones, 2008, cited in Ellis et al., 2011).

I began to notice common ground that auto-ethnography shares with storytelling; with autobiography and with creative writing (the text); with literary and textual analysis; and with the application of interpretive tools (Anderson, 2006; Ellis et al., 2011; Okely & Callaway, 1992).

Playing Multiple Roles

The role in which I was positioned within the research context nurtured my empathy while it made me more self-aware of questions, issues and dilemmas around researcher objectivity. My situated-ness was similar to that of a counselor who can be likened to a deft dancer, needing to move with care and respect, so individuals who are being supported can find their own way through their dilemmas rather than feel they are being directed or talked down to by service

providers, with prescriptive advice being poured down their throats. I was open about my researcher location as well as my identity as a professional immigrant who had walked the same generic path a bit ahead of my participants, and in fact was still walking it every day as migration settlement and integration can often be a continuous and ongoing lifelong journey.

Just as I assured my clients that as an individual, a newcomer professional, and service provider, I would share whatever resources I had, and together we would work through the process of finding other tools they may find helpful, so too with my research participants (none were my direct clients), I responded to their questions as helpfully as I possibly could, and shared with them my experiences and insights. While I did not serve the settlement needs of my study participant cohort directly and one-on-one, I did facilitate group workshops with some of them in my capacity as front line staff. I could observe that the groups with whom I facilitated employment workshops (as indicated above, some individuals among them were my research participants) people felt empowered through the sheer strength of many of them seeing me as a role model to aspire towards.

I feel that it was a research journey where both parties felt valued as their experiences were validated. On the part of my research participants, they could understand their own situation better in the moment, and feel more hopeful going forward seeing me walk the talk, so to speak. From my perspective, my dilemmas, struggles and negotiations with questions surrounding researcher neutrality lighted the way forward and I found the methodological lens of auto-ethnography, one of the theoretical and method-related frames central to this study.

Researcher and Practitioner

Interestingly, such a methodological perspective took me both forward, urging me to explore theoretical and method-terrains hitherto unknown to me while it nudged me to look back and make connections with the person and the professional I had always been.

Coming to PACS from previous disciplinary training (even entrenchment) in literary and cultural studies was no small matter for me as I spent the best, and long, years of my professional life in pursuits of learning and teaching literature, including completing doctoral studies in the field. I wasn't really aware of how momentous a sea change this transition would be when I embarked on my new chosen inter-disciplinary path in PACS, taking courses in unfamiliar knowledge areas, and working on assignments that needed methodological strategies and skills I was not previously exposed to.

However, with some distance, I now view with a deepened perspective my border-crossing from a humanities-based discipline to one that is multi-disciplinary and grounded in the social sciences. This hindsight learning also helps me to better understand how the dots in my previous life connect not just with each other but also how they manifest and position themselves in my current work.

Discovering Autoethnography

E. M. Forster's short epigraph to his novel *Howards End* (1910), "Only Connect….," (also a catch-phrase that reflects the theme of the novel and Forster's worldview), were words that always appeared to me bigger than they looked on the page, their power inspiring me back then, when I lived my previous life as instructor and literary critic dabbling in the literary text at the University of Delhi. Being younger and perhaps more one-dimensional, at an instinctual level, Forster's phrase seemed really significant but its true meaningfulness was blurry. Today

however, quarter of a century on, in a changed world, and with personal and professional maturity thrown into the mix, it is well-lit by stunning clarity and I don't need an epiphany to grasp its relevance. Not only is the world more connected today but my life lens too has widened and deepened with years and maturity, particularly with the personal experience of migration and transnationalism thrown into the heady mix.

Relating to autoethnography, the narrative turn in ethnography and its proclivity to the postmodern outlook found a resonance in my thinking, and so it was for me a moment of epiphany when I first discovered this seductive area of enquiry. For instance, when I first discerned my own interest in exploring themes in migration and integration studies within the inter-disciplinary PACS field, I noted that it was accentuated by my personal "'lived experience" of migration. For me it opened new pathways to study this particular realm in migration as the alignment with post-positivist, situated, and reflexive methodologies seemed obvious to me, and research methods grounded in ethnographic theory and practice seemed appropriate for this research (Anderson, 2006; Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011; Conquergood, 1991; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

Situated-ness in the Research Context

Since I initially became drawn to working in the newcomer settlement sector due to my research interest in the field of migration and settlement, my hands-on work with newcomer clients has helped me gain both overview as well as in-depth situational understanding of gaps, needs, and problem solving options. Interactions with experienced co-workers; brainstorming during staff meetings, and in other forums like inter-agency meets, professional development workshops, and conferences; as well as networking and participating in employer engagement

sessions and other stakeholder meetings have all been activities that demonstrated to some extent where possible solutions may lie.

My situated-ness as a scholar-practitioner, and a researcher, located in the field in this every- day manner, has provided me with unique opportunities for participant observation (Spradley, 1980; Tedlock, 1991). It was fertile initial ground to be situated in and get both an overview and a fly-on-the-wall perspective on newcomer experiences of migration, settlement, and much more. While facilitating workshops and counseling sessions, either in groups or individually, I had the honour of hearing newcomer professionals speak about dreams and hopes they had prior to their move to Canada. During employment training workshops they had opportunities and safe spaces to describe how their real experience of settling and living in Winnipeg compared with those expectations.

Moreover, discussions with colleagues with years of experience in migration and settlement provided me with a long-range perspective too. This helped me learn about changes that had occurred in the last few years in immigration policy and settlement programing. I felt fortunate that I could locate my understanding of the here and now in the (historical) long term backdrop of migration contexts, be it in relation to previous ebbs and flows related to migration policy and programing, funding structures, immigrant profile, labour market changes, and skill gaps, and other relevant considerations.

Had things changed in the last 10-15 years, I wondered? Had they become better or were they worse, I asked those who had a longitudinal perspective of the sector. When I heard them tell stories from the past and examined current scenarios individuals were struggling with, the popular adage seemed fairly resonant, namely, that the more things change the more they stay

the same. It is important though to go beyond the philosophical tenor of the previous statement as it also reveals gaps and real problems in policy and governance structures.

Why do things take so long to change and what are the real constraints that create these stubborn and persistent roadblocks? For those who work in the public sector, associating broadly with governments and their interface with the not-for profit side of things, there is awareness that funding is an issue as is lack of coordination and collaboration (Reinke, 2017). However, root issues generally run deeper, and are often situated in rigid mindsets, lack of political will, prevalence of apathy leading to status quo, monopoly of power positions and territorialism, as well as a general lack of sync between dynamic needs and inability of bureaucratic processes to be robust and responsive to meet individual needs.

What would problem solving and solution building look like in such a scenario and how could it be made operational? Which were the specific and concrete barriers that over time had become intractable situations, and where and with whom did the potential (and responsibility too) for problem solving lie? Who were the important stakeholders whose proactive participation would be imperative to make systems and processes function better? What could I do, in my dual roles, as a practitioner and a researcher? While I worked in the newcomer settlement sector, meeting newcomer professionals and seeing them struggle, these questions confronted me head-on. How could the interdisciplinary field of Peace and Conflict Studies, particularly theoretical and methodological tools related to social justice and peace-building, contribute strategies that might successfully enable positive change?

Further, due to my positioning in this space as a "pracademic" (researcher-practitioner), and getting such a ringside view of the field, was a powerful experience that brought me closer to my own experiential self. I kept field notes that helped me reflect on and process small details of

my every-day interactions and emotions, and find new analytic insights. Stories my clients shared in workshops or during one-on-one employment counseling sessions spoke directly to me as I too had gone through my own recent migration journey. In fact my journey was even more current and ongoing than that of most of the internationally educated professionals I served through my day job though there were some like me too who had not moved fully but kept their options open so they may return "home" just in case things did not work out in their new home.

Straddling Multiple Spaces

My migration journey seemed relentless, ever present and with no end in sight as for a few years after moving to Canada I lived in two worlds at once. I continued to hold my tenured academic position as instructor and associate professor in English at University of Delhi for a few years after moving to Canada as I was uncertain about what my professional future here in this new environment would look like. I would take a leave of absence for a few months from my job "back home," time that I had accumulated through my years of service, to be back in Canada with my family, and carry on with my lingering doctoral studies at the university here, as well as my part time job working with newcomers. And when my time would run out, off I would go, back to teach another semester at my university in India. These visits from one home back to another, from host country Canada back to my "'real" homeland, India, (or so it seemed then) were about hanging on to the good stable job I had from a perspective I can best describe as "just-in-case things didn't work out in Canada" and we decided to move back.

Certainly I straddled my twin-homes efficiently, India and Canada, including the spaces in-between, by living concurrently, even provisionally, through intermittent back and forth travel. Strange as it may sound, I had migrated while I still continued to live "back home," often physically in real time, and oftentimes emotionally, and in my headspace. It was certainly not

easy, and I wondered and dug deeper to see if there was another bigger reason. All this while, as I also continued to work part time with newcomers in Winnipeg in the role described above, my positionality helped me continuously compare, evaluate, perhaps even simultaneously live multiple realities, my own and the those of clients I served.

My rationale became somewhat clearer to myself when I encountered other newcomer professionals in my day job whose profile and situation were similar to mine, and I saw mirror images of myself in lives they were leading and emotions they were experiencing. This decision to keep looking to the past with that backward glance while moving forward was based on an instinct to ensure that I was maintaining a professional identity I wasn't ready to let go of. It was like performing a dangerous circus act, straddling two geographical and mental spaces, and living two lives simultaneously. It became increasingly clear to me that I didn't want to give up the stability, status, and self-affirmation my professional affiliation back home awarded me as I had no clue what would fill that empty space, if anything.

This kind of living in several spaces at once may appear like a unique subjective experience, and as such, an aberration, but through my job I met more and more individuals like myself, all of us living transitional, often transnational, lives as though hanging continually by a fragile thread. I noted that, much like the population cohort I supported, one of the significant pieces of myself that had been lost in this relocation (dislocation?) was self- confidence. A natural consequence of the above was a spiralling down towards loss of self-esteem, and emotions like frustration, and discouragement.

I have seen my clients make hasty and often bad decisions as a result of being trapped in similar cycles. I know some individuals who are unable to look me straight in the eyes because they have lost their sense of self as their work-life in Canada has not given them any

opportunities to prove their self-worth. There are still others, well-spoken, and with doctoral degrees to their credit, who return home every few years (maintaining their residency requirements, families continuing to live in Canada) because they feel devalued as members of the workforce here. Oftentimes, families decide that the only way out of these relentless dilemmas is to live apart, with one of the partners whose occupation is not recognised in Canada, living and working overseas, while the other continues to live here so children get the education and environment they aspire for.

Continuing the specific story of my personal migration journey, looking back now a few years on, enrolling in a Phd program at this later stage of my life that I did may appear like an unlikely and unusual decision to many, if not a positively bad and "wrong" one. To myself, with hindsight insight, overall I do not view it so negatively, except when it becomes that monkey on my back that refuses to jump off. Oftentimes I feel like it drags me down not letting me get on with my life at this somewhat later stage of my life when I might prefer to utilize the tools and perspectives gained in this new field that I feel passionate about to make a difference in the world.

While I have enjoyed this doctoral journey, feeling blessed and grateful every day for the opportunity to rejuvenate and reimagine myself intellectually and ideologically as well as emotionally and professionally, perhaps had I known then when I started, how many precious years of my life it would consume I may not have begun to walk this path. Even if on the surface this discussion seems autobiographical, and to some readers it may not appear directly relevant to this study, it is actually much broader, and in being so, it is relevant in terms of auto-ethnographic methodology that undergirds this study.

Dilemmas in Decision-making

In my dual roles as researcher with my interview subjects, and front line settlement staff working with highly educated clients, I have seen professionals who struggle with decision-making. They have high aspirations and expectations, and sometimes all they know is that they want to be able to make optimal use of the opportunity of being in this brave new world by doing and achieving what they could not back at home. Certainly those goals and dreams are variable and specific depending on the situation of each individual. For example, these goals could be of financial independence or educational attainments for some; a great job that can boost their self-esteem in the eyes of family and friends back home for others; or perhaps they may be about finding their satisfaction in achievements of the next generation for some others. Whatever the ultimate goal and purpose of their move and the struggle that ensues, it does boil down to dilemmas and decisions that must be made in a territory that is uncharted.

Uncertainties and decision making in the context of a familiar environment are less risky than they can potentially be when the context is brand new and territory totally unfamiliar as there isn't fulsome understanding about where these paths might lead. For example, financially, and in terms of time, much is on the line for an individual who is advised to enrol in an educational program as the only way to land a job in Canada. And the number of people with high qualifications and experience who are given this advice, either by family, friends, others in the community who have walked this path before them, is staggering.

The problem is any path is hard to replicate because each new traveller is likely to bring something new to it. Besides, professional directions, when pursued second-time round, are usually not linear either. When the context is career transition, particularly in the current highly technological economy, many factors come into play. As a result, this advice from family,

friends or community members, even though well-intentioned, may not be the most relevant and useful, or even sound, for the individual concerned, as it has no guarantees for leading to desired outcomes.

Advice given in this context, even when provided by well-wishers, is often coming from sources that have very limited experience of their own. Family members or friends who tell the newcomer how to proceed to build a successful future in Canada may have gone through the migration experience several years ago when employment and labour market scenarios were quite different. Or their advice may be based on the journeys of others about whose experience they may only know partially. It could be a completely different line of work in terms of occupation, and that could make all they say irrelevant to the situation being faced by this particular person. And yet, good Samaritans are always eager to provide unsolicited advice in areas where they have little expertise. While it is gratifying to know that the advice comes from a good place, it is not helpful, especially if it launches someone on a path completely different from the one they ideally could have pursued, especially when they do so without exploring several other options.

Moreover, as individuals, we are all different too, and one person's decision is unlikely to be the same as another's even if situations are similar, as it would be shaped by their previous experience, educational, ideological, and cultural background, and multiple other situational considerations. Personalities vary hugely too, and as discussed in a later chapter, character traits like openness to explore different and new work related options, as well as flexibility, and adaptability can be key factors for employment settlement, especially in the case of professionals who have a range of transferable skills.

Employment assistance agencies have trained and experienced staff that can offer more individual-targeted support but they too need to make sure their guidance is nuanced and non-prescriptive, and in terms of attitude does not denigrate and devalue previous training and experience a professional newcomer brings to the table. For professional immigrants, there are likely several alternative routes to arrive at their chosen destinations if they had access to correct information, timely guidance, and other tools that would assist them in being able to better project what the consequences of their decisions might be. Given that there is much that is new and unexpected in an unfamiliar environment, this challenge of uncertain consequences arising from certain decisions must be factored in and taken in stride to avoid frustrations and disappointments in the future.

Decision-making at a Personal Level

My personal story is a useful frame to concretise how specifically targeted decision making for professionals could be. Although I felt free to pick and choose what I wanted to do to facilitate my post-migration second career, I often wonder and dream about other paths that alternative career choices may have led me on. I must affirm that my personal and family circumstances, as well as my specific professional aspirations, guided my decision to undertake a PhD project after moving to Canada as part of a family move. Another point to note here is that even when individuals migrate to Canada in the family class, if they are professionals seeking their own employment integration (and this happens routinely in the case of spouses), they too in actual terms are economic immigrants as they become competitors in the labour market.

From my perspective back then, my need to rejuvenate myself intellectually was so intense that it seemed possible only through moving into a disciplinary terrain that was brand new for me. As suggested earlier, it is the uniqueness of each individual that often pushes them to make

certain decisions, sometimes in complete defiance of objective advice from friends and family who are able to think with more clarity and objectivity, and less personal bias. So it was for me, determined as I was to pursue a second PhD, (starting it in my mature years, in a new country), with the larger purpose of dabbling in new ideas and theories, learning methodologies totally new to me.

It's true that decision making is variable and specific, and the trajectory I chose would not work for another as mine began with the dream of new adventures I could have in terms of work I had never done before, on completion of this research project. I felt that I would rejuvenate and reimagine myself intellectually through doing a three sixty degree turn, making a leap of faith from the humanities to social sciences and more, including making a paradigm shift that was both inter and trans-disciplinary. Not only did I walk with a sense of purpose into a whole new disciplinary world, I also learnt a range of brand new methodological tools through which I could understand the world better.

Most of all, I learnt ways to engage, be, and see myself in relation to the world around that was also a path of self-discovery for which I am truly grateful. For starters, I acknowledge that even with someone with my kind of profile and trajectory, the above may be a rare path that an individual may decide to pursue. Being reflective and as objective as I can be about such a subjective experiencing of myself as located in the world around me, I understand that several factors went into the making of such a professional personal choice. It was the unique coming together of several aspects of my personality; long term goals and aspirations; broad interests and disciplinary skills; as well as my "atypical" privileged immigrant situation in life that went into making it a possibility. I was fortunate, and somewhat atypical in not having to find a transitional

job for survival purposes as I had moved to Canada as part of a family move and was not economically compelled to be the breadwinner for my family, usually the case for newcomers.

If only I knew then what I do now…

However, and again, hindsight bias lights up with shining clarity the paths I have traversed in the last few years, I can surely say now, with some regret. If only I had more knowledge and better understanding of ways in which things are set up here and the way systems work in Canada, and I had more confidence in my own abilities in this new and unfamiliar environment, I would have had more knowledge tools to make a more considered professional/ life decision. For many individuals, career and employment-related decisions are life decisions as most other aspects of life hinge upon them. The spectrum can be basic or advanced, and Maslow's pyramid of needs explicates this (Maslow, 1954). These needs can range from experiencing self-esteem, life satisfaction and recognition, to feeling a sense of belonging through being a contributing member of society, to being economically self-reliant and feeling enabled to take care of one's own needs and those of others who depend upon us.

In the case of professionals that I know, many of whom were my interview participants; some are my friends and family; others were my clients and are now my friends; and certainly speaking for my own self; meaningful work that provides self-actualisation is one of the most significant pillars that has capacity to hold together other aspects of a person's life, including keeping the person strong and upright, with mental health and well-being in place through being connected with others in the world (Rosenthal et al, 2012; Van den Broeck et al, 2013). Work is very significant to people, and can be the make or break element in the migration, settlement, and integration trajectory. Particularly in the case of economic migrants for whom migration is about decision-making and seeking opportunities for betterment for the individual and their

family, employment is the key determinant of settlement success. These decisions to seek new possibilities for improving lives is based in self-selection and agency, but the tools needed for success are detailed, nuanced and are often reliant on accessible information. It is true that the onus of seeking detailed information upon which all decisions should be taken rests on the individuals themselves. However, despite there being abundant online resources available nowadays, detailed, nuanced, and targeted information is still not easy to find. Besides, there are vested interests at play and much valuable information is not easily accessible for those for whom it would be purposeful and life-changing.

Perils of Shifting Ground

The struggles of getting back to being my own professional self but in a new and uncertain environment were stressful, and more so because I had no idea how it would happen, or indeed if it ever would. To be honest, with the changed geographical context, the ground kind of shifted under me. This move and relocation to Canada demonstrated that different systems and new ways of doing the same job you did back home make the same job look very different. Sometimes, it may be the technological interface that changes the way these differences present themselves, or there may be other reasons why tasks related to the job are not the same. At other times it may simply be the infrastructure, or processes and frameworks within which the work or workplace is located, that makes everything look so foreign that an individual begins to feel inadequate or perceives themselves as a misfit.

For example, one of the critical factors that often leads to a make or break situation in the employment sector for newcomers is the emphasis employers and hiring-managers place on soft skills. This aspect becomes even more important when it comes to maintaining employment than it is for getting that first job. I hardly knew any more if I wanted to look for opportunities I knew

and understood, or start over and explore new options. Also, in the case of certain jobs, for example, like teaching in a the university setting, it becomes obvious soon after getting here in case you did not know about it previously, that it's a stronghold and a glass ceiling near impossible to shatter for an immigrant with foreign credentials (Wilkinson et al, 2013).

Writing about this is a liberating process as it helps me reflect upon and process my embedded story. It also helps me free it, and when it's out in the open I can see it more clearly and understand it better. In fact, my day job working with co-professionals was fascinating for this reason too. While every story was always specific in being different from the one before, there was common ground too. And because we could walk together in these shared spaces it made for meaningful relationship-building between us. It was almost like multiple images in broken mirrors reflected off of each other, and my story and my experiences, my emotional dilemmas, and my professional struggles, were all reflected in those mirror images of others' stories.

Through the process of distilling down all our specific and combined experiences of these individuals, it was possible to understand how a new environment can lead individuals to perceive themselves to be inadequate and begin to feel a lack of self-confidence. It begins to make sense then to see how this kind of mindset can easily push an individual fully capable, experienced, and well equipped with all the hard work-skills, to make a hasty decision to take up a job where the full range of their skills will be devalued and their abilities under-utilized. There are other compelling factors like the need to be economically stable to take care of family responsibilities. These often leave an individual with little choice but to give up their long term dreams, and take up that easily available transitional job, also termed survival job, to make ends meet.

It is all of the above considerations that influenced my early decisions in my Canadian trajectory: self-perceptions of inadequacy as I didn't know how things work in Canada; and so I felt like a fish out of water, and not totally in control of my present or my future. This was a perfect recipe for diffidence that made me have little faith in my own abilities. It was interesting that to achieve my long term goal of exiting academia, the only world I really knew, the path I chose led me right back in with even more intensity, through the pursuit of a second PhD. I have observed with some of my research participants, and other migrant professionals too, this compelling need to get into an educational program while still being fairly new and not able to clearly articulate and figure out where it might lead them. These decisions are perhaps a result of inner pressures to learn the new environment and systems quickly to be able to feel the sense of being in the familiar comfort zone.[19]

One of the other factors that impacted some crucial decision making for me was my desire for ongoing new learning. Relocation to Canada often opens doors to possibilities for individuals that they had no idea about prior to coming here. Information available online is not enough as it is not targeted, detailed or nuanced. Questions like the following can haunt newcomers and they lived in my head continually too. Who could I/would I be in this new environment once I could be myself, was a question I periodically asked myself. What would I "do" for a living when I really feel settled and I know properly how things are done here? What would I want and choose to do and be (if I could) now that I have this wonderful opportunity to explore different options of re-inventing myself in a new country and system? These were often my musings, especially

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[19] See Chapter Five for another view on migrant professionals' pursuit of education as furthered by neo-liberal policies of the Canadian state. As Ng and Shan argue in their study with Chinese women professionals , through encouraging and implementing policies that "systematically" devalue educational capital of migrants, immigration and settlement structures put the onus of lifelong learning on individuals, making them take responsibility for their empowerment, and letting systems off the hook.

during my regular back and forth travels between the home of my birth, and Canada, this new home.

Although a million new and exciting possibilities seemed to exist in this new land, it was scary too as I could not be certain where I would land if I followed my heart and threw myself off that experimental cliff. As I was simultaneously going through personal settlement struggles as an immigrant professional, my moments of clarity helped me zoom in and locate my own thematic and methodological focus within this research area. This blurring of worlds, personal, professional, as well as the intersectional layers between my multiple identities, seemed like shifting shapes inside a kaleidoscope. And it was my work environment that helped me zoom in and figure out my specific research focus within the broad field of migration and economic integration for newcomer professionals.

Deconstructing my situated-ness further, it is significant to note that my personal profile as a professional (visible minority) immigrant seeking work in my area of experience and expertise makes me quite similar to the clients I have had the opportunity to support through the provision of employment-assistance services. In fact, at the outset, I enrolled in the program (in which I was later hired) with the intentionality of learning first-hand about the settlement system as well as availing these employment services personally for myself.

Professional Roles during Data-collection

I describe below the situation that explains and provides clarification regarding my job related position and research-specific location during the time I was engaged in collecting data for this study. Data was collected through conducting qualitative interviews and focus groups, and most of my research participants were current and previous clients recruited through this agency, or through referrals from other agencies. There were others who were recruited using the

snowballing method. I would like to confirm that none of the research participants were individuals that I was directly working with in my capacity of providing employment assistance services. In fact during this period, and for a few months before and after too, as a result of funding constraints, my work position was part time and I was only facilitating workshops and not working one on one with any clients.

Another important point to be noted here is that a few months after completing my data collection at my employment location (described above) I changed jobs. Although I continued to work in the employment sector within newcomer settlement for almost another year, the client cohort I was serving as front line staff during my second job was immigrant and refugee youth. Our agency provided educational development and employment services to disadvantaged youth, both immigrant and refugee, in the age range of 16-29, and I was responsible for direct employment assistance to clients, including career guidance; seeking new employer partners, and being the liaison between stakeholders; providing on-the-job monitoring; and building and co-ordinating relationships with all partners.

This broadened my exposure and provided an additional lens through which to view and understand the current and dynamic scenario of ever growing settlement needs, both specific to the employment sector, as well as in the overall holistic context within which these fitted.

Expected Implications of Research for Practice and Policy-making

It is hoped that this research will have implications for immigration and settlement policies as it will identify and describe gaps, needs, and barriers in the context of economic and holistic integration. In suggesting ways to actualise processes that facilitate more inclusion, sense of belonging, civic participation, and social capital, it is hoped that recommendations it makes will enhance economic integration, overall participation and social cohesion for migrant

professionals. The study's multi-pronged approach is aimed to support capacity-building

structures that foster better individual and collective agency as well as overall well-being.

Building resiliency at the individual level, and helping to change negative attitudes and

messaging towards newcomers are other important goals of this research.

It is expected that the study will have relevance for practice as it will benefit service

providers in the settlement sector through giving direction to new, alternative, and better targeted

programing, and more social- justice-aware multicultural counseling. I envision and hope that

this research will also be useful for professional development and community of practice

activities for service providers. Further, in achieving the goals highlighted above, it would be

beneficial for individuals who will be able to access more supportive structures and enhanced

resources.

Finally, this study aims to strengthen the relationship between theory and practice,

community engagement and university teaching. As an aside, the following example

demonstrates the action- potential of the research, and ways in which the feedback loop between

theory and practice can be strengthened. In collaboration with a colleague, I had co-developed a

Summer Institute that we co-taught in the summer of 2017, and it was well received. The course

was practitioner-focused and skill-based and provided innovative opportunities,

learning/teaching tools, and partnering possibilities to students to gather hands-on experience

working with community members on career and employment counseling in the case of

marginalized populations. The objective was to co-create knowledge through integrating

community knowledge resources, with academic and pedagogical practices.

The goal was also to utilise, strengthen, and create methodologies for community building,

using, and creating, new collaborative frameworks that integrate teaching, research, community

engagement, and practice. The vision is that work of this nature, as well as other forms of action-based practice, will in turn foster engaged and creative forms of learning. It is hoped that such interventions will enhance personal and professional development for practitioner-educators, and provide opportunities for advocacy within a community setting. Moreover, it will affirm individual and collective resiliency, and actualize capacity building, for students, as well as the excluded populations they will be working with.

Summarizing the Research Journey

The purpose of this chapter is to map the research journey through highlighting methodological parameters and the rationale behind employing them, as well as the methods utilised to gather and analyse data.

The first section details the actual methods used to carry out the research and to conduct the study. As stated in this chapter, during the time of a preliminary exploration of the migration field undertaken to discern gaps in research and practice, and later while gathering data, my day job gave me access to migrant professionals who have migrated to Canada in the economically skilled category. As workshop facilitator I assisted this cohort of individuals to acquire skills for job search and job preparation, and provided employability and skills training, including cross cultural and soft skills competencies relevant to the Canadian workplace.

Working with these clients, and with colleagues who have long range experience and understanding of settlement issues helped me better understand where the gaps and needs are; what the likely factors for success and failure for different individuals might be; including conceptualizations and varied perceptions around "success" and "failure."

The chapter highlights methodological frames that underlie this study, providing shifting perspectives between my story of migration, and through it, the extrapolation of the larger cultural phenomenon of economic migration. One, this strategy simultaneously highlights that each story has its specificities but also that broadly there is much common ground upon which understanding and solutions can be founded. Two, interactions between the researcher's personal story and its relationship with the bigger migration narrative, demonstrated through the constant back and forth, make clear the role and relevance of auto-ethnographic methodology in the context of this research. Grounded theory and ethnographic aspects within the method/theory framework have been introduced including making a case for why this particular framework and lens is integral and organic to this research. From my "situated knowledge" location as an immigrant professional and as a practitioner within the job search context of the labor market, and additionally employing an auto-ethnographic lens, my goal was to identify specific gaps in immigration and social policy, and settlement services, that present challenging barriers for individuals.

CHAPTER FOUR: Boundary Crossings: A Backgrounder

> What was Canada—a distant place most did not know where, a pink mass beside the green of Greenland. Suddenly everyone was talking of Canada: visas, medical interviews, 'landeds.' In Canada they needed plumbers, so those who did not know one end of the spanner from another, schoolteachers, salesmen, bank clerks, all joined plumbing classes and began talking of wrenches and discussing fixtures that they had never seen in their lives. Toronto, Vancouver, Montreal. You got the most recent news outside mosques after prayers, when men await their women, and during morning and after teatimes at the A-T and other tea shops: who had left, the price of the dollar, the most recent black-market related arrests. They talked of Don Mills as if it were in Upanga. The buildings of Rosecliffe Park were known, it seemed in intimate detail.
>
> (M. G.Vassanji, *No New Land*, 1991)

A General Overview of Migration Studies

This brief chapter is set up somewhat differently from the other chapters in not being divided into sections. This is because it is in the nature of background notes on migration that highlight general concepts, tropes, and terminology often utilised within migration literature. The relevance of these "background notes" to the current research study is indirect and limited, but the purpose they serve is seminal. While these brief notes may not speak directly to the specific experiences of the cohort that is the subject of this research, they are intended to provide a kind of backdrop to the broad themes and approaches in migration that are part of shared experiences of migrants, whatever the specifics of their migration trajectory might be. In doing this, they will likely resonate with the general migration experience, including the situations migrant professionals encounter.

For example, the following themes, discussed in this section, are common denominators within the migratory experience of professionals who come to Canada for economic reasons and

with the long term goal of putting down roots: notions and emotions of home and longing, nostalgia, and belonging when individuals and groups leave a home of their past to create another life in a different geographical location; what propels such a decision, what such an action entails, and what it triggers; and the realities of settlement and integration that individuals and families negotiate during this ongoing journey.

Diaspora, discussed at some length below, is a loose as well as heterogeneous concept and term, and is often used interchangeably with migration. However, it may or may not resonate with the self-perception an individual has of their own migration journey. Certainly, the diasporic experience is part of the larger topic and theme of migration, and for this reason it seemed appropriate to focus on it in this short introductory section.

Preliminary Notes on Themes within Migration Studies

A variety of themes, typologies, and conceptualizations of being home and away find space to huddle under an umbrella as large and multi-sited as migration studies. Subjectivities as diverse and nuanced in location as migrant, transnational, diasporic, and exile, or newcomer, immigrant, and even refugee, all of which encapsulate a range of often dissimilar trajectories of movement get included in discussions that focus on immigration/migration. Oftentimes, the only similarity these forms of naming share is the fact of physical movement from one geographical location to the other. Increasingly, factors like globalization, and technological and virtual imperatives impact contemporary formations, realities, and theorizations around migration.

Notions of assimilation, acculturation, homeland, and belonging become as significant as realities of racism, acceptance, and discrimination in new homes. In fact, all aspects of building new homes that oftentimes seriously impact the act of living and being whole in the present as

well as compulsions to look back that preclude integration and meaningful citizenship options need to be part of discussions around approaches to migration too.

This is such an interdisciplinary field that discussions and analyses display a rich and multifaceted array of perspectives and sites, a result of cross fertilisations among contributions made by geographers, demographers and population theorists, political scientists and economists, historians, sociologists and anthropologists, and scholars of literature and cultural studies.

From dialogues and theorizing that ranges between "empirical to metaphorical," "the transnational turn," and de-territorialization, diaspora and "diaspora space" (Brah, 1996, 181) and ethnoscapes, (Appadurai, 2003), identity making within multicultural, cosmopolitan and globalised times, or "third spaces" (Bhabha, 1990), and analyses of the concept of diaspora within migration studies there are several directions that approaches can and do take.

Migration Trajectories and Tropes

For instance, one of the most fundamental discussions in the migration field is between "forced" and "voluntary" migration, i.e., refugees and exiles on the one hand and groups like the labor diaspora or others who move seeking better economic opportunities on the other (Van Hear, 2010, 34). Or the binaries of "push' and "pull" factors set up to analyse causal factors leading to migratory movements (Basran & Bolaria, 2003).

There is the "assimilationist" perspective within migration studies that insists on personal and cultural characteristics of certain ethnic communities in terms of their potential to integrate into the values of the host culture, hence such an approach leading to immigrants being seen as "problems", and no accountability on the part of host country to eliminate structural inequities from their system (Basran, 10). Moreover, such a view devalues and distorts the economic roles

played by newcomers, hardly taking into account their role as labor resource (Portes and Borocz, 1989, cited in Basran and Bolaria,10).

There is also the typology Cohen proposes that categorizes the diaspora in terms like victim, labour, trade, imperial, and cultural. His discussion notes too that such divisions suggest fixity and superficial generalizations while the truth lies in specific diasporas often occupying overlapping or interstitial spaces in between the above categories (Cohen, 1997). Even within the format he provides Cohen argues for possibilities and the need for more nuanced understandings, including discussions on the postmodern aspects of diaspora with its focus on de-territorialization of identities, signified through "traveling cultures."

Esman offers a three part typology of settlement, namely, settler, labor, and entrepreneurial (Esman, 2009). Vertovec proposes three meanings of diaspora, as a social form, a type of consciousness, and a mode of cultural production (2000).

Migration and Diaspora: Diverse Migrant Subjectivities

While it is true that one of the approaches to migration studies includes discussions of migrant subjectivity through frames of reference grounded in the notion of diaspora it is important to see the two terms- migration and diaspora- as discrete social formations as using them in undifferentiated and indiscriminate ways (something that happens frequently in the literature as well as in common parlance) is inaccurate and simplistic.

For example, through highlighting an inherent multilayered-ness within the migration genre, Cohen points to the multiple trajectories within it. His discussion is grounded in a historical and linear context. Hence he begins, like much other important writing on this topic, with the Greek notion of dispersal within diaspora- "to scatter, spread, disperse, be separated" (Knott, 2010, 20) moving on to significations located in collective trauma, and finally allegiances

of the diasporic to a community both through retaining meaningful connections with shared

migration histories and a sense of co-ethnicity with others from similar backgrounds (Cohen,

1997, ix).

Early studies identify the Jewish experience as the paradigm for diaspora and exile and this

is one reason for these terms to be forever so compellingly resonant with ideas of forced

emigration, displacement, social and political marginalization, loneliness and enduring longing

to re-migrate to the homeland (Bauman, 2010, 19). Brah and others, capture the layered-ness of

home being a "mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination" and "lived experience of a

locality" (Brah, 1996, 92) "symbolic conceptualization of where one belongs," (Salih, 2003, 70),

"a metaphorical space of personal attachment and identification" (Ambruster, 2002, 120), as a

"'conceptual or discursive space of identification and as a nodal point in concrete social

relations" (Rapport, 1998).

Diaspora: A Portmanteau Term for Migratory Movements

The term diaspora is often employed as a default category to club together all kinds of

migratory movements completely different from each other. Cohen describes multiple

trajectories of migration grounding his discussion in a historical and linear context. To reiterate

what is noted above, Cohen begins, like much other important writing on this topic, with the

Greek notion of dispersal within diaspora- "to scatter, spread, disperse, be separated" (Knott,

2010, 20) moving on to significations located in collective trauma (Cohen, 1997, ix).

In the descriptions provided so far, directly above, repeated from the the previous section,

and other observations mentioned in that section, there are underlying dangers of the term

(diaspora) becoming an undifferentiated, portmanteau kind of articulation empty of real

meaning, or meaning that may be inaccurate. Bramadat deconstructs the term, explaining that,

based on its originary connotation of dispersal, in order to claim ownership of the diaspora tradition members must conceive of, or at least imagine another place as home even if it is one that displaced communities never intend to return to. He says, and I agree, "if there is no longing for, or deep identification with a faraway home, if there is no sense of the new land as a non-home, ipso facto there is no diaspora" (Bramadat, 2005, 14).

The "colonial subtext" in the indiscriminate use of the diasporic label is problematic, and the writer rightly notes, "I am concerned with those groups that become described by outsiders as diaspora communities without the full consent of such a label, especially for members of the second and third generation who may not feel dispersed from anywhere" (Bramadat, 2005, 17). Further, since belonging to a diasporic group implies the gesture of continually looking back it is likely to jeopardise integration and a putting down of roots in the new country.

Bramadat also draws attention to another important problematic, that is, the contradictions between views expressed on these topics in academic journals on the one hand and in high school hallways, dance floors, corner stores, university lounges and subways across the country on the other. He argues for these sites to be where there may emerge a "'new, more fluid, and fully Canadian mode of self-understanding that combines ancient, modern, local, and international, religious and ethnic traditions with contemporary popular culture that will shape the civil society in which we will all live in the coming decades" (17).

Since the following discussion is directly relevant to individuals with membership in the visible minority category, I cite it in its fullness below. Bramadat substantiates the claim he makes above regarding an existing gap between an academic view and another that is more prevalent in popular culture by telling the story of one of his students, a Canadian citizen, ethnically a part of the Sikh diaspora although his parents were born in Malaysia. He describes

this individual as someone who in the present is more likely to go to Moose Jaw rather than to the Punjab for a visit. There are tens of thousands of individuals from different ethnic communities and with diverse religious allegiances who relocate to Canada in search of a better life, and who have their extended families and friends here and for long years do not go back to their homelands or only on short visits as tourists. Further, they feel a complete sense of having established homes and a sense of belonging in Canada, in their professional and personal lives.

Bramadat contrasts the above example with another, of his wife's family this time, who moved to Canada from England in the 1960s and still go back for regular visits but nobody sees them as part of any diaspora. The question thus raised is a pertinent one, and reflects exclusionary and racist biases, as the term diaspora getting applied naturally (by default) to visible minority communities implies the impossibility of ever achieving full membership even for those in these communities who unambiguously desire it.

Brubaker (2005; cited in Oonk, 2007, 239) argues that diaspora when used as a noun essentializes communities through a kind of groupism, and so it may be more useful instead to conceptualize diasporas "not in substantial terms as a bounded entity, but rather as an idiom, a stance, a claim...a category of practice....As a category of practice, 'diaspora' is used to make claims, articulate projects, to formulate expectations, to mobilize energies, to appeal to loyalties" (Brubaker, 2005; cited in Oonk, 2007, 239).

Other Useful Definitions of Diaspora

The larger point of this discussion is to problematize the term diaspora so that it can speak to differentiated lived experiences of migration in ways that would make sense to those who live it, while being alert to racist and exclusivist undertones thus making certain these frames of reference are accurate and respectful, hence enabling.

Judith Shuval notes, "A diaspora is a social construct founded on feeling, consciousness, memory, mythology, history, meaningful narratives, group identity, longings dreams, allegorical and virtual elements all of which play an important role in establishing a diaspora reality" (Shuval, cited in Raghuram, 3). Sokefeld argues for diaspora to be analytically treated similar to social movements occurring in response to triggers, as well as intersecting sets of imagined transnational communities: "'development of diaspora identity is not simply a natural and inevitable result of migration but a historical contingency that frequently develops out of mobilization in response to specific critical events. Diaspora is thus firmly historicized.

It is not an issue of naturally felt roots but of specific political circumstances that suggest the mobilization of a "transnational imagined community" (Sokefeld 2006, 280, cited in Raghuram, 3). Raghuram and Sahoo destabilise the notion of diaspora through seeing it as a tool by which to unsettle, reconfigure and maintain boundary negotiations, boundaries like physical, political, social, cultural and emotional, triggering unanticipated alliances and conflicts with identity markers like class, race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality especially as these variables relate to nationality, nationalism, and transnationalism (5).

As scholars of postcolonial literature and theory, and diaspora studies, Vijay Mishra theorises the "diasporic imaginary" and Radhrishnan is known for his views on "diasporic mediations between home and location." With physical and emotional, intellectual and philosophical homes in multiple locations including transnational, transcultural, and hybrid spaces, their writing resonates with nuanced considerations of notions and realities around identity and belonging within the diasporic condition that are similar (to each other) but also different from the more linear and straightforward ways in which social scientists approach the topic of migration.

Radhakrishnan describes the diasporic location, arguing for it to be neither a mark of privilege or a universally representative condition, but rather as the "space of the hyphen that tries to coordinate within an evolving relationship, the identity politics of one's place of origin with that of one's present home" (Radhakrishnan, 1996, xiii). Home for him as a practising academic intellectual in the US becomes a mode of interpretive in-between-ness, an acknowledgement both of "elsewhere" and "here" and a form of "accountability to more than one location." For instance, he initiates conversation on notions of authenticity dealing with the identity question within migration studies in the following passage:

> I cannot live, earn, pay taxes, raise a family, produce scholarship, teach and take passionate and vigorous political stances here, and still continue to call it "not-home." Conversely, I cannot historicize the valence of my being here except through an Indian/subaltern/postcolonial perspectivism. The demands of the "politics of location" are complex: "home" and "not home" and "coming" and "going" are neither literal nor figurative, but rather, issues within the politics of 'imaginary geographies'' (xiv).

Radhakrishnan points to the two-directional nature of diasporic historicity, tracing his own identity back to his father while locating himself as a generational bridge in relation to his son who he exhorts to lead a life full of discovery, open-endedness, full of questions not of answers.

Further, his acknowledgement of multiple registers through which subjectivities can speak as well as his honoring of different sub-constituencies within the same subjectivity, and still not be a chameleon or a ventriloquist lacking in integrity through performing such an act, creates a theoretical framework based on contingent and "discrepant dislocations" (John, 1996).

Configurations of Home and Belonging

James Clifford's choice of the term "travel" to speak of "missionaries, converts, literate and educated informants, mixed bloods, translators, government officers, police, merchants, explorers, prospectors, tourists, travelers, ethnographers, pilgrims, servants, entertainers, migrant

laborers, recent immigrants, (Clifford, 1992, cited in Cohen, 101) instead of terms like displacement, nomadism, pilgrimage, and migration connect to the distinction he makes between borderlands and diasporas."

In his view, the former implies a "bi-locality where an emerging syncretic culture is temporarily separated by erratically enforced frontier controls, but linked by legal and illegal migration." He argues that although there is a "close resemblance between borderlands and diasporas in that they 'bleed' into each other, diasporas, positioned somewhere between {physical dwelling in} nation-states and traveling cultures, are social entities caught up with and defined against the nation state and have claims different from those of indigenous, autochthonous, 'tribal' peoples" (Clifford, 1994, cited in Basch, 1994, 8).

Additionally, as Cohen asks, "Does one live in a perpetual state of liminality? He provides a somewhat quizzical response too: "it does not matter where you're from, or where you've come to, but where you're at" (2006). Approaches to migration studies then, however multi-sited and contradictory, in one way or another struggle with themes of home and belonging, rootlessness and exile, so that home gets configured in plural forms and in many places, physical and geographical, rooted or traveling, and emotional, or philosophical.

Globalization and the Transnational Turn in Migration Studies

There is theoretical space within discussions on diaspora to note the difference between earlier definitions of the nation-state as individuals and groups sharing common culture within a bounded territory and new notions that include citizens who live physically dispersed within boundaries of many other states, but with active social, political, cultural and economic allegiances to nation states of their ancestors (Clifford, 1994).

Comparing the current situation to the 1980s, Vassanji states,

It used to be when people left their country, they knew they would never see their homes again. They felt lucky that they had made it to Canada, and there was no looking back. But now we come from a different world. We come by plane, we hold dual passports, we have email and we have telephones. There are fewer currency controls, economies are interlinked, and when new people come in they bring in the language again and refresh it, so it doesn't happen anymore that German disappears or that Gujarati disappears. Families are dispersed in all parts of the world (Richler, 2006).

The "transnational turn" (cited in Baubock & Faist, 2010), a concept coined in the 1990s, to connote an approach within migration studies that brought migrants "back in" as important social agents has been studied from many perspectives, including through the paradigm of interdisciplinarity, particularly in the last decade. It moves away from the diaspora model within migration to include contemporary realities of globalization and deterritorialized forms of nationhood, multicultural states, and plural forms of discourse analysis, and impacts of media and social networking revolutions that seemingly erode specificities and historicities. Among other things it also provides an opportunity to step back and take note of the influences brought into this field (originally largely shaped by sociologists, geographers, and historians) through the work of cultural theorists, novelists, and postmodern scholars from other arenas.

For instance, the transnational conceptualised as borderland space where "when multiple cultures meet, new categories are created and old ones break down, such that identifying a single resulting culture is difficult" (Nurse, 1999, 477, cited in Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007, 139). Or transnationalism, initially defined as "the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement" (Basch, 1994, 6) more recently became situated as "taking place within fluid social spaces that are constantly reworked through migrants' simultaneous embeddedness in more than one society" (cited in Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007,131; Levitt & Schiller, 2004; Pries, 2005; Smith, 2005),

namely "other sites around the world that connect migrants to their co-nationals and coreligionists" (Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007, 131).

Literature reviewed by Levitt and Jaworsky highlights transnational cross border activity generative of social capital, economic and political participations with potential to radically alter "economies, values, and practices of entire regions" (Kyle, 2000; Levitt et al. 2003, cited in Levitt and Jaworsky, 2007, 132). And then there is for instance, Anzaldua's (1987, cited in Mahler & Pessar, 2006) conceptualization of the space between United States and Mexico as a borderland that shows up the border as artificially bifurcating a unitary social and emotional space when spaces really should not be imagined only in nation-state formations but also in ways that people living within them perceive them (Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007).

Differentiated "Lived Experience" and Approaches to Migration

Needless to add, these discussions have significant implications for debates around citizenship and nationhood, entitlement and identity, and border-crossings and conflict. The trajectory of approaches to migration studies needs to, and indeed has, moved beyond host-country perspectives, and that further areas of study need to focus upon (a) "space, place, and the nature of embeddedness; (b) the variable consequences of transnationalism, negative and positive; and (c) comparative studies of international and internal migration," with emphasis also on "social constructions of gender, class and race across borders" (Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007, 142).

While to generalize is to homogenise and that is always potentially problematic, increasingly it is becoming politically correct and hence important to be cognisant of mixed and hybrid spaces in the lives of transnational migrants. De-territorialized manifestations of identity within transnational and transcultural spaces speak to postmodern discourse and for this reason

too contemporary approaches to migration studies take into account these fluid and situated formulations.

The Post-modern in Migration Studies and the Identity Question

Cohen's engagement with the postmodern in migration studies is clear from his evocation of scholars known for hybrid conceptualizations of identity and cultural phenomena (Bhabha, 1994; Hall, 1992; Said, 1993) to show changing patterns in diaspora and the move in migration studies away from unidirectional "moving to" or "return from" forms of movement through engaging with "multiple subject positions" and "interstitial" moments and spaces. Cohen perceives these changing patterns within migration approaches with the existing model being

> asynchronous, transversal flows that involve visiting, studying, seasonal work, tourism and sojourning, rather than whole family migration, permanent settlement and the adoption of exclusive citizenships (Cohen, 1997, 128).

The following private correspondence between Cohen and Vertovec reiterates the above:

> Aesthetic styles, identifications and affinities, dispositions and behaviors, musical genres, linguistic patters, moralities, religious practices and other cultural phenomena are more globalized, cosmopolitan and creolized or hybrid than ever before. This is especially the case among youth of transnational communities, whose initial socialization has taken place within the cross currents of more than one cultural field, and whose ongoing forms of cultural expression and identity are often self-consciously selected, syncretized and elaborated from more than one cultural heritage (cited in Cohen, 1997,128).

It is from discussions like the above that notions and understandings around of bi-cultural identity and in-between-ness emerge, and based on experiences individuals have, whether they are positive or negative, they are conceptualised as spaces that are either affirmative or marked by deficit.

Summarising General Themes in Migration

As indicated previously, this chapter highlights some of the major tropes, themes and configurations around migration journeys. Primarily, it focuses upon a term like diaspora as it is one most frequently used to conceptualise migration journeys both within the academic community and also in popular culture. Through the provision of several interdisciplinary examples, I hope the points of interface and separation become clear between this social science driven interdisciplinary study and others that are often situated more in the realm of humanities, literature and culture studies. Certainly there are meaningful alignments and shared thematic resonances, but there are points of departure too. Perhaps one of the variances is the focus on "lived experience" in this study, and that on representation in some of the others cited.

Apart from the workings of serendipity, if I were to connect the dots between the "then" and "now," it may be accurate to say that I came to this particular research journey at my current stage of life because of my previous interests in making sense of literary writing and theory that came out of the lived experience of migration. And now, faced with a similar journey in my own personal life, it made me doubly aware of how my own migrant subjectivity was responding to the challenges I was experiencing.

Furthermore, since this research has given me the space to explore researcher positionality as a key variable in the research journey, it has also helped to bring into acute focus the dual spaces that I myself simultaneously inhabit. My personal location within the hyphen, being an "academic-immigrant"[20] straddling both bicultural identity space as well as that between literary

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[20] Radhakrishnan describes himself through such a terminology p, xiii, *Diasporic Mediations: Between Home and Location* (1996).

studies and interdisciplinary social science research makes this dialogic interface particularly

resonant.

CHAPTER FIVE: Migrant Transitions and Re-Inventions

Overview of Themes that Emerged from the Data

Based on analysis of migration related themes and contexts that emerged from the data, as well as discussion of methodological tools employed, this research study is distilled down to the following subtopics. These are: identity and intersectionality in Migration Studies; social exclusion factors and labor market integration; migration, conflict resolution, and peace-building and; Constructivist approaches for solution-based strategies.

Later sections in this chapter review literature that explores each theme and sub-topic separately. The goal of the following discussion is to deepen understanding in this field of study, including making new interdisciplinary connections between the fields of migration, PACS, and auto-ethnography, while exploring those that have been highlighted by other researchers.

Identity and Intersectionality in Migration Studies

As is well-known, identity in the case of immigrant populations gets shaped and re-visited due to the act of migration. These sites of identity, including intersecting roles and power dynamics within the family, community, and the world of work, shift and get re-constituted as a result of border crossings. However, additional factors like racialization, ethnicity, and discrimination form the backdrop and get included too as these are the grand narratives in a discourse where referents are persons of color, (named visible minority groups in the context of Canada).

Migrant Subjectivities and Identity Making

Variances and ambiguities resulting from the often life-changing act of migration, and from the journey that follows, have been described through a range of important terms and studies that make visible underlying complexities in the migration field (Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007; Alba, Richard & Nee, 2015). Assimilation, adaptation, acculturation, and integration have been terms that have been hotly debated historically and continue to be contested in present-day (Berry, 1997; Campolieti, et al., 2013; Marger, 2006; Neckerman, Carter, & Lee, 1999; Racy, 2012). Since most topical issues are situated in the social and cultural milieu of the time, it is only logical that one as relevant and hot-button as immigration derives its signification from political and economic contexts of the time it is rooted in. The ramifications then are dynamic and they shift in response to political discussions and economic trends (Jacoby 2004; Kivisto 2005; Portes, 2010; Portes & Rumbaut 2001; Portes & Zhou 1993).

Assimilation, Adaptation, Acculturation, and Integration

The section below attempts to provide a brief glossary of these loaded terms, and it barely touches upon some of the core thoughts inherent in them. In some resonant sense though the deep meaning at the heart of each of these words creates the fabric of the lives immigrant individuals lead when they transition between the realities of their two homes, the one they leave behind and Canada where they decide to settle. In the context of this study these terms are not front and centre though, and neither are they being utilised to construct a succinct argument. I see their place as simply one that can help create a backdrop, in the nature of a musical score, against which the story of immigrant lived experience can play out. Certainly, the weight these terms carry alert us to implied connotations of what it means to feel included, and how it feels when that sense of belonging is missing from our lives.

For example, multiple studies in the late 1990s and early 2000s that explored the transnational turn in migration described how migrants were living transnationally while they were also continuously striving to assimilate in cultures while leading new lives in the host country (Basch, 1994; Baubock, Rainer & Faist, 2010; Mahler & Pessar, 2006). Other scholars have pointed to gaps in such reasoning, observing that such a stance of living in dual worlds at once was counterintuitive to purposeful assimilation (Campolieti et al., 2013; Marger, 2006; Neckerman et al., 1999). The purpose at the heart of assimilation is contested in the literature too, and a preference is indicated for "adaptation" instead, and on terms laid out by the migrant, not prescribed or pushed down the throat by the state (Berry, 1997; Racy, 2012; Wilson-forsberg, 2015).

Toosi et al (2017), coming at the conversation from a health care framework, employ a comparative strategy for understanding integration, using a "transitions theory" (Meleis, 2010) lens and an "acculturation theory" (Berry, 1997) perspective. The first views migration as ongoing, unpredictable, non-linear and complex, accounting for continuous change and seeing hope lying in seeing accomplishment and success in the future. Acculturation, Hynie explains, is a "gradual and multifaceted process" where traditional and non-traditional behaviors both coalesce and conflict. It is in the " negotiation of meaning" in these in-between spaces that she sees the potential for immigrant families to develop bi-cultural coping strategies (Hynie, 1996). Following this argument further, acculturation theory is similarly based in a dynamic and dialogic frame, with focus on psychological implications; coping with stress and adapting to it; and it relies on the abilities of migrants to make personal choices for positive behaviours leading to satisfaction of health and well-being (Berry, 1997, 2008).

Specifically in the case of individuals that are the focus in this study, multiple identity

sites emerging from their high aspirations as well as their personal and professional

relationships-including roles within the family, community, and broader societal networks-are

often in conflict with each other. Even so, these multiple identity sites manifest both separately

but also in unison, intersecting and seamlessly bleeding into each other to create a composite

individual. For example, the experience of being an educated professional, having had a good job

back home, and along with that, a sense of self based on "belonging" as a contributing member

of society changes rapidly as a result of migration.

To work at survival jobs to pay the bills and take care of the family are part of mainstream

and popular understanding. For instance, there are anecdotal accounts and documented research

about medical doctors driving taxis in Winnipeg (and in other parts of Canada).[21] South Asians,

many of whom were educators and engineers in their home country, are currently one of the

largest cohort of entry level workers employed by Tim Hortons, and highly qualified individuals

from a range of visible minority groups are working as security guards and health care aides

through service-providing agencies in Winnipeg. Implications for self-esteem, and adverse

impacts on well-being and mental health are documented in the literature (Altman & Pannell,

2012; Cole, 2009; Davis, 2008; Hochbaum, 2013).

In light of above, trajectories of assimilation and adaptation, acculturation and integration,

as well as the blurring lines in between them are complex. As they shape and impact

individuals' lived experience of feeling "settled" meaningfully in the host country, they must be

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[21] As cited in a CIC (now IRCC) report by Li Xu (2012) "Who Drives a taxi in Canada?", according to the 2006 Census, taxi driving has become an occupation highly concentrated with immigrants in Canada. There were over 50,000 taxi drivers in Canada; two out of four drivers were immigrants. This ratio is double that of immigrants in the Canadian population of the same age range (almost 1 in 4), thus immigrants were significantly overrepresented in the taxi driving occupation.

observed and understood with careful nuance. Besides, employment challenges faced by skilled immigrants impact other aspects of their lives, such as family dynamics and relationships; their parenting, spousal, and other roles within the family and society; affiliations and location within the class system; and other shifts and changes as a result of migration (Gupta, 2013; Reitmanova & Gustafson, 2009; Rosenthal et al., 2012).

A study by (Cerdin, et al, 2014), while with its variances due to its situated-ness in the context of France, has some relevant lessons for the Canadian immigration-integration experience. It frames economic migration as "a war for talent," and refers to luring QIs (Qualified Immigrants) as a business proposition. The prospects of hiring well qualified individuals for the long term while incurring lower costs going through the process itself clearly targets economic interests.

The article also sets up a dual framework, in terms of "motivation to migrate" and "motivation to integrate," and this analysis too can have useful implications for settlement programing and immigration policy in relation to Canadian professional migrants. However, it is also true that, despite intentionality, one of the most important factors that directly shapes an economic migrant's attachment (Kazemipur, et al 2013) to the host society is the experience of employment settlement they go through (see also, Alba, Richard, & Nee, 2015; Neckerman et al., 1999; Portes, 2010; Xi, 2013). As Kazemipur et al argue, "Prescriptive assimilationist" and structural-historical approaches that place "'intention to assimilate" at the centre due to their view that integration is a linear and inevitable process are problematic as assimilation can be only be seen as a "possible by-product of the nature of immigrants" experiences, materialized only when such experiences are pleasant and consistent with immigrants' expectations' (p. 612). Likening assimilation to other desirable goals in life, like success and happiness, Frankel (2006)

too asserts that it cannot be planned. The line is blurry (and potentially dangerous too) between "prescriptive assimilation" and its more "coercive" version, as starkly evident in present-day Quebec politics. The controversial policy implications are obvious too.[22]

Multiculturalism

Oftentimes as backdrop, and at other times situated centre-stage, multiculturalism forms intricate and contradictory patterns in its role as enshrined in the policy framework in Canada. I have read a few studies that have painstakingly teased out dilemmas and complexities inherent in this framework as well as ways in which lives of immigrants and non-immigrants in Canada are impacted as a result of this policy (Berry, 2011; Ghosh, 1994; Halder, 2012; Imbert, 2017; Joppke, 2017; Kymlicka, 1995, 2010; Moodley & Adam, 2012; Naidu, 1995).

The official policy of multiculturalism, implemented in 1971 by the then Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, is intentioned towards rights and freedoms to ethnic communities to protect and preserve their differences, their heritage and cultures, religion and languages, while celebrating their diversities and facilitating their meaningful integration into Canadian society, not in the manner of American "melting pot" but as differentiated pieces stand out in a "'mosaic." It is a big topic and is made sense of by individuals based on their situated-ness.

For example, a scholar's disciplinary orientation shapes their views about it, and as a policy framework, a newcomer to Canada may see it as full of promise with potential to reassure them of their human rights. Scholars and academics have defined it variously, discussing if it is a single doctrine, or if it has been slowly dying (Vertovec and Wessendorf, 2010). Over the last

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[22]It is interesting, valuable, and relevant to assess and understand these issues in light of debates that relate directly to "coercive assimilation" and "selective secularism" in present day Quebec politics https://www.mironline.ca/franco-phony-assimilation-in-the-2018-quebec-election/

few decades, and based on the climate of the times, scholars from multiple disciplinary have argued about its role in shaping (and being shaped by) discourses around cultural differences and Canadian identity, terrorism and immigration, diversity and democracy, citizenship and human rights, and other big topics that impact the world we live in.

As an example, critics have discussed its relevance, and backlash to it, including observing that despite its liberal connotations it has little power to enforce (or even has a plan for execution) to assure migrants of anything substantive like economic rights which is what they most need (Bannerji, 1993; Banting, 2007; Hébert & Wilkinson, 2011; Wright & Bloemraad, 2012). On the other hand, any rights framework is perhaps a good thing as within it is invested an institutional or legal structure that individuals can access for redressal of wrong doing.

Multiculturalism is interesting and useful for me as a tool of analysis exactly for all the varieties of paradoxical implications it can contain, and in my role as practitioner sometimes I see more its uses and potential relevance even when I observe that many migrants are either not aware of its existence, or don't understand it. Multiculturalism then, it seems, contains within it multitudes and any migration related conversation can learn from considering its place, and by locating and reviewing it, not only as a useful theoretical tool for analysis but also in its practical applicability in the every-day.

Intersectionality

As discussed previously, triggered by the experience of migration, self-perception of dislocation, and marginalization, that an individual goes through, brings into stark clarity the multiple identity sites that are embedded within, and are often existent at subterranean levels. This is true even when the migratory act is undertaken voluntarily and with full knowledge, volition and control. This is the case because the incidence of the unknown, unfamiliar, and the

unpredictable within the migration trajectory is huge and this fact of uncertainty makes it potentially a terrain that is challenging and difficult to fully prepare for.

Intersectionality theory, often perceived as a cornerstone and theoretical contribution of gender studies to the social sciences, can provide an analytical framework to understand multiple marginalizations caused by gender, race, class, color, caste, for example, ("multiple social positionings" (Samuel, 2010, 97) or "axis of oppression" (Risman in Shields 303, cited in Samuel, 97). Underlying this is the understanding that marginalization is integral while responding to the need for "'developing an integrated analysis and practice based upon the fact that major systems of oppression interlock rather than operate separately" (Davis, 2008; Brah and Phoenix, cited in Wilson, 2013). Applying an intersectional lens to migrant subjectivities is key to making sense of experiences of transition (Anthias, 2012; Erel, 2010).

Collins (Collins, 2000) sees in intersectionality a lens through which mutually reinforcing sites of power can be centralized. Further, she applies the term to an ethnic and global context. Taking on the stature of almost a subfield then, and used as an approach across disciplines like sociology, feminist studies, critical legal studies, and human rights discourse, intersectional approaches have been described and utilised as an interdisciplinary framework for analysing and operationalising concerns and issues related to social justice.

Further, Samuel points out the usefulness of this approach in helping migrant (women) also juggle multiple and conflicting identities in a new cultural space, negotiating both structures of power as well as resistance strategies through making innovative life choices (Samuel, 2010). For instance, she notes the power of the family, customs around marriage, and other everyday

social and religious norms in the lives of migrants in conflicting cultural contexts often creating destabilizing and life changing experiences for them (Altman & Pannell, 2012).[23]

Postcolonial theorists, including feminists, like Min-ha (1989), Collins (2000), Yuval-Davis (1994), Sandra Harding (2004) and Dorothy Smith (1987, 1990), have utilized the framework as a comprehensive lens both to understand social justice and structural conflict issues rooted in marginalization, oppression, exclusion, difference, and discrimination, (including racism), while also providing the language and tools to advocate and create policy for transformative and positive change.

Furthermore, a study conducted by Huot adds another layer to the above formulation, suggesting that performance of identity is contextual and takes place while in intersectional interface with an individual's (intersectional) identity markers in their interaction and enactment through occupations. This study employs Bourdieu's concepts of field, habitus, and capital (1977), as do other studies, (Akkaymak, 2017; Bauder, 2006; Erel, 2010) to show that "integration involves a process of 'starting over,'" which entails becoming aware of differences in fields and habitus within and between home and host societies, learning "'how things work" in the host community, and negotiating performances in social interactions" (Huot et al, 2013).The conclusions are summed up as follows: "Bourdieu's theories highlight how challenges migrants faced in engaging in occupations within particular places were related to how their habitus and capital shaped their possibilities and performances in social interaction within Canadian fields of practice" (p 10).

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[23] See Altman and Pannell for a review of literature and consistent argument connecting feminist intersectional theory to examine policy and theory gaps in relation to women as migrant domestic labor.

As cited in (Rajiva, 2013, p. 17), according to Cottrell and Vanderplaat (2011, p. 268), "It is increasingly recognized that the family, rather than the individual, is the integral unit of analysis within the immigration experience…the experience of immigration is profoundly affected by familial ties and relationships." The essays in Bauder (2019), make a timely and compelling case for positioning the family rather than the individual at the centre of settlement and integration discourse, not only for purposes of analytical understanding of the experiential reality of migration but also from a policy perspective aimed at mobilizing successful integration of newcomers. Class identities as situated in the context of the migrant family are in that sense valuable to study to attain a holistic view of the settlement-integration journey. They are critical also in the potential they have to impact overall well-being for each individual family member separately as well as affecting the health of the composite unit.

Names and Labels

Views and perceptions about immigrants that fit them into neat one-dimensional economic (and social) paradigms often construct individuals and communities in a monolithic, either/or representation. For example, in common parlance, legal citizenship does not seem to normatively grant the right to be named "Canadian" if an individual belongs to a visible minority group. Generally, in conversation when a reference is made to "'Canadians," the (default) implication is not to citizenship but rather to a European ancestry.[24]

Dismantling and interrogating such forms of naming, through two-way conversations and awareness campaigns, can help us navigate and critique hidden assumptions and biases widely

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[24] Anecdotally speaking, (based on personal experience as well as stories shared by research participants and many others) it is the case that, being a legal Canadian citizen, and having lived in Canada for decades, the perception and default naming (form of address or referent) for visible minority individuals often is "immigrant" or "'newcomer". This results in the conclusion that it is one's European ancestry, obvious from appearance, accent or other "visible" signs that leads to such an inaccurate and problematic assumption on the part of members both of "mainstream" communities and others.

prevalent in popular culture. This can also be potentially useful in deconstructing the impact such labeling and terms of representation have upon newcomers' constructions of self, as well as their self-esteem. For example, terms like "'visible minority," "immigrant,"' "'migrant,"' or "newcomer" used to describe or address this cohort determines self-perceptions, assumptions, and negative stereotyping, thus creating a homogenizing and totalizing narrative. This further enhances migrant individuals' sense of a marginalised outsider-status (Gurcharn & Zong, 1998; Maxim, 1992; Ogbuagu, 2012).

Although such forms of identity-making are most powerfully experienced by individuals who are new entrants in the host culture, oftentimes, as years roll on and they become legal citizens and are meaningfully employed, such labels confirming their minority status stick, becoming further normalised due to the color of their skin or their need to sustain their bi-cultural identity (Haiying, 2005; Tafarodi, Kang, & Milne, 2002) which they often do through (visibly) maintaining their cultural and religious traditions, like celebrating their festivals or going regularly to their places of worship.

Canadian multiculturalism, while being a positive and laudable policy overall can also potentially be a double edged sword. Through its official mandate to encourage (even promote) cultural diversity, it often ends up congealing migrant identities in specifically ethnic moulds, precluding possibilities of fully embracing a Canadian identity for migrants who might choose to do so.Ethnic minority status is often thrust upon migrant individuals and groups even when they themselves do not own up to occupying such a space on the periphery, and have moved beyond such a personal subjectivity.[25] Such a conundrum manifests in other situations too when

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[25] For second and third generations, the impacts on identity-making, (through behaviours that may perceive as racist), can be more intense and negative when compared with their parents' generation. Being born and raised in Canada, their situated-ness defines their sense of self as well as their attachment and belonging in ways that are for

individuals, having been in Canada for longer than five years, are cut off from settlement support services as they are no longer eligible to receive them due to length of stay in Canada. Further, as new entrants to Canada, they can apply for citizenship after three years of stay and as a result the chances are their legal status has changed too, from being permanent resident to becoming legal citizens. However, the majority of settlement sector services are limited in their provision only for individuals who are permanent residents as they are assumed to have "settled" during that five-year time frame.[26]

The reality though is the opposite, as they may not have found the right job or have been laid off from one, or they still need language support. Further, integration is conceptually and practically a tricky term due to its inherent complexities, hardly arriving in linear or standardised form for everyone, and with an end-date, but rather functioning more in the nature of a continuum and as an ongoing process (Gebhardt, 2016; Wong & Tézli, 2013). In all situations though, it appears not just inappropriate and hurtful but also inaccurate to be named "newcomer" after more than two decades of living life in a place that one considers their only home.[27]

The problem is that in any of the above scenarios or indeed other similar ones, as a result of the visible minority appearance of individuals, their accent, or their manner of dressing, there is the (undesirable) possibility of forever being perceived and named "newcomer" or

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them non-negotiable. Experiencing racism and discrimination in such a context has enhanced potential for social conflict.

[26] Guidelines around timelines related to eligibility for newcomers to receive settlement support services are not fixed but dynamic. There are multiple programs too and funding mandates and allocations change periodically based on political dispensations (federal and provincial), availability of grants and programs at a particular time and overall needs that may split funding dollars. Currently, (in general), with primarily federal funding structures in place, supports are cut off once permanent residents obtain citizenship for which they are eligible to apply after 3 years stay in Canada. However, they are often not "settled" leave alone "integrated" (whatever these terms may mean in specific scenarios). There are niche and limited programs though through which agencies can apply that address needs of Canadian citizen cohort still in need of employment supports.

[27] It is from such a place and mindset that racist slurs originate during charged moments when individuals and groups who look visibly different are told to 'go home' when in actual terms the only language they speak is English or French, they have no other geographical location to return to, and their only home is in Canada.

"immigrant" for a majority of migrants. Such a perception and assumption on the part of the majority population amounts to discrimination and denial of benefits of the fullness of citizenship rights despite having been granted legal citizen status (Dankelman, 2008; Ungerleider, 1992).

Politics of Representation

Deconstructing this politics of representation further, one established view perceives migrants as a monolithic group that takes jobs away from more deserving and entitled Canadians while the other perception sees in them a necessary resource that can make a useful contribution to the Canadian economy. Such dualities in perceptions relating to newcomers create a binary wherein individuals are often situated on two opposite ends of a spectrum (van de Ven & Voitchovsky, 2015; Vineberg, 2011). Besides, such a binary is problematic also because these two views become separated and compartmentalized spaces into which individuals and groups are often forced to fit in, with no real options of being situated in the more nuanced spaces that lie in between.

As a result of these broad strokes, the specificity of a life and singularity of the story replete with everyday lived experience of success and failure, heartbreak, loss, elation, and tears is lost (Ogbuagu, 2012; Hébert et al., 2010; Wilkinson, 2013). Further, such grand narratives lead to simplifications, generalizations, and patterns that create rigid and homogenous categories that get locked in popular imagination and culture. As well, they lead to stereotypical representations and assumptions that are often fixed and one-dimensional (Henry, 2003; Krishnamurti, 2013; Mogadime, Smith, & Scott, 2012).

In terms of lived experience of professionals new to the city, both those views often come together, even blending into each other. These two mindsets co-exist, both indicative of racial

biases, namely, immigrants viewed as resource that will perform jobs "Canadians" don't want to work at, and when they get good jobs being seen as outsiders who steal good opportunities from more deserving Canadians (Berry, 2011; Palmer, 1996).

Many migrants, new to the Canadian context, are offended by this turn of events because they know well their own expertise. They are well aware too that such blue-collar minimum wage jobs in call centres or flipping burgers, working as security guards and health care aides, are not the jobs they came to Canada to work at (Danso, 2007; McCoy & Masuch, 2007). Even when viewed as respectable here when compared with perceptions of people back home, these forms of employment make them feel humiliated, underutilised and unable to contribute in ways they believe themselves capable of or qualified for (Chatterjee, 2015; Slack & Jensen, 2007).

Immigrant professionals encounter other significant challenges apart from unemployment, for example, underemployment, and over-qualification (Blustein et al., 2013; Ng & Shan, 2010; Reitz, 2001; Thompson et al., 2013), deskilling, and devaluation (Guo & Shan, 2013). Their lack of job search experience in this new cultural context is a major barrier in and of itself, and certain prescriptive methods and behaviors are recommended by settlement organizations in order to achieve success (Akkaymak, 2017; Guerrero & Rothstein, 2012).

Social Exclusion and Labor Market Integration

For internationally educated professionals whose sense of self is often rooted in their professional roles, settlement and integration challenges are exacerbated due to a range of social exclusion factors. Career transitions are difficult as straightforward career pathways do not exist, and cross cultural differences create barriers. In addition, the job search process is unfamiliar, and discriminatory factors are pervasive in the labour market sector. Furthermore, having experienced self- esteem and validation through achieving job satisfaction back in their own

country, expectations of skilled migrants are often high and their aspirations turn out to be unrealistic in the Canadian context.

Social Exclusion Factors

Foreign-born visible minority migrants face a range of social exclusion factors, for instance, non-recognition of international education (Esses, 2006; Li, 2000; Xue, 2008); poor labour market access (Flynn & Bauder, 2015) further exacerbated by the current employment scenario which is precarious (Johal & Thirgood, 2016); discriminatory hiring practices like the hidden job market and racist mindsets on part of employers and hiring managers (Oreopoulos, 2009); as well as absence of social capital.

Bourdieu (1985) and Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) describe social capital as "the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutional relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition" (p. 119). These are personal and professional networks including membership in groups and clubs where information sharing and network enhancements can happen. According to Lin (2001), these are spaces where influences may be leveraged upon recruiters, such as employers or supervisors by, for example, "putting in a good word" in favour of the potential employee, "standing behind" the employee by certifying his/her credentials, and help reinforcing and recognizing the employee's identity (cited in Nakhaie & Kazemipur, 2013, 433).

"Uneven Field" and the "Canadian Work Experience" Barrier

As discussed in the previous section, intersectional impacts of identity factors for new migrants, like age, gender, education status, occupational background, visible minority status and immigrant status result in negative socio-economic outcomes for migrant individuals. Lightman & Gingrich (2013) summarise social exclusion as systemic processes that "(re) produce and

justify economic, spatial, socio-political, and subjective divides (ensuring) denial of effective exchange of one's abilities, thus cutting off avenues for upward mobility, leading to an uneven playing field" (p 124).

Given the above competitive context, migrant professionals experience double discrimination as a result of their outsider status. They often have fewer supports than temporary foreign workers and international students too as they lack personal and professional networks that others have. Both TFWs and international students have Canadian workplace experience as well as some social capital. Since the majority of professionals arrive in Canada as economic migrants, generally they do not have Canadian work experience, and as a result they also have little familiarity with the cross cultural workplace environment as well as with labour market contexts and realities. The absence of Canadian experience as a significant employment barrier is quite well known through anecdotal experiences shared by newcomers, and it is well documented in the literature (Cheng, et al, 2012; Lai et al, 2017; Samuel, 2009). Widespread prevalence of expectations of Canadian Experience on the part of employers became acutely visible as a result of research in this area, and this led the Ontario Human Rights Commission to recognize it as a form of discrimination (OHRC, 2013). [28]

The factors listed above shape experiences of employment settlement for migrant professionals in Canada, leading to delays in timely economic integration which in turn create long term barriers to optimal and meaningful employment settlement. These factors have serious negative potential for highly qualified economic migrants as they lead to underemployment, and de-skilling. The result is a lack of holistic settlement, leading to long term negative consequences

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[28] See http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/policy-removing-%E2%80%9Ccanadian-experience%E2%80%9D-barrier

like intergenerational poverty for families. Oftentimes family relationships are also compromised as a result.

The "New Economy" as Exclusion Factor

This topic is discussed in more detail in the next section but I briefly introduce it here as it is an important element that exacerbates challenges for newcomer individuals who are already dealing with a tough and unfamiliar labour market scenario.

In this current "new economy,"[29] and prevalent labor market scenario (Alberti, et al, 2013; Johal & Thirgood, 2016) the employment situation is often fluid, unstable and precarious for majority of job aspirants, including for individuals who belong to mainstream communities, for example, Canadian graduates and other adult workers joining the workforce or returning to it. There are international students too, seeking permanent residency after completion of education in Canada, and other groups that migrate to Canada for economic reasons, like migrants in the CEC (Canadian Experience Category) and entrants who come in through the PNP (Provincial Nominee Program). In the midst of such a precarious job market, newcomer professionals with high aspirations and limited exposure to Canadian workplace norms are at a competitive disadvantage.

Racialization and Biases

The "assimilationist" and "'acculturation" perspectives within migration studies highlight cultural characteristics of certain ethnic communities in terms of their potential (or lack of it) to integrate into the values of the host culture. Such an approach views immigrants of non-

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[29] The term is used to refer to the inevitable future of the economy in which countries that invest in information and communication technology stand the best chance of economic growth and wealth accumulation (OECD 2001).

European descent as "unassimilable"[30] and such a perception leads to immigrants being assessed as "problems", or "social burden" (Berry, 2011; Palmer, 1996). As a result of such a (racist) attitude the host country is not held accountable to eliminate structural inequities from their system (Basran et al., 2003, 10).

An example of the glass ceiling effect immigrant professionals encounter, one that refuses to go away even with the passage of time when they can no longer technically be categorised as "newcomer," is from the immigrant serving sector, also known as the settlement sector. On the one hand, this federally and provincially funded formal settlement support sector has a preference for recruiting migrant individuals as front line support staff due to the skills and understanding of cultural norms of clients they bring in, as well as abilities to communicate in the same language (Türegün, 2013). Türegün describes this phenomenon as follows,

> The settlement sector emerges as a credible alternative [of employment to immigrants] because many of them have already been there, seeking help for their settlement and employment needs but also engaging in community leadership and capacity building (Türegün, 2013b, p. 601).

However, as Bauder & Jayaraman, (2014) observe, this wealth of cultural and "symbolic capital" (Bourdieu) that new migrants have and invest working in this sector, contributing experiential learnings from their personal migration experience, does not have easy transference in alignment with their previous education as they continue to work as front line staff with low pay and little potential for career mobility.

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[30] See the excerpt below (Vancouver Sun, June 17, 1913, Editorial, p.6), for racial bias, and see context chapter for more detailed analysis. (this footnote continues on next page)

"But there is the point of view of the white settler in this country who wants to keep the country a white country with white standards of living and morality…They are not a desirable people from any standpoint for the dominion to have…The white population will never be able to absorb them. They are not an assimilable people….We must not permit the men of that race to come in large numbers, and we must not permit their women to come in at all. Such a policy of exclusion is simply a measure of self-defence…We have no right to imperil the comfort and happiness of the generations that are to succeed us."

It is ironic and surely telling that this racist and discriminatory mindset, while well-known and clearly obvious as a barrier within the immigrant sector, is alive and well here too, and opportunities for top management and decision making policy positions in the sector are limited for visible minority staff who have years of experience and expertise in this field. Such attitudes and behaviours devalue and distort the economic roles played by newcomers, hardly taking into account their role as labor resource (Portes & Borocz, 1989, cited in Basran et al., 10).

A brief mention here of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (Statutes of Canada 2001, c.27) that replaced the 1976 Immigration Act will clarify the focus on human capital as one of the core principles of Canadian Immigration Policy. The first two objectives that pertain to the immigration program are to "to permit Canada to pursue the maximum social, cultural, and economic benefits of immigration" and "to enrich and strengthen the social and cultural fabric of Canadian society" (Statutes of Canada 2001, c. 27, s. 3.1). As cited in Li and Li (2008, p.6), the purpose of achieving economic gain from skilled immigrants is clearly articulated in this new Act:

> Canada needs young, dynamic, well-educated skilled people. It needs innovation, ideas, and talents. Canadian employers want to take advantage of opportunities offered by the fast-moving pool of skilled workers. The global labour force can benefit Canadians through job creation and the transfer of skills. Immigration legislation must be adapted to enhance Canada's advantage in the global competition for skilled workers (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2001, 1).

Given the human capital focus in immigration policy (Peter S. Li & Li, 2013), racialization and exclusion are problematic (and counterintuitive).

Further, as Reitz explains (2005), "human capital theory suggests that workers' earnings reflect the productive value of their skills-particularly skills based on formal education and work experience" (5). Accordingly, human capital theory would hold that income disparity between

immigrants and non-immigrants is a result of the individual themselves and not social barriers (Buzdugan & Halli, 2009, cited in Baker, 2010, 29). Thus root causes of the situation, such as intersectional determinants of identity, structural inequalities and possible racial biases (Portes & Borocz, 1989, as cited in Basran et al., 2003; Bauman, 2010; Brah, 1996; Esman, 2009) are not considered and dealt with.

The significant fact though is that there are multiple pieces in this puzzle, and they cohabit in ways that are simultaneous, intersectional and inter-connected, blurring and bleeding into each other. These pieces could perhaps be a metaphor for all the stakeholders that must come together in collaboration for employment-related barriers to be removed, and problem solving to happen. Structural barriers are a big part of the challenges economic migrants come up against, and even if individuals took full ownership of problems they were facing, and strive to create their own solutions, unless systemic issues like credentialing barriers and other discriminatory practices are addressed, sustainable solutions to this "wicked"[31] problem would not be realised.

Immigrant Selection and Other Policies: Neo-liberal Agendas?

Several studies note in the barriers economic migrants face underlying state policies that are rooted in neo-liberal agendas that assert control and are racist. For example, through the introduction in 2008 of a new stream for skilled immigrant entry to Canada, Canadian Experience Class (CEC), skilled foreign workers and international students with a record of employment in Canada are given preference. The point system too was overhauled at this time, and points assigned to international education were reduced and Canadian experience was added

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[31] As cited in Buchanan (1992), Horst Rittel (1967) in Design Studies first described "wicked problems" as a "class of social system problems which are ill-formulated, where the information is confusing, where there are many clients and decision makers with conflicting values, and where the ramifications in the whole system are thoroughly confusing." More recently the term is widely being used in social innovation literature too.

as a key criterion for immigrant selection (Bhuyan, et al., 2017; Ferrer et al., 2014; Flynn & Bauder, 2015b; Grant, & Oertel, 1998).

However, creating an immigration stream through which a pathway to citizenship can be forged for temporary foreign workers and international students who have already tested the waters can hardly be seen as an exclusionary gesture. It is true that inclusion for one group may likely mean exclusion for another as opportunities will always be limited when compared to demand but then policy decisions are not straightforward either, and must take into account a range of interconnected variables and priorities, vested interest as well as mandates.

While it makes sense for critical theory to be analytical and constantly keep vigil on possibilities and dangers of exclusion by flagging signs of preferential treatment, if we keep ground realities of job market integration and employer expectations in mind, it makes practical sense to do this. It makes even less sense to bring in, on false promises too, multitudinous numbers of highly qualified international class migrants into Canada, causing brain drain in other parts of the world, and then have them underemployed, frustrated, and depressed because of their inability to gainfully contribute their skills and taxes to the Canadian economy. Instead, it would help to step back, and through employing survey-based research, and other measurable strategies, develop better understanding of existing mis-matches between labour market shortages and availability of trained available workforce so that win-win scenarios may be achieved. This could be a way to ensure that skilled individuals already in Canada can find meaningful employment integration.

Democratic Racism

This is a relevant concept as it encapsulates and highlights contradictions and complexities between "equal opportunity" discourse (including through provision of employment equity

policy frameworks) and inabilities of individuals to achieve their full potential due to realities of structural inequities on the ground. It is described by Malhi and Boon (2007) as an ideology that allows for the "coexistence of both egalitarian values (such as fairness and equality), as well as non-egalitarian values (e.g., negative attitudes, feelings, and behaviours toward people of colour) (p.126)." They go on to explain these tensions further:

> The justificatory arguments and obfuscation that are characteristic of this ideology permit racist beliefs to be retained and manifested within an ostensibly democratic country. As such, democratic racism is functional for the dominant group in society as it maintains the dominant group's power and privilege at the expense of other non-dominant groups (p.128).

Such a conceptualisation helps us become more aware of subtle racism or see through denials of discriminations by dominant groups that hold power. This is particularly problematic as non-dominant populations like visible minority groups also internalise and normalise racist behaviors and attitudes they encounter as they might be disguised and covert.

This often leads to victim self-blaming, an unsuccessful immigrant viewing themselves through the lens of deficit, taking full responsibility for their failure and doing everything in their power to re-make themselves in the appropriate mold in a society that is normatively democratic and egalitarian.

Integration

Integration itself is a difficult and challenging notion. Many factors need to be in place for successful integration to be realized, and Esses et al (2010) describe it as an environment where it is possible to "contribute, free of barriers, to every dimension of Canadian life, economic, social, cultural, and political" (cited on p.11). Moreover, it is an ongoing process and a dialogic journey, a work in progress rather than a finished product. A multi-layered, and multi-

perspectival concept, it ties in with inclusion, and needs multiple stakeholder engagement at many levels.

Grounded in a framework of a "welcoming community," paradigm, (which may be "a characteristic, a policy, a focus, and a place") integration can only be actualized in a "healthy community" which by definition is a place where there is "a strong desire to receive newcomers and to create an environment where they will feel at home" (Esses et al, 2010, 65). So, governments, not for profit agencies working in the settlement service sector, community organizations, faith-based bodies, policy makers, businesses and industry personnel, health professionals, educationists, and other stakeholders, all need to come together if a truly inclusive framework is to emerge that can actualize integration. This kind of bottom-up or side-to-side, partnership model is in turn presupposed up on and impacted by ways of thinking and doing that must be essentially collaborative.

A collaborative project for settlement, based on the above description, and rooted in the "welcoming communities" principle, provides indirect services through a pan-Canadian network of agencies that operate under the Local Immigration Partnership umbrella. Immigration Partnership Winnipeg (IPW) is the formation that operates in Manitoba. It is housed in Winnipeg under the Social Planning Council, operationalized through and in collaboration with MANSO (Manitoba Association of Newcomer Serving Organizations). The objectives and vision of this program are to initiate and operationalise grassroots and community consultations, as well as integrate these citizen opinions with research and frontline experience to be able to support the strengthening of policy in relation to immigration and settlement. The overall goal of this federally funded, though locally executed, program is to help foster a more welcoming

environment for newcomers through enhancing capacities of settlement agencies and improve possibilities and structures for better integration.

It is a well-known fact that all geographical contexts are different and specific, and beyond shared concerns and issues faced by all new migrants, settlement and problem-solving happens in the local context. In the case of these Local Immigration Partnerships too, the formation, interests and energies are variable too and every province and city has its own areas of focus based on the specific issues that are predominant in their geographical location.[32]

Meaning in Work for Professionals and Skilled Migrants

The discussion in previous sections becomes more pertinent in light of research findings with regard to meaningful work, defining it as Schnell et al (2013) do as a "sense of coherence, direction, significance, and belonging in the working life" (p. 543) and how it is analogous to finding meaning in life. As documented through perspectives and voices of individuals who participated in the research, employment in their area of interest and expertise was about more than a paycheck, to include goal-setting, and as later expressed by one of the research participants, not just adding value to their own lives but significance to the lives of others.

When a "meaning in work" (Schnell, et al, 2013, 543) ideology is applied to the context of migration career transitions, meaning of work collapses into meaning in work to become a focus of subjective experiencing of meaningfulness in an overall sense for professional migrants. Add to that a need to integrate and a desire to belong in the host environment, essential for family settlement, holistic well-being and a forward looking attitude. Absence of this meaning, on the other side manifests through negative components like turnovers in employment, job

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[32] For detailed information on pan-Canadian Local Immigration Partnership program see link below
p2pcanada.ca/wp-content/.../Local-Immigration-Partnerships-Handbook-2013.pdf

disengagement, cynicism, exhaustion, and stress (Schnell et al., 2013; Claes & Ruiz Quinta-nilla, 1994; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001).

Meaning in work is further broken down in empirical research into positive outcomes like job satisfaction, performance, organizational commitment and tenure. Most significantly, emotions and mindsets, positive or negative, can hardly be forced and are contingent on being in gainful employment that provides opportunities for self- actualisation, financial stability, and an affirmation of self-esteem.

Conflict Resolution, Peace-building and Migration Conflicts

Employing conflict resolution parameters and peacebuilding theories to explore the continuum of immigrant "lived experience" of integration is useful for examining challenging barriers and processes that create external and internal conflicts for individuals, families and society. This interdisciplinary theoretical framework is a valid one in the context of this study as it enables a practitioner-based paradigm. It also provides tools of deep analysis to understand complex problems and explore solutions.

An interdisciplinary framework like Peace and Conflict Studies encourages and enables academic analysis of conflict and resolution (Burton, 1987; Jeong, 2000; Schellenberg, 1996) to be utilised to build knowledge while facilitating a multi-level and hands-on approach. This can then be applied towards action that has potential to target personal and structural change. Described by Oliver Richmond (2010) as an all-encompassing term for multiple processes, one of the aspects peacebuilding is associated closely with is state building. Liberal peace-building processes and institutions are part of it (MacGinty & Williams, 2009); as notions of sustainability are central to peace-building (MacGinty, 2008). For instance, as in the focus within conflict transformation being also on the creation of a new non-hierarchical dynamic in relations

that were previously based in one party asserting power over the other, with the objective not just to manage or mitigate conflict but to transform (eliminate) it through transforming relationships.

Lisa Schirch's strategic peacebuilding in a *Just Peace* map is an inclusive paradigm that incorporates advocacy, capacity-building, reducing direct violence, and transforming relationships (2004). In her view, strategic planning based ideas and initiatives are needed in current times to create an "architecture" of peaceful and just communities, and peace practice; collaborative decision-making; dispute resolution and system design must be integral to societies. Further, as she emphasises, peace must align with justice if it is to work in coordination with a range of stakeholders working in different levels of society. Some of these formations focus upon civil society actors and civic participation, and also depend on a preliminary analysis of the local context including the interconnected nature of structural and secondary violence.

Furthermore, the framework provides an analytical frame that focuses attention upon the root causes of violence. Such an approach is relevant and applicable in the context of conflicts arising from migration, especially in the case of challenges to holistic integration and inclusion. Peace and Conflict Studies is a vast field; rich in several trajectories and multi-faceted approaches, and while still young it is also burgeoning and ever expanding in its scope. Spanning a diverse range of locations and issues, and only some are mentioned below, this field of academic enquiry and praxis focuses upon geopolitical conflicts and transitional peace-building, post conflict reconstruction and diplomacy, but also others that are more community centred, like grassroots movements, sustainable governance, citizen engagements and social justice.

Setting this area of study apart from other more entrenched disciplines within the social sciences are its inter-disciplinary and practitioner based orientations. In addition, an inherent action-oriented toolkit is integral to its conceptualization, which includes practical conflict

resolution tools like mediation, negotiation, alternative dispute resolution, even restorative justice, and several other strategies for conflict management, resolution and transformation.

Relevance of Peace and Conflict Studies (PACS) to Migration

The following section explores only those particular theoretical and praxis-focused directions from the peacebuilding and social justice field that are most relevant in the case of this study on migration. Firstly, due to the focus in this field on both process and outcome, processes that emerge from this interdisciplinary field can help to familiarize and provide the 'pracademic' with a toolkit of approaches that can help create empathetic and inclusive structures, relationships and behaviors. These are pragmatic and effective value-based processes and outcome-oriented strategies that emerge from a grassroots and bottom up approach; like elicitive and mindful listening, reframing, and, storytelling; reflective practices and mutual respect.

Further, the field's interdisciplinary foundation has the potential to make accessible borrowings from a broad range of disciplines as well as an integrated framework. This is helpful as a combination of factors impact individuals in ways that are often unpredictable, these factors resulting in the achieving of success in some cases, but not in others.

Being sensitive to structural issues that make up the big picture is important. At the same time, insights that relate to real and specific ways in which systems impact individuals are significant too. How meaningfully these negotiations between the micro and macro levels can be achieved becomes a factor critical to success. For instance, from the perspective of a front line worker, when I evaluate labour market experiences and outcomes for immigrant professionals, it becomes obvious fairly quickly that existing support structures and settlement processes in place are not sufficient by themselves but additional expertise (blended with empathy) is needed too.

Front line staff can provide these kinds of support through helping individuals navigate the many elements within the employment integration journey.

In fact, it can get more layered and nuanced, as it is primarily through building of relationships and rapport between immigrant clients and settlement staff in the cross-cultural environment that meaningful employment and career transition counseling can be delivered. The focus on relationality within the interdisciplinary field of PACS, and emphasis on dealing with conflicts arising from cultural differences can hardly be ignored, and these are some of the core shared aspects useful in their application to migration conflicts.

Unit of Analysis

Borrowing the level of analysis paradigm from international relations theory (see also person-centred approach, Grant, 2007a, and 2007b), I make an argument for exploring the topic of settlement and integration from the perspective of the individual migrant, with focus on the nuanced, layered, and experiential filter of the story. Storytelling (Senehi, 2000) is, within the PACS field, one of the important and established methods of building understanding, analysis, and empathy for dealing with conflict. However, the micro level necessarily connects and conflicts with the system at the macro level thus colliding with structures and institutions, like discriminatory practices in the labor market or racist gestures in the Canadian (multicultural) state.

On the one hand, the utilitarian paradigm categorizes immigrants as "desirable" (or not) on account of demographics like ethnicity, educational qualifications, and professional expertise, while on the other, humanitarian grounds shift the needle of discussion to issues in relation to refugees, asylum seekers, and family reunification. This leads to implications that are ambivalent as they do both things simultaneously, producing Canada in the image of a welcoming, tolerant

and inclusive nation state (see Krishnamurti, 2013) while failing to apply a humane perspective in the case of economic migrants.

It is true that any attempt to compare refugees and asylum seekers to economic migrants may be akin to finding parallels between apples and oranges, and that is not the purpose of this argument. The case for more humane treatment to be meted out to individuals in the economic class is not so much a case for social justice or humanitarianism as it is about delivering on promises already made through the point system of assessment for entry into Canada, prevalent since 1967. It is also a call for immigration and settlement policy to be inclusive and streamlined so it is robust enough to achieve the greater common good and be a win-win for all parties. This will alleviate potential for frustration and negative mental health impacts for migrant individuals and families in the long term thereby creating communities that feel safe in the ownership of their own belonging-ness to Canada and more confident in their abilities to contribute their strengths to it.

Focus on Relationships, and Grassroots Peacebuilding: John Paul Lederach

The PACS framework, with its range of multiple trajectories, can be viewed as an all-embracing set of analytical tools for understanding conflict at an individual and a systemic level. John Paul Lederach, one of the leading practitioners and theorists in this interdisciplinary field develops an integrated framework through his nested paradigm (1997) that "underscores the need to look consistently at the broader context of systemic issues." These emphases on the systemic and structural, as well as Lederach's grassroots-led "elicitive" approach, are particularly resonant elements in his peacebuilding paradigm that apply in the labour market context. The elicitive approach is in opposition to the prescriptive one, and Lederach advocates it as one where grassroots voices are honored for their knowledge and understanding of their own environment,

and where the focus is on building relationships and capacities of local actors (1995). In a framework such as this, collaboration is the key principle, as is an acknowledgement of shared vision and common goals so that mutually beneficial points of intersection between parties can be found (Lederach, 1995; Rothman, 2012).

Lederach suggests that, "at the subsystem level, we can experiment with various actions that promise to connect 'systemic' and immediate 'issue' concerns." In the context of labour market integration too, issues, challenges, and barriers exist at broad systemic levels so that huge and small policy gaps exist, and these lead to disruptive processes that negatively impact employment and overall settlement for skilled migrants. As is often the case, systems are often not geared to take into account specific needs of each individual as multiple variables are at play. As highlighted through discussions in other chapters in this study, due to the diverse nature of multiple employment-related challenges as well as the presence of several stakeholders that must come together and play their part, systemic solutions become challenging to achieve. Besides, as a result of differences between individuals, sometimes the same policies, practices, and processes affect them differentially. As a result, people do fall through the cracks.

Further, in accordance with Lederach's (1997) integrated framework, one of the important areas of focus is upon relationships and elicitive frameworks that center grassroots peacebuilding. His contention that each individual has his/her own understanding and vision of change and the path to get there (Lederach et al., 2007) is particularly relevant too in a context like multicultural Canada, and also particularly this study. Thus, approaches to bringing about individual and systemic change need to take this into account when programs are designed and policy initiatives are considered.

Lederach's (1995) interventions in conflict resolution theory rely upon the model of sustainable conflict transformation through "equitable social structures that meet basic human needs, and respectful, interdependent relationships" (77). The objective here is to address root causes of conflict so that structures are enabled to be transformed so they may support more egalitarian relationships (Lederach, 2006, Miall, 2004). However, while the goal of conflict transformation is certainly a desirable one, in practical terms its limitation is that unequal power dynamics are not easy to eliminate, and these hinder the operationalizing and translating of aspirational objectives (like equitable structures) into reality. Even so, the peace-building model must have an integrated goal centred approach and a time frame, the research process focused upon facilitating dialogic spaces with participants so that desirable structural, systemic, and relationship goals can be met.

Regarding relationships, Strauss utilizes the underlying principles of "symbolic interactionism" (first used by Blumer in 1937, cited in Schellenberg, 1996, p. 68). Here again, the core is ways in which human beings cooperate, or through interaction form bonds that unite them or bring them into conflict. Strauss' approach to society, often termed the "negotiated approach" suggests that "human institutions are not simply transmitted from the past or determined by some present authority, but they grow from innumerable workings out of the interests of people with one another, in other words through a process of negotiation" (Strauss, 1978, p. 99-100, cited in Schellenberg, p. 68). Boulding (1973) and Kriesberg (1989) utilize tenets from economics, social process theories, and moral philosophy that help them conceptualize both conflict and resolution in terms of nuanced processes that deserve study in their own right so that complexities can be engaged with (Schellenberg, p. 77).

Negative and Positive Peace, and Structural Conflicts: Johan Galtung

Johan Galtung (1969), a pioneer in the field, also called by some, father of modern peace research (Bishop and Coburn, 2010; Weber, 2004) articulated fundamental understandings around conflict and peace building. His conceptualisation differentiating between negative peace as absence of war, and positive peace as well-functioning sustainable communities with equal opportunities and rights for all also led to the development of the notion of structural conflict.

More and more scholars in this interdisciplinary field explore not geopolitical and state-building issues but focus on "intractable" problems that emerge from violence that is structural in nature. Poverty and other systemic inequities that lead to homelessness, gendered violence, human trafficking, and environmental conflicts are only a few examples of structural violence.

Migration conflicts are structural in nature too as employment related barriers in the case of skilled migrants are to a large extent a result of gaps in immigration policy; a lack of sync between the objectives based on which individuals are invited into the country and what follows thereafter; and in fact the very purpose that is supposedly at centre of immigration policy, that of nation building and addressing labour market shortages in the Canadian economy. For example, on the one hand, before granting permanent residency, the point system assesses and calibrates the value (of migrants) to the Canadian economy in terms of their human capital, like their language proficiency and their age, as well as their potential to contribute to Canada skills based on their educational qualifications and work experience previously acquired in their home country.

In reality though, for highly qualified migrants, there is little connection between the promise of being valued and achieving success based on their human capital, and realities of

what actually happens once those same individuals arrive in Canada. The terms of contract established previously suddenly change and employers begin to ask them instead for soft skills, Canadian education and Canadian work experience.

The systemic barriers are further exacerbated when other difficulties begin to pile up as a result of qualification recognition challenges, unfamiliar expectations within modes of job search, a hidden job market, as well as a demand for social and cultural capital. As a large portion of this study is devoted to communicating experiences of struggles these highly qualified migrants go through, to "make it" in Canada through finding success in the labour market on their own terms, I will not repeat these stories of dissatisfaction, frustration and depression they have already told in their own voices. They go through what Galtung (Galtung, 1969; Maley, 1985) characterises as structural and indirect violence, going through disadvantages caused by racist structures that discriminate against them on account of their visible minority identity, their ethnicity and outsider status, their accent or simply their overall appearance.

Basic Human Needs Theory: John Burton

Burton (1987) argues for a needs based approach as one of the critical principles of the field of conflict analysis and resolution. Maslow (1954) conceptualises human development as based on fulfilment of basic needs that he grouped under five headings: physiological, safety, belongingness/love, esteem and self-actualization. Further, Rubenstein (1997) explains that for Burton and others (like Lederach and Galtung, 1980; Coate and Rosati, 1988) the "concept of basic human needs offered a possible method of grounding the field in a defensible theory of the person," as against paradigms prevalent at the time that focused on geopolitics and post war issues. Burton asserted his understanding of social conflicts as based on denial of basic human needs like identity-recognition, security, and personal development and, according to

Rubenstein, the purpose of his view was that it would provide a relatively "objective" basis for understanding sources of social conflict, going beyond local political and cultural differences.

Three fundamental sets of basic-needs variables, or basic needs criteria, are analysed by Cavanaugh: *acceptance needs* (recognition of communal identity), *access needs* (effective participation in society), and *security needs* (physical security, housing and nutrition). Denial of means of access—for example, participation in political, social, and economic institutions—leads to grievances, which, if not addressed in a timely manner, can lead to social conflict (Cavanaugh, 2000, p. 67).

The application of the above analysis in the context of economic migrants is on target as their aspirational goals are grounded in identity-making through finding meaningful and sustainable employment. The model of "thriving" (Spreitzer, et al 2005) is an important domain of inquiry in literature that further reiterates this connection. Thriving as situated in the world of work relates to "feeling energised and being valued," and as a consequence, about self-development, and actualisation, meaning-making and well-being just as in the field of medicine, "failure to thrive" is a term commonly used a marker of poor health (Spreitzer et al., 2005, p. 158).

According to Laclau (1996), "In many societies, the state is an instrument of domination by privileged ethnic groups who engage in a form of cultural despotism" (35, cited in Byrne, 2000, 119). It might be a pertinent question to ask then, do economic integration challenges faced by visible minority migrants, and social conflicts that they may experience as a result, point a finger in the direction of the Canadian multicultural state?

Multi-track diplomacy for Conflict Transformation: Diamond and McDonald

Botes' (2003) description of "conflict transformation" is "value-laden," (20) and it emphasises systems change through moving from conflict-habituated systems to peace systems. He observes, "social conflicts that are deep-rooted or intractable get these names because the conflict has created patterns that have become part of social systems" (7). As articulated through Multi-Track Diplomacy (see Diamond, 1996), the notion of conflict transformation is an ongoing, continuous and never ending process (Galtung, 1996; Lederach, 1997), and it is a way to create "new relations, institutions, and visions" (Vayrynen, 1999, cited in Botes, 7).

The model of Multi-Track diplomacy for addressing conflicts and seeking solutions targets systemic change through using multiple tools, actors, and stakeholders. The term, made famous by Diamond and McDonald through the publication of their book by the same name in 1991, emphasises the need for, and critical significance of, cooperation and collaboration as a way to develop integrated frameworks for working together in order to transform intractable conflict situations and achieve sustainable peacebuilding.

Nine tracks in all, relevant for sustainable conflict transformation, are identified and discussed in this model. The first two tracks comprise of state actors like governments, and non-government professionals that could come from a variety of fields with valuable experience they could utilise to advise and support track one diplomats. The rest of the tracks include other stakeholders who play a significant role of influence in the community and the world at large, like businesses, civil society, educators, activists, religious groups, funders and different forms of media, including social media.

As identified through the data gathered and analysed in this research study, one of the crucial gaps within systems that facilitate immigration and settlement in the case of economic

migrants in Canada is the absence of synchronisation between different processes and multiple stakeholders that need to work together so that seamless and timely delivery of services can be ensured as and when needed by newcomers at every stage. The model of multi-track diplomacy described above is a useful framework that can provide direction regarding fostering cooperation and collaboration between stakeholders like all levels of government (track one), the non-profit settlement sector (track two), and all the other tracks, for example employers in businesses and the private sector; host society through ideologies that value welcoming communities (Esses et al., 2010) as a way to facilitate two-way integration; support that could be provided by bodies that are ethno-cultural and religious communities; and other cohorts like institutions that provide educational programs, advocacy groups, corporate funders and media organisations that can help to address anti-immigrant rhetoric that often creates a negative representation of immigrants.

Constructivist Approaches for Solution-Based Strategies

Lastly, keeping in view the goal of enhancing economic and social inclusion factors in the case of visible minority professionals in Winnipeg, this research study utilises an integrative approach, and a constructivist framework for analysis and action. Some strategies for creating better paradigms for problem solving, enabled through such a theoretical approach, are as follows: a systems thinking framework that prioritises holistic thinking, with a focus on a practitioner perspective, a solution-focused approach, and practice-based tools from self-constructing and life design frameworks for career transition counseling.

The themes within theoretical literature discussed so far—identity and intersectionality, labor market integration, and PACS—help to lay the empirical and analytical groundwork for this study. This section explores a theory-praxis based framework to negotiate with employment-related migration scenarios with a focus on practical solutions, and a kind of template for action

moving forward. The chapter concludes with a few examples of what some of these practical models look like in their operationalising.

Interdisciplinary, Collaborative and Integrated Approaches

Literature from the fields of organizational development and management practice (Huot, Rudman, & On, 2013; Panaccio & Vandenberghe, 2009; Turchick Hakak & Al Ariss, 2013), applied psychology and mental health (Berdahl & Moore, 2006; Dean & Wilson, 2009a; Guerrero & Rothstein, 2012; Reitmanova & Gustafson, 2009), career planning and urban studies (Hiranandani, 2012; T. Kennedy & Chen, 2012), as well as strategic planning and leadership development is useful in providing a value based model of conflict resolution that is also action-oriented and solution-focused.

The main objective of mining literatures from some of these practise-based disciplines is their potential of working with individuals, and bringing a range of stakeholders together to effect transformative social change. All these fields, as well their coming together in an interdisciplinary format, move forward to lead through building relationships and taking ownership, using previous knowledge individuals bring with them as well as inherent lived experiential resources they have. One of the other similarities is their grounding in collaborative paradigms where relationships work, in and through partnerships and collective responsibility, with multi- sectoral stakeholder engagement at the centre. In the case of seeking and creating solutions to achieve better economic integration outcomes for skilled migrants too there is need for an integrated approach based in a collaborative and constructivist model if the goal of holistic integration and inclusion is to be actualized.

Complexity Theory

Comparing complexity theory to peacebuilding theory, Reinke (2017) notes commonalities like non-reductionism, context-sensitivity, relationships, and the potential in both to highlight power differentials within social institutions (p.9). The working of power is understood within complexity theory as shaped through relationships (Capra & Luisi, 2014).   Hendrick, (2010) who traces complexity theory back to its origins in "complexity science," refers to its current application in the social sciences, international relations, management, and in peace studies too.

Lederach (2005, p. 33) too observes that the field of "Peacebuilding is an enormously complex endeavour in unbelievably complex, (and) dynamic (settings)..." This makes good sense particularly at this current complicated juncture in the world where the potential of multiple factors leading to a cause and effect syndrome in exacerbating conflicts is enormous. This is true especially in relation to intractable social conflicts that are multi-faceted, multi-issued, dynamic and unpredictable, non-linear too, and involving several actors and stakeholders. Hendrick describes these intertwined complexities as follows:

> The elements in a complex system adapt in response to the actions of other elements in the system and to their environment, hence the term complex adaptive systems (CASs). These CASs are embedded or nested in (or otherwise in connection with) other CASs (e.g., a tree is part of a forest that is part of a larger ecosystem). Each human being is a CAS existing in dynamic relationship with a number of ecological, social, economic, and political CASs.

Migration and settlement related challenges that economic migrants encounter in their journey to settle in the host country when they seek to re-affirm and re-establish (even restore) their sense of self in a totally new environment emerge from a range of locations, and can often be ongoing and relentless in the long term. Besides, as the discussion in the study so far has demonstrated, these challenges emerge from a range of compelling locations that are both separate from each other but also interconnected, including in their dynamic interactions with each other.

In such a context, where there is always potential for fluidity and a moving beyond positivist ways of understanding situations, complexity theory is a useful tool both for analysis and for reaching out to explore solutions. Jones (2003), argues for the adoption of a complexity orientation in conflict situations for the following reasons:

> [The] unpredictable nature of developments within complex systems should promote greater flexibility of thinking and approach—that is, an awareness of the inevitability of unintended as well as intended consequences of interventions—and modesty with respect to what is realistically achievable. The intervener, whether as an advocate, empowerment agent, mediator, or humanitarian supporter, is no longer to be seen as external to the conflict situation but as an agent acting within the system, influencing it and being influenced by it.[33]

Structural conflicts that emerge from migration-related career transitions for professionals can perhaps learn strategies from the "integrative, holistic and flexible" (Hendrick, 2010) approach that complexity theory can make available for analytical understanding of issues and nuanced potential for interventions.

Systems Theory Framework (STF) as Applied to Career Development

This section examines a systems thinking approach and constructivist life-design (Savickas et al., 2009) [34] perspective to explore their relevance and potential as solution-based strategies in the context of career transition counseling for migrant professionals. The discussion below first maps seminal developments in the field in the last fifteen years or so and then examines their relevance to the career transition experiences of skilled migrants. So far there is little application of these recent career counseling theories and practices to the field of migration transitions

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[33] see also http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/complex_adaptive_systems.
[34] This joint position paper came out of the Life Design International Research Group, with representatives from Belgium, France, Italy, Portugal, Switzerland, The Netherlands, and the United States. It was formed with the objective of creating an international collaborative resource of models and methods to explore innovative approaches in career development relevant to needs and issues in the new knowledge economy.

(Kennedy & Chen, 2012), [35] and this appears to be an important and fertile area for further research.

Recent developments in the career development and counseling field have been paradigmatic as practitioners and theorists in this area of practice have tried to grapple with issues arising from new workforce scenarios in the rapidly changing world of work (Savickas, 2009). Patton and McMohan (1999) note that the original and dominant "trait-and-factor" (Brown and Brooks, 1996; Savickas, 1996) approach in career guidance "does not help us to understand the increasingly complex issues brought about by today's world of work, such as job-related phobias, sexual harassment, job burnout, dual-career families, unemployment, and job seeking" (p. 229). There is a current push in the field towards valuing and including subjective experiences, socio-political and constructivist approaches, and incorporating strategies like narrative counseling and solution-focused career guidance (Miller, 2004). Miller describes constructivist counseling as follows:

> Constructivist career counselling involves the exploration of the personal meaning ascribed by the client to a career problem and the co-construction of possible new meanings from which goals can be developed and outcomes achieved (51).

For starters, such a view would require a more flexible definition of careers, and comfort on the part of both counselor and client, with extended use of narrative to tell stories of the personal and the experiential for the purpose of career crafting. Miller also emphasises the significance of understanding human behavior in-context, and explores the role of a systems theory framework to understand the diversity and complexity of influences on human development.

People live within organisational structures comprising of mutually dependent parts (systems and subsystems); that the basic needs of a system are to adapt, survive and maintain

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[35] For more articles on this topic see special issue of *Journal of Vocational Behaviour*, 2011, 78 (3). https://www-sciencedirect-com.uml.idm.oclc.org/science/journal/00018791/78/3

itself; that change in one part of the system will affect change in another part or parts of the system; and that structures and rules operate to maintain the system and to generally resist change (Okun, 1984, as cited in Miller, 52). Constructivist principles imply a client-centred approach, collaboration, curiosity, and an orientation to co-constructing possibilities of hope and desired change based on the competence, resourcefulness and agency of the client (McMohan et al., 2002; Miller, 2004). The model of "life-design" (Savickas et al., 2009 & Savickas, 2015) for career intervention moves beyond "choosing a vocation" (Parsons, 1909) or career guidance to craft a more holistic "life-trajectories" paradigm.

The focus here then shifts to a heavily contextualised life-development (as against career development) framework that takes into consideration a range of scenarios, or domains in an individual's life. These models could be used by individuals "engaged in the personal project of life building, (applying them) to understand and cope with their unique contexts," for example, youth pondering their occupational choices; individuals in whose lives psychological and other supports are absent and they begin to question what matters most to them; and there are already huge communities of aspiring workers who are aware of precariousness and other new risks in the current formation of the work world (2009, p. 241).

A constructivist life-design ideology, especially when used as a practice-lens for career counseling, is certainly a post-modern conceptualisation, grounded as it is in openness, flexibility, and contingency. There are no fixities here and notions of complexity, fluidity, and a seamless blurring of past, present and future are its grounding principles.

I make the following observation based on my interview data as well as my frontline work with clients. It certainly depends on the presence or absence of support structures, and other factors, but in the case of a good percentage of migrant professionals, the act of migration made

them feel they were cut loose from all stable centers. Further, repeated challenges they encountered confirmed their view of themselves as inadequate, and lacking. Their experiencing of loss, of control (over their environment), and of identity and self-esteem, even a holistic understanding of who they are or used to be, was compounded by the discrimination they met. Due to a range of stressors, most significantly, a lack of response to resumes they sent out, many began to believe that they do not have what is needed for achieving success Canada.

Now let's imagine if the kaleidoscope shifts to a life-design paradigm. What image of themselves would they see reflected in the mirror if both they and their career trajectories are to be viewed from the lens of life-design, the theory of self-construction, and an overall constructivism? Would it not be a validating, hopeful and forward looking image, one that includes in their sense of self their past, present and an anticipated future, certainly one that comes from a place of strength and not absence. The five presuppositions highlighted by Savickas et al in the life-design approach are the following: shifts from previous, more traditional theories of career development: a move from traits to context; prescription to process; linear causality to non-linear dynamics; and from describing to modeling (242-243).

Social Justice Approach to Multicultural Counselling

Peavy (1999) has identified constructivist principles that facilitate intercultural counselling: (a) respect for difference and diversity; (b) openness to a range of possible ways of interpreting reality; (c) encouragement of creativity, inventiveness and cultural resonance; (d) sense of real-life engagement; (e) resistance to negative effects of any final classification or categorisation; (f) helping based more on cultural than psychological hypotheses; (g) direct use of language tools and social artefacts; (h) cooperation and consensus rather than authority and imposition; and (i) helping construed as emancipatory and capacity-building in intention (Peavy & Li, 2003).

The need for the counsellor to provide culturally competent employment and career counseling while serving an ethnically diverse clientele of immigrant professionals (in the context of multiculturalism in Canada), must be sensitive to include the factor that individuals make meaning of work based on their contextual multi-layered experiences. This will include the experience of migration, but also previous to that, as well as their future aspirations, and the current situation. There may be need to include coaching tools in counseling practice, and other strategies that can help mine and surface individual resiliency.

The developmental stages of the Counseling and Development program at George Mason University to demonstrate the values and objectives of integrating a social justice approach to multicultural counseling are described below:

This program uses, as a starting point, Davis's (1996) definition of social justice:

A basic value and desired goal in democratic societies that includes equitable and fair access to societal institutions, laws, resources [and] opportunities, without arbitrary limitations based on observed, or interpretation of, differences in age, color, culture, physical or mental disability, education, gender, income, language, national origin, race, religion, or sexual orientation.

Goodman's et al state (2004) the following about inclusion,

scholarship and professional action designed to change societal values, structures, policies, and practices, such that disadvantaged or marginalized groups gain increased access to these tools of self-determination (p. 795).

The Counseling and Development Program at George Mason University included in its mission statement five key components: Social Justice, Multiculturalism, Internationalism, Advocacy and Leadership, and they described their focus and goals as follows:

The Counseling and Development Program is committed to preparing counsellors who promote the social, psychological, physical, and spiritual health of individuals, families, communities, and organizations in order to contribute to the advancement of global well-being. The program strives for national and international excellence in implementing a counseling perspective which provides a foundation in basic counseling skills and focuses

on social justice, multiculturalism, international, advocacy and leadership (Bemak et al., 31-32).

Another example of the use of a social justice approach as a pathway to creative problem-solving and building resilience is presented in Arnault and Merali's (2019) study, situated in the context of refugee groups. More specifically, their recommendations include "cousellor-initiated interventions in areas of spirituality, housing advocacy and psychoeducation for self-empowerment in improving refugee housing outcomes" (242).

Using a case study approach, and without giving much detail in the interests of confidentiality, I provide an example below that may concretise a praxis-based tool through which the above values, ideology, and methods were translated into action. As indicated in the study a few times, the central purpose of undertaking this research was to utilise a practitioner approach, in order to be enabled to explore solution paradigms to address employment related barriers that professional migrants face during the course of their journey to achieve meaningful economic integration in Canada. Although the geographical locale within which this study is located is Winnipeg, and local contexts certainly shape specificities, the conclusions of this study are wide ranging, with relevance in a pan-Canadian scenario, and best practices could be internationally applicable too.

The purposes highlighted in the discussion above, relating to the Counseling and Development Program at George Mason University, and the research study conducted by Arnault and Merali (cited above), are closely aligned with core values and objectives that were are at the centre of the Summer Institute that I co-developed, and co-taught with another colleague, in 2017, at the University of Manitoba. This Summer Institute, titled "Career Development and Employment Counselling for Excluded Communities" grew out of the

perceived need within the field of Career Development and Counselling (in Education), for including a social justice lens.

The participating cohort was practitioners working in varying capacities within the school system, mostly educators, but some administrators too, and they came to this in-service learning program from different parts of Manitoba. In fact, just a handful of participants were from Winnipeg. The focus in this program was on exploring real-life solutions to barriers and problems they were encountering as employees in the school system as part of their everyday work, often with marginalised groups and minority populations.

Through this three-week summer institute they got opportunities to (a) learn about alternative and new career development theories, (b) explore social innovation based tools and experimental citizen-labs thinking, and through group work, develop prototypes, models, and processes to address real-life ("wicked") systemic problems (with the overall goal of fostering inclusion in their own communities), and (c) each participant got experiential learning through getting a practicum opportunity being affiliated with a community organisation based on their area of interest, with options to follow up and continue with the connections and learning in the future if they so desired.

The key goals and achievements of this summer institute were fFacilitating inclusion and leading social change through community engagement, and fostering relationships with stakeholders to learn in and through collaboration; advocacy and outreach; and building bridges between academic spaces, and individuals and groups in the community.

Summarising Theoretical Frames

There is much common ground between worldviews that emerge from migration studies, PACS, ethnography, and constructivist life-design approaches. Facilitating the speaking with each other of these fields, and learning from those dialogues, seems liberating and meaningful. More specifically, this view flows from my interpretation that all these worlds have in them the inherent locus of the story, as well as the potential to make available an applied practitioner-based way of "doing" to help "capacity-building" in the context of immigrant professionals' integration in a range of ways. Other traits shared by them include complexity, and the potential to be reflective and relational, as well as collaborative and innovative in the search for solutions.

The linkages and collaborations between migration-triggered conflicts and a complexity lens are relatively unexplored but they do appear to be relevant and meaningful directions to pursue, especially from the perspective of strengthening the feedback loop between theory and praxis. Moreover, the application of theoretical approaches in the context of migration related transitions, especially those based in life-design and self-construction, need more attention.

Integrating the above perspectives in further research and praxis will be ways forward that would open possibilities for innovative attitudes on the part of individuals and program developers. Collaborations between complexity theory, PACS, and life-design perspectives have potential also to make available enriching options for strategic coordination for implementation of new policy paradigms that bring stakeholders together who have competing interests but shared values.

CHAPTER SIX: Articulation of the Experiential

> he says I am from there, I am from here, but I
> am neither there nor here. I have two names
> which meet and part… I have two languages,
> but I have long forgotten— which is the
> language of my dreams
>   (Mahmoud Darwish)

This first chapter on findings analyses themes and issues that emerged directly from research questions that were posed to the participants of this study, both the professional immigrant cohort as well as the key informants. Information in this chapter is presented in a way that it breaks down the data, categorising it into themes and sub-themes for the purpose of analysis.

Experiential is a key word in the context of this research. The questions asked of the participants were open-ended, and semi-structured, so as to guide the conversation. For ready reference, these questions are part of Appendix B.

The questions were aimed to provide free rein to study participants to facilitate and support them in the sharing of personal stories of migration. The goal was to glean a subjective description, the questions simply being a tool that would assist reflective and personal narrative telling in relation to their migration and settlement experiences, with particular focus on aspects of labour market integration. The purpose of gathering experiential data was also to ensure that "lived experience" could be reflected through individual stories, presented and heard in its authenticity, and that the research would focus on its specificity being validated in the voices of real people.

In my role as researcher I saw myself as a facilitator who was in a position to provide support to respondents in the surfacing of their migration-related experiences. The goal was to further and assist a process that would help highlight nuanced complexities and dilemmas inherent in their migration-transition journeys.

The heading statements in bold and italics that open the discussion in each section below are words used by respondents that refer directly to the theme being explored in that particular section. Although these are actual words used by research participants no names have been appended to these one-line statements. This is deliberate as their use and placement here is designed to signify the sense of a generic and representative voice. These words are not intended to be read as specifically spoken by particular individuals.

Other significant sub-themes, similarly central to discussions on the topic of migration and settlement in the case of visible minority IEPs, also flowed out of our conversations. The next two chapters, Chapter Seven, and Chapter Eight, will focus on discussion and analysis of these sub-themes.

First Impressions

A word to set the scene: I started the interviews by requesting my research participants to share with me their experiences of migration to their new home here in Winnipeg, Canada. Typically they began with introducing themselves to me, going on to situate themselves in the context of where they came from, sharing how long they had been in Winnipeg at this time, and what their line of work was pre-migration, and now, in cases where they were employed.

General information about individuals who participated in the research has been provided in Chapter 3. This information details for the entire group the range of variables like age, gender, ethnicity, geographical location they migrated from, and occupational affiliations, including

breaking it down in terms of numbers in each of these categories. In accordance with maintaining

confidentiality guidelines, it is deliberate that this information does not identify each individual

in the particular. Besides, since in this research, none of these variables are being specifically

considered as factors that impact settlement and integration, the specifics of who they are or

which statement could be ascribed to which speaker is not relevant. In any case they have all

been given pseudonyms and this further protects their identities. It is important to take all these

precautions as these individuals are potentially vulnerable, and in many instances they are

speaking out about their experiences in ways that criticise and target power making structures or

specific individuals within these organisations.

In describing first impressions of their migration experience, most respondents mused

about the differences they noted between the environment they knew well back in their home

country, and this city that was brand new and unfamiliar. In response to my questions, they went

on to share how they understood their own experiences of encountering and dealing with this

new environment, including the challenges they believed they faced, and also how they dealt

with them. The thoughts and feelings expressed through their responses convey a summation and

flavour of our conversations and they give voice to early fears and anticipations experienced by

research participants. The following themes emerged.

THE NEWNESS OF IT ALL

"It feels like I'm going blindfold"

The descriptions ranged from the journey feeling like a "mixed grill" of challenges and

surprises; for example, being shocked at how easy (and different from back home) it was to deal

with a car accident as insurance took care of everything and there were no corrupt officials

asking for bribes; to experiencing being subjected to a monolithic gaze, in the case of an

individual from Sierra Leone who said that he was perceived as, and assumed to be, a refugee

just because of the color of his skin. Amaan's response was as follows:

It's an interesting journey—lots of positives and negatives.

For Sebastien, although he had a Master's degree in English, and had taught almost 5 years at

University back in his home country, in his self-perception, language and communication were

some of his challenges:

> You don't know the workplace culture, and I didn't know how to greet people.
> It took me four months to find an entry-level job at a restaurant where I worked for a year.
> Also, people are individualistic here. There's no family culture. We have the collective feeling, like sharing.
>   Here when you are 18, your health card is separate from your parents. You are on EIA. You do not belong to your parents. I'm not saying this is wrong. But it was surprising.

He went on to get further education here in Winnipeg, undergraduate and master's degrees in

Social Work, and now works with refugee newcomer families helping them navigate systems

and processes here through his job in the formal newcomer settlement sector.

For Lauri, one of the elements in her experience that stood out for her was the self-

awareness that, due to differences in cultural standpoint, she had to catch herself as she wasn't

sure "what impression she would make if she expressed herself freely." A similar response came

from Sunshine who said,

> When I came in, I was greeted with context and political correctness issues. My behavior, way of speaking, and other body language was given a different interpretation from my country's interpretation.
>   And this automatically put me on line to start thinking of re-inventing myself, which was a huge challenge for me. I still have a lot to learn so as to conform to the Canadian standard. Change is progressive not instantaneous.
>   Most actions that are termed aggressive in Canada are interpreted as enthusiastic in my country. People confront and address their differences, but in Canada you cover it with a smile.

> You are never sure when you are needed or not needed, or when you have offended someone or not. In Canada people cover with outward warm hugs and pleasant smiles, but in actual situation you are not needed.
>
> This is very different where I come from as people are straight about handling issues. This is one aspect I am struggling with and for me this is huge because it is an integral part of Canada.

Meme whose move to Canada would be termed a typical second migration—from Ukraine to Israel, and then onward to Canada, summed up her experience in the following words:

> There are opportunities in Manitoba not known to immigrants, like grants to retrain. Need for better dissemination of information. Marketing me myself, saying, "Here's what I can do." And methods/strategies of job search here are different.

Drilling down the above narratives to seek common denominators, the experiences described in this chapter could easily be potential perfect recipes for exclusion going forward. Based on data gathered through conversations I had with those who participated directly in this research, it may be stated that nearly all of the individuals interviewed experienced the move and their settlement here in Winnipeg as somewhat confusing and stressful both due to the sea-change in the overall environment, and even more so, due to anxieties and challenges of employment integration.

A SENSE OF APPREHENSION

"no English, no network, no Canadian experience."

Most study participants observed that the processes of searching for a job are quite different here, and this required of them a lot of re-orientation and new learning. Their predominant perception was that things were not going as they expected, and, from this experience, they concluded that labour market needs and employer expectations differed between their own country and the Canadian economy. One of the aspects I observed during these conversations was that soon immigrants new in Winnipeg began to wonder, and ask:

How easily and straight-forwardly will my skills and experience transfer when jobs here even look different from back home? Everyone seems to want Canadian experience, and I feel like I don't even know where to begin?

In my conversations with majority of my research participants, a first open question requesting them to recount their early experiences in Winnipeg landed us directly into important topics related to employment, namely, their search for work; or why it was the core piece of their migration journey; as well as the gap between their expectations before moving to Canada and what the realities, being here, looked like.

SIGNIFICANCE OF WORK

"I used to push people to work hard, be productive, and bring out the best in them"

I asked my research participants how the experience of finding employment in Winnipeg had been for them so far. They described challenges they had initially faced with regard to the job search process; how the entire landscape around employment seemed to them unfamiliar; and the worst part was that they could not understand why all their sincere efforts at finding a job were unsuccessful.

A detailed section on barriers and challenges is part of a later section in this study; it is also one of the themes the literature review deals with; and a discussion on difficulties faced by IEPs is present by implication through being underwritten in the discussion on solutions and problem-solving. Besides, the topic of highly educated professionals doing menial jobs when they come into the country as skilled immigrants is visible and a well-known one in popular culture, often even getting expressed through tropes like "need a doctor, call a cab" (Basran & Zong, 1998; Cheng, et al., 2012; Danso, 2007; Dean & Wilson, 2009; Gurcharn & Zong, 1998; Ngo & Este, 2006; Türegün, 2013).

For this reason I do not focus on this theme at this stage of the study. Instead, this section encapsulates some voices of research participants in the discussion they have (below) regarding their valuing of their work, reasons for doing so, and a nostalgic remembering of how it felt when they were contributing members of their economy and country when they were in their home country. The statements quoted below also highlight their professional goals, hopes, and self-doubts.

"I like to solve problems, do something and see results; use my skills to make a difference" (Ian)

"I want to show people the professional I am so they will value me" (Grace)

Sabina observed wistfully:

> You want to work in a job that needs your level of education, making a difference in somebody's life, people looking up to you, respecting you—many benefits of a job at your level apart from money. Working with people with same level of education, thought processes and views is different.
>   My part-time job here was okay as program coordinator with a personal wellness company, better than the bank where I worked before that. In the bank you perform the routine, don't need to think critically. I missed being with like-minded people, those who had same aspirations as me.

She had been in Winnipeg for three years before I had a chance to meet with her. She was struggling to find a foothold in the right job. The reason and goal in making such a decision was, in her words, "to be able to give their children a broader view of the world." Having taught at the university in the Faculty of Business Studies at home before working with the U.N., the family had migrated to Canada despite being at the top of the professional and status ladder in their home country. Her husband was hired by a company in Winnipeg, and so they moved to the city with their four children, their ages ranging between 8 and 20.

As an employer, with a consultancy in finance in his home country, Ayo had experience in, and always enjoyed, solving problems for organisations, mentoring junior colleagues, working for governments in senior positions. "Our jobs define us, families feel it, so much talent in

immigrants," he said. Ayo believed that as a result of skills and abilities he had, like critical thinking, analysis and judgement, he would find work that would fulfil his needs for teaching and coaching, and as a result, for self-actualization and belonging.

Work, it was clear, was for most of the participants not only about earning a livelihood, financial independence and a means by which to take care of their families, but it went way beyond the fulfilment of basic needs. It was about self-esteem, self-worth, and a path that would lead to affirmation of identity.

SENSE OF LOSS

"I went from having everything in my home country to having nothing"

From the experiences shared by the skilled immigrants who are the focus of this study, it became clear that personal and professional identities are so interlocked into each other that for many they become a symbol and a path through which to prove to oneself, and to family and friends back home, that you have established yourself in a new environment, and that you are successful. Paying taxes in the new economy was also expressed as being another sign of being a contributing member, and a subsequent pathway to feeling a sense of belonging and integration. Zhang remarked:

> It was a challenge, finding a job. You know it will be difficult, but you don't know how difficult. Going through cycles, I wondered, "Did I make the right decision by coming to Canada?"
>   Professionally I'm not in the same position. I went from having everything in my home country to having nothing. With three kids we went through our savings quickly. I want to add significance to my life, not just success, make a difference in others' lives.

When I asked him to clarify the difference between "significance " and "success," he explained that for him success was about adding value to yourself and significance about adding value to others. It seemed to be an insightful observation, and it speaks resonantly about Zhang's

discomfiture and frustration. It also indicated to me that he had a sense that the road ahead was going to be long and rocky.

NEED FOR CAREER SATISFACTION

"I'm a very career oriented person, very goal driven, have set milestones
early on in my life, what I want to achieve and be"

Pamela, a young HR professional with seven years of experience of working in her field back home moved, first to Dubai on getting married and then, a few years later, the young couple migrated to Winnipeg, Canada. Well-spoken, her passionate commitment to her profession clear in her words and shining bright in her eyes, she told she had sent off resume after resume with little success. She was in one of the workshops I used to facilitate, and always eager and ready with thought-provoking responses and questions. Her large black eyes had begun to carry a lost look though, and it appeared as though the fire in her spirit was drooping a little. She was keen to participate in the interview when I sent the email out. Her response to the question, "what does your work mean to you" was as follows:

> I'm a very career oriented person, very goal driven, have set milestones early on in my life, what I want to achieve and be and when. So being employed for me is very important as it helps me get the milestones I've set for myself. So not being in employment in a way drives me further from my goal. Work for me is a goal, a career, is a must. It's just like as long as I see myself wake up everyday, I want to see myself in employment because of the goals I've set for myself in life.

Subsequently, she did find her first job, and two months in, I did see her again and got a chance to check in. Based on her newfound experience in the world of work, she said:

> The feeling that comes with being able to impact where you go, add value, feel useful, is a good feeling. Knowing you're actually able to contribute somewhere instead of waking up every day thinking, "Will I get a job? Will they call me,? Will I get a foot in the door?" Back to when I was looking for a job, the thought would come to mind, "Am I up to standard? Am I going to be able to fit in, work for all these people? Are they not calling me because I'm not up to standard, not good enough?" This opportunity to work tells me nothing is wrong with me. It's just that they haven't noticed me.

It was telling that having a foot in the door helped her see there's nothing wrong with her background or with what she can do, and that validated her sense of self. It gave her comfort and satisfaction to realise that she can work like others, even better as soon she began to be picked to help other employees, oversee their work, and provide mentoring support.

COMPLEX PROFESSIONAL ASPIRATIONS

"I want the right job, not any job"

For skilled and highly educated immigrants, their professional aspirations are often complex as job fulfilment is conditional to finding the "right" job, not just any job (Anisef, Sweet, & Frempong, 2003; Guo & Shan, 2013; Hawthorne, 2006). As an example, when a former university professor, or a medical doctor, despite best efforts, is unable to secure a job commensurate with his/her professional expertise or status, or expectations, and is compelled to work as a security guard or health care aide, there are often severe negative impacts at multiple levels. Kevin was one of the employers who participated in the research. He was forthright, and he said, "we're all worse if an engineer is working as a health care aide." In his view,

> This problem will continue to get worse till we all stand up, don't be afraid to ask deep questions; besides this problem must not be marginalised as an immigrant problem but be framed as a Canadian issue.

Sam, a business owner interviewed during this research, also noting positive contributions of migrants, observed,

> Migrant professionals bring in valuable "outsider experience" that is often free of insider biases, and this is also one of the strengths of hiring newcomers. For example, insider perspectives on approaching a scenario in an employment setting, or a conflict situation, may be fixed and rigid while an individual, with similar experience of problem solving but acquired in a different setting, is likely to bring in views that reflect out-of-the box thinking, and these would be innovative and creative approaches to examine a situation in the Canadian context.

Unfortunately, as the research indicates (Guo, 2015; Ngo & Este, 2006), employer biases are highly prevalent, and the majority of employers and others in hiring positions, do not think like Kevin and Sam. From a solutions point of view then, it would be helpful to highlight not just the complex professional aspirations of this cohort but also the high level skills of critical thinking and problem solving that immigrant professionals bring to the table due to their international work experience.

FEELING TRAPPED IN SURVIVAL JOBS

"If I stay in this for a few years, I fear I will stay in this forever"

Kristinea was in a transition job (more often called survival jobs)[36] as a child care support worker. She felt trapped, and did not really like it as she had an office job back at home, more prestigious and white collar, from her perspective. However, she and her family had fled a conflict situation at home and they were grateful to be safe in Canada. She said,

> If I stay in this for a few years, I fear I will stay in this forever. But I love the challenging nature of a job. It's so satisfying when it's difficult.

In comparison with her life back at home though, Kristinia's experiences in Canada appeared to her as only only positive. Her compelling life-and–death reasons for leaving her home were the "push" factors that made her experiencing of her employment situation only as a small challenge she could easily deal with.

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[36] Survival jobs generally connote the first jobs newcomers pick up when they move to Canada in order to take care of their basic needs for survival, for example, often to ensure that the family unit as a whole is finding settlement in terms of food, housing, schooling for children, and similar needs based on specific circumstances. They could be in retail, or in sectors like health care, security, or call centres, as examples. These jobs are often perceived as temporary, stop-gap and short term, and are generally unrelated to long term goals and areas of training of individuals. Transition jobs too would fall mostly in the category of those that fulfil a short term and interim purpose although they may be more thoughtfully considered so as to be in occupations that are related to their long term career-related goals. These are pursued by individuals as a way to gain Canadian experience (although survival jobs do this too), while they work towards completing licensing requirements, pursue bridging programs, or other forms of educational goals. Oftentimes, in common parlance, these terms can be seen as being used intermittently too.

Most of the skilled immigrants who participated in the study came from the developing world with high levels of education, experience and expertise, and they shared their discomfiture working in roles where they had to provide home care support, or if they worked as child care workers, or security guards. Being employed in call centers and retail seemed to be nearly as bad as these roles too were associated with a lower status in the social hierarchy back in the context of the environment in their home country. Such a situation made them experience shame, leading them to concealing from loved ones what their life in Canada was really like. Ayo expressed this thought and emotion in the following words,

> Sometimes I'm confused about who I am, and I don't know how I can be honest and also be myself. The worst part is that I'm lying to my family back at home, telling them I teach in a school while I actually work in Costco.

While perceptions and behaviours are always variable, based on individuals and their specific situations, it is also true that generally factors like social status and identity get compromised in such situations (Dovidio, Gaertner, & Saguy, 2007; Hewamanne, 2012; Xue, 2008).

Ayo's words above indicate that he was finding it difficult to be honest about presenting himself in authentic fullness as there seemed to him to be some discordance between the professional he believed himself to be, and how he saw himself in the present. When Ayo spoke about his experience and the predicament he was finding himself in, his body language suddenly changed. His shoulders began to droop and he could hardly look me in the eye.

ARE YOU VISIBLE-MINORITY?

"Soon we will be SO visible because we will NOT be a minority"

As previously sated in this study, the nomenclature, "Visible Minority" is a descriptive categorisation of an identity location that refers to non-European immigrant groups in Canada. In

the context of Canada's official policy of multiculturalism, visible minority status is also one of the employment equity categories that individuals have the option to self-identify in to receive preferential treatment, compensatory privileges, or accommodations. Other cohorts who belong to this category include vulnerable groups like women, indigenous groups, and individuals with disabilities.

This term first came into usage in the 1970's when the official policy of multiculturalism was adopted in the Canadian constitution (Maxim, 1992; Soroka & Roberton, 2010). Canada was very different in its demographic composition back then compared to what it now is, and if I were to paraphrase the gist of responses I received (presented below in the voices of study participants) when asked what they thought of this term, and how they experienced it as a referent for themselves, their views could be summed up to signify that they perceived the term to be "inappropriate," "irrelevant" and " confusing."

As expressed by one of the participants, Asim, a former professor of Economics in his country and now working with the government:

> Visible but still minority: two connotations. Visible: able to stand out; minority: not majority, may not claim to have power majority has. Does it help? Not sure. What does it mean in society? Nothing. But in government, it means something. I was a beneficiary of the program, and got my opportunity. For a job applicant, I don't know if it's helpful. It could be a source of discrimination. I know in evaluation process, could go against if some panel member has a negative opinion. Qualitative response? Depends on how you use it. If used for affirmative action, then it's positive. If just for communication of identity, then it could be negative. Offensive? No, there are always minorities in communities.

Given Asim's explanation, and also seeing his profile as an individual who worked in economic development policy with the government, it was clear that it was not that he was confused in his understanding of the term. His words though, did give voice to the inherent multiplicity of connotations, both positive and negative, that this term could potentially lend itself to.

According to Sunshine,

The concept of visible minority would be a great idea if newcomers are not only offered a job but are trained. However, the concept is good because it gives opportunity for newcomers to get jobs in their related field.

For Sunshine, the problem appeared to be that the term was not substantive in its ability to lead to positive and successful outcomes although it was theoretically meant to support racialised newcomers in accessing equal opportunities in Canada.   Meantime, Asim continued to ponder, and added,

> We should talk of ourselves as people. Those who have benefited will continue to benefit. The status quo will remain. If you say we are all the same, we should not use the term "visible minority." Besides, a person of color is supposed to be poor so that's another problem with this classification.

Asim found the terminology discriminatory, expecting that a country like Canada would not see individuals and groups as " different" based on their colour or ethnicity.Sabina responds to my question with the following words:

> I find this term interesting, but is it the best way to describe people of color? I compare with my experience of living in the U.S. where we were called non-resident aliens, so it's better than that! *[laughs]*. They want to make us feel it helps us, but doesn't actually.

As clear from the voices of some of the participants in this study, noted above, opinion was fairly divided on the implications of this form of naming to refer to people of color. For some it was an offensive label while for others it was simply a descriptive category with no suggestive connotations.

To some it was confusing, or problematic, and also potentially discriminatory. "Why should I be classified as a minority?" was Joe's question. He went on to say,

> Besides, I would like to believe I got the job based on my merit and not because of some compensatory strategy because I'm actually a second class citizen.

For Jiimmi, it raised a bigger concern, and she observed,

> I hate the term. In a country like Canada that believes in equality and human rights, it should not be relevant today.

When Timsu was asked what he thought regarding application of the visible minority naming to himself and other non-European populations, he responded as follows:

> I'm definitely a vis-min person. But I've been called all kinds of names in England when I lived there so I don't feel bad. For an interview someone called and said, "We're sending two people of color." "What color?" they asked, in response. I recall a saying, "If you're white, that's right. If you're black, go back. If you're brown, hang around. I'm brown so I'm hanging around. *[laughs cynically].* What about visible minority folk who're highly educated? You have to enter through the back door or ceiling. It's not an offensive term though. After living in England for a reasonable amount of time, you don't feel anything as the system has taken so much shock, has been so traumatised. Canada seems mild by comparison, very light, as people try to be politically correct.

Several responses to the visible minority question point to the perception that it came as a surprise to most newcomer individuals that such a term, or concept, was being used in present-day Canada to construct and represent "difference" between communities. Also, it was quite clear that the term carried more negative connotation than positive impact, and that through affirming difference, it had more potential to discriminate even when it was meant to be a vehicle for affirmative action. Responses to the visible minority question received from key informants were diverse and also telling.

Nearly all ten respondents struggled with it, and they saw it as "troubling," "confusing," "degrading," "problematic," "racialized," "not relevant in today's Canada," one of them even saying it was a "stupid term." One of the these participants who works in the policy realm, coordinating processes with regulators, observed that he looked at it more as a "language of diversity" but also admitted that "our systems have to be more inclusive, that we must understand everyone's experience, and in that context the term 'visible minority' sounds dated as a constructive term." The majority of study participants thought the term was offensive so maybe we need another that is value-free and non-judgemental, less loaded in racist baggage and negative value.

REAL INCLUSION? OR TOKENISM?

"I see only one African and very few Asians in among five hundred employees"

When I asked Perez, who now works with issues in employment equity and diversity

management as part of her job in Human Resources, what she highlighted was telling. Although

theoretically coming from the standpoint of inclusion, she remarked:

> They are trying to make sure visible minority and other equity groups are well represented
> in the workplace. But in my organization I see only one African and very few Asians
> among five hundred employees, so we are still under-represented. So I'm wondering if it's
> a way to exclude, or just tokenism.

Andrew (an audiologist trained in the Philippines) responds to this question with some details

that touch upon several implications. It is informative and passionate and deserves some

attention in this conversation so I cite it in its fullness:

> Regulations are put in place to give an advantage to the visible minority. I think, it would
> be better, I don't know, if the category just been switched to "immigrant" because there's
> no real benefit. With the current regulations here in Canada, I already passed my credential
> evaluation to the CIC to Immigration but then my registry for audiologists still wants it
> again. I can't pass it myself, and the credential assessment associations should be the ones
> to pass it to them. So it's barrier after barrier after barrier. So I think just because you
> didn't get your education here, its already a very, very, very, big gap. I don't think
> someone from—, like a fair-skinned person from Britain immigrating here—, I think they
> will still have the same problems because they didn't have their education from Canada.
> And I don't know if their schools have reciprocity in the schools here, but I think they will
> still encounter the same problem. They will go through the same things we are going
> through. So I think, I don't know, if they have to re-categorize or rename that term.
> Whenever I go down to the street and go to the bus—, it's like when I'm in Singapore, it's
> a multicultural society. I see Filipinos. I see Chinese. I see Indians. Sometimes I get the
> shock when I see a white person because in Winnipeg at least there are a lot of other races
> here, and I say, oh, I am already in Canada, I'm not in the Philippines, or I am not in
> Singapore, because there a lot of other people here aside from Caucasian. If visible
> minority means non-Caucasian, then I find the definition very sketchy.

Andrew's response in the context of facing challenges with professional credentialing processes

and the lack of a Canadian education demonstrates his frustration with the discrimination he

believes he faces. On the other hand, he feels confused by the ease he feels being in a city where he perhaps expected to feel "foreign" because he is surrounded by members of his own community and others who belong to diverse ethnic groups. Aryan, who came to Canada as a refugee and now works with ethno-cultural populations, voiced his views, but also gave voice to the opinions of his clients (he clarified) when he said:

> It's a confusing term, e.g., visible is not accurate because as non-whites in Canada, we are actually "invisible" rather than visible. So maybe we should be called "invisible minority." When a form needs to be filled and I try to explain to my clients what this term means, it's always difficult. Also does not have much use I think.

While this sample is small, and the objective of this study is not to generalise based on responses, it is also true that a question like this will always elicit a response that is subjective and it will be based on individual perception, as well as their specific understanding of the concept and their experiences.

The juncture at which Canada stands today, with the kind of population ratios where visible minority populations comprised 22.3% of the total population in the 2016 census, [37] it may be useful to have thoughtful conversations relating to this term so that such an identity-marker may be conceptualised with appropriate clarity, respect, and objectivity, eliminating negative baggage.

WINNIPEG: A WELCOMING, INCLUSIVE CITY OR A RACIST ONE?

"Welcome to Winnipeg: Where Canada's Racism Problem is at its worst," Maclean's,

January 22, 2015

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[37] Statistics Canada, "Visible Minority (15), Generation Status (4), Age (12) and Sex (3) for the Population in Private Households of Canada, Provinces and Territories, Census Metropolitan Areas and Census Agglomerations, 2016 Census – 25% Sample Data," *Data Tables, 2016 Census* (2019).

Winnipeg was made somewhat infamous in 2015 when Nancy Macdonald's article about this city was published in Maclean's magazine. Unlike other italicised statements, used for the purpose of leading into discussion of themes, which are actual words used by research participants, the above header statement in italics that begins this section is the title of a piece in Maclean's Magazine that explores the prevalence of racism in Winnipeg. This essay is a detailed discussion of entrenched racist mindsets, attitudes, and behaviours of dominant (mainstream) populations within the city, manifest primarily in relation to indigenous groups.

While the analysis examines the reality and nature of this "ethnic divide," including historical and other factors that made it so embedded, it also discusses it in terms of a developing contemporary story in which there is a growing realisation that "Until everyone in the city understands that the health and well-being of the rapidly growing indigenous community is inextricably linked to the health of the city overall we have a big problem." However, apart from providing a broad context of racist and discriminatory mindsets in the city, there is little direct relevance that pertains specifically to people of color.[38]Further, as the essay points to a difference between north and south-ends of the city, as well as changing relationship dynamics between population groups in present day, (both in taking a generational view and across generations), it becomes possible to extrapolate that it is neither easy nor fair to describe a city in any blanket or homogenous manner. There are inaccuracies as well as implicit dangers in taking a monochromatic view as it flattens difference. Most places are neither all positive, nor all negative.

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[38] It must be pointed out that three years after the publication of the article cited here, a sequel in BBC News, Toronto, highlighted courageous acts of community activism performed by indigenous and non-indigenous groups in Winnipeg, and work being done by grassroots organizations that is helping realise goals of reconciliation have changed the culture on the streets. As the article points out, while there is a long way to go, things are demonstrably much better. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-45215814

Likewise, being either inclusive or racist will vary as a variety of perceptions and individual experiences will play a part in making a city appear to a person in a certain way. Different parts of the city may be "experienced"differently by individuals and groups depending on their subjective and specific responses, and a range of variables could contribute to determining these perceptions. Some sections may actually be less diverse and so perhaps "be" or "feel" more racist. It is important to remember too that our own fears and insecurities, our personalities and inherent assumptions, also impact (even shape) how we think about, perceive, or receive our environment.

Further, with respect to this question, only a few among the study participants could provide a considered response based on a comparative view as most individuals who migrated to Canada had so far lived only in Winnipeg. One of the participants who had the opportunity to live elsewhere previously spoke positively about his experience, saying that the city was friendly, forthcoming, and helpful.

Moreover, just as the branding of Manitoba on licence plates goes as "friendly Manitoba," so too does the reference to our weather, and references in common parlance to the friendly residents, go as "cold weather, warm hearts." A few respondents though did say that things would improve if stronger and more mutually supportive relationships could be forged between newcomers and "Canadians," as the so-called dominant mainstream population cohorts are often named.

It is logical that when asked such a question in relation to the city in which individuals reside, respondents may use different variables to arrive at their subjective conclusions. It would depend on their specific needs during different stages of migration-transition and settlement, and if experiences they have had in the city have been positive or not, have satisfied their needs or

disappointed them. For example, if a newcomer is in desperate need for English classes in order to access employment opportunities and the wait list is too long for them to get in, or they end up having a bad experience with other city services in their time of extreme need, these situations will negatively impact their opinions of the city, its infrastructure and its practices.

For example, for Jimmi, it was the strong community networks that her extended family had in Winnipeg that defined her settlement trajectory. She felt well integrated and completely at home as in addition to family supports she was also part of the bigger ethnic community, friends and family members celebrating festivals and other social and cultural events together. Such an experience is bound to shape the experiencing of life in a positive way for an individual as it did for her.

Melanie has worked with newcomer professionals in a staff role for the last few years, and she corroborated the above view, observing

> It depends on personal circumstances, and for individuals who have financial reources or friends, it alleviates some pressures. The downside is that sometimes family and friends advising takes you in a different direction, but then there are others who take these challenges as opportunities to overcome barriers, and find motivation.

It is true though that personal supports are additional, and life as experienced for an individual who has a range of options in their safety net often does better.

However, this may have less to do with infrastructural supports the city has to offer and is more about the strength of private network of family and community members. For example, for Jamil, a refugee from Sierra Leone, reality looked quite different. He felt devalued and frustrated, processes and bureaucratic red tape in the city too slow for him so that he was unable to access supports he felt he needed urgently. This colored his views and when he described Winnipeg as closed, conservative and unaccepting of new entrants, he was evaluating the city in

comparison with much bigger and more cosmopolitan cities like Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal where some of his friends had significantly different experiences.

Yusuf, with a doctoral degree from within North America but unable to get into the labor market with any stability despite best efforts for more than five years, was even more disillusioned and cynical, and responded: "I have no idea. I have to be part of it to know."

Suman's experience with employment here was not perfect but was definitely better than Yusuf's. It is also important to consider the fact that her husband had a good job and that she was not singly responsible for putting food on the table, and this too, along with other variables, including some personality-based variables specific to her, defined the way she experienced the city. She responded:

> One thing I like about Winnipeg, people are accommodating. I keep running into the same people. Small place. Good environment to raise kids. Easy to manage. Form good friendships. Besides, I like going out, meeting new people, and like to have a positive attitude.

Liza, although coming from the same part of the world, had a completely different experience:

> I'm feeling that, as a black woman, I was doubly discriminated against. Black person coming like a beggar, they think. They skip me in a line, assume I can't speak English. When they hear me speak, then they start attending to me.

Although the above was how Liza described her experiences in the city but she also found numerous supportive individuals who became friends and close allies, including good employment opportunities that helped her learn, integrate and achieve some of her life goals.

Polyphonic voices will always tell multiple and contradictory stories. Moreover, all three words used above, that is, "welcoming," "inclusive," and "racist" have a range of connotations, and this discussion, being more general, does not go into the specifics of similarites or differences between these. Although this question relates to impressions individuals have about the city they live in as newcomers, it goes beyond it, digging deeper and tying in with feelings

they may have, for example, of experiencing a sense of belonging here or the lack of it, being homesick here or not. This question about the city connects well with another that follows, on integration, giving respondents an opportunity to ask themselves if they were still looking back or moving forward, and what the factors are that compelled a backward glance, what was missing and should be in place that would make integration a reality for them.

In other words, I would argue that through the act of deliberately examining their surroundings in terms of how the city received them, both objectively (and analytically) but also from an experiential perspective relating to how they in turn received te city, the question provided a useful reflective moment. Participants used this opportunity to separate out and evaluate both the external environment as well as the internal landscape within their own migrant psyche. This helped them become more objective and self-aware, learning coping strategies from each other's shared experiences. From the de-briefing we did after, the participants expressed that they felt an enhanced sense of agency and more in control of managing some of the challenges they were encountering, as well as their emotional responses to these.

Returning to the data provided by my respondents on different ways in which the city came to them, or indeed how they received it, for example, the term "welcome" has been broken down into its many components by the "welcoming communities" initiative that uses research tools to help break down concepts like inclusion and integration into concrete factors, markers and indicators (Esses, et al, 2010; Kuropatwa, 2007; Lund & Hira-Friesen, 2013). These empirical results drawn from data analysis are further made operative through being turned into policy goals and outcome driven action plans, with the target of enhancing inclusive practices.

Much of this is being successfully made operative through an IRCC funded and provincially implemented program called the Local Immigration Partnership. The literature

review section looks at this Pan-Canadian initiative in some detail.Under the umbrella of this program, focused strategies are being employed across Canadian provinces, utilising research, and considering front line programing and indirect services, community outreach, multiple stakeholder engagements (for instance, seeking out employers and ethno-cultural groups as partners; finding support from city infrastructure; and other such measures) to reframe conversations, raise awareness and reset mainstream assumptions around newcomers. It is projected and hoped that these measures would help create a more welcoming and inclusive environment where all people get their rightful due, do not feel discriminated against, and have the ability to be the best they can be so they may thrive. These important issues are discussed in some detail in the literature review section too.

INTERSECTIONAL BARRIERS, CUMULATIVE CHALLENGES
("I'm) knocking on all doors, but maybe it's the wrong door"

As previously described, during interviews with respondents I used open-ended questions to better understand specifics of "challenges, triumphs, and surprises" that were part of the experiential reality of migration for my research cohort.

One of the broad themes that emerged from the data that was gathered was that a majority of IEPs perceived and experienced a difficult learning curve in relation to economic settlement and integration here in Winnipeg. Both in relation to the job search process, and more holistic employment related issues, one of the biggest barriers newcomers struggle with when they move to Canada is the fact of differences they find in the host country environment in relation to job search processes, and overall labour market challenges.

This aggregated and intersectional nature of barriers that is both norm and part of the complex shared reality for newcomers to the country was pointed out by majority of key

informants as part of their overview of issues. Will has seen this from the inside in his role as front line staff for the last two decades, and he observed,

> So many factors come into play when families move, and they have to do many things for settlement: kids at school, health, housing, basic needs must be met while they're trying to secure a job. While they have valuable experience, emphasis is on survival so that becomes a starting point.

The constant refrains highlighted by respondents have been gathered together and presented below in the form of composite narratives, to convey main ideas. For this reason, and to reiterate the generic nature of similar responses, a deliberate choice was made to not append any names to the following statements although they are actual words used by respondents. Since some of the responses are one-liners, they are presented with quotation marks for easy readability.

> "I delivered a lot of resumes but the only response I got was that I could speak a number of languages... (He raises his hand and says), 'I have to say, I'm here, where do you need me?"

> "If you're highly skilled, don't come to Canada…"

> "I find it difficult to close the chapter of my past."

> "Over-qualification is a big barrier: either way you lose, if you hide your qualifications and someone finds out by accident, or if you're honest about them, it feels like you're knocking your head against the wall."

> "Very challenging, not even being shortlisted for jobs, applied for so many, on many websites too. Sometimes I would lose momentum, highs and lows, bad economy anyways. Fellow immigrants will tell you don't even bother going to the settlement assistance agencies. Within our community it's a pity people will not even go to them for help, they give up, they settle in lower jobs and stay there forever, there's rejection. Sometimes, when you don't have support you think it's a difficult economy. Have to find ways to keep motivated as in your own community you see people who have given up, and are pessimistic."

When understood more deeply, what individuals and groups also experience is the gap between their expectations and aspirations, as well as the gap between imaginations they have of their potential new home prior to arrival in it and the ground realities they confront in the new

environment. One of the tropes used to encapsulate these first impressions of their experience, as found in the literature, as well as widely used in common parlance by front line settlement staff, is termed the "honeymoon phase." This is before reality sinks in and challenges begin to appear. In the experiences shared by most participants in this study, things went on a downward spiral in the early months and years of relocation in Winnipeg.

DIFFERENT TERRAIN HERE

"They did not give me the opportunity even to fail"

The skilled immigrants who participated in this study shared that the biggest barriers they faced arose from difficulties of finding work that aligns with their education/training, or with their previous experience and expertise. The terrain was different here in Canada, they noted, and this made it clear to them that their expectations were not realistic. Prior to the move they had imagined that the transition will be straightforward and linear. As they had high skills, they had assumed that they would do well although the environment was so different from their home context- economically, socially and culturally. When IEPs do badly, it is confusing for them as the factors that lead to repeated rejections are often unclear to them. While Vera described it in one word, as going "blindfold." Mahmudi, now (happily) employed as a health care support worker despite his educational qualifications from the UK in a specialized field of engineering speaks his mind at length:

> They did not give me the opportunity even to fail! So much talent in immigrants, people willing to go back to school, for professional development. But they have to be given the opportunity. I tried at University, and at Red River College. I came here because you need people like me, and then when I come here, I don't get a job. I should be given the tools.

Timsu expressed her views as follows:

> Canadian experience. People won't directly say you don't have Canadian experience. They say you're such a strong candidate. Then you know it's just the Canadian experience thing. You did so well but, there's always something. My husband says, "Why do they even tell

you this?" I had three to four experiences like this where hiring managers said, "We're really impressed!" And then you wonder, maybe you were not good enough. Something else there they can't tell you. Definitely there's barrier there. You keep hearing it—"Not quite good enough." Immigrants face that all the time. "Oh, you speak English so well!" And I want to ask, "Compared to what? This tells me they weren't expecting it.

After keeping a brave front for a long time, Edward admitted:

> I regret not being able to work in my field. My wife is an orthodontist, and works in India right now. I live here. She has worked in Ireland, Scotland. Couldn't find work here, could have contributed. Kids straight out of school get 70K. They say we have to take our own people.

Pamela sighed too, and spoke at length about her difficulties:

> I have seven years experience in human resources. And basis of HR is same everywhere. Only thing different will be the laws. Best practices in HR, same. And you understand that once you get the Canadian certificate when they approve the equivalence, that gives the sense that your education means the same. You get the sense from people who actually examine your certificates. But it's not the same when you get in. Large gap between real workplace and labour and immigration in Canada. No sync. Otherwise, if there's a sync, there would be understanding of what you bring from wherever you're coming from, what they have, then it matches or doesn't—then you don't get those people in. Because of that gap—I believe wide gap—between employment itself and people certifying certificates that you come with, needs to be a way they can marry each other, or integration, or interception, so they begin to understand that even if you're coming from outside, not inside Canada, doesn't mean you don't know what it means to be in that field.

Jacky, one of the key informants who has been, for several years, involved in research as well as providing policy oversight on these issues noted:

> Professional organizations have great abilities to prevent people getting back to their occupations by setting up artificial barriers. Licensing associations are lazy, they make assumptions, and don't take the trouble to assess training institutions to be able to differentiate between good schools and bad ones.

Bill who has played a key role in supporting his professional clients navigate the troubled waters, providing referrals to resources to services and beyond, and has seen systems repeatedly fail for them, observed,

> There are no penalties for being a bad player, and no incentives to do better, besides there is disincentive from their own members who don't want to flood the field with others who will be willing to work for lower wages.

The differences, and challenges, present at multiple levels. For instance, the study participants told me that they observed that the job market in Canada is heavily invested in requirements based in soft skills, often an unfamiliar concept from the perspective of new entrants. This is because professionals, in the context of their previous work context, are used to being assessed on the basis of their hard skills in relation to their particular area of training. In Canada however, due to cross-cultural differences, the how-to of performing the same tasks changes, and this can make the occupation, and the employee's role within it, look somewhat different too.

Besides, based on their job search experiences, participants indicated that the ability to communicate appropriately in the professional setting seemed to them to be a central factor, one that employers and hiring managers saw as most the significant requirement while hiring. It was also one aspect where they perceived themselves to be sometimes lacking, and this made them feel inadequate and diffident.

Not all newcomers in the professionals cohort believe that they have something new to learn from, or gain, from the official settlement sector though. So they struggle by themselves, on and on. By the time they realise that they are not getting any interview calls despite best efforts at sending out passionate resumes every day, a lot of time is already lost.

PUSH-PULL FACTORS

"Things I can't get at home: peace, electricity, and there's crime there too"

Typically this is a term used to refer to factors associated with the migration journey as experienced by individuals and groups. It's a way to broadly summarise factors that may have triggered the move in the first place (Anthias, 2012; Savickas, 2009; Maxim, 1992; Mchugh,

2000). For instance, "push" signifies negative circumstances in the home country that force people to flee their homes and seek refuge elsewhere. These could be war, violence, conflict, persecution or poverty, or other compelling reasons. In this case, the motivation to move is coming from the intention of saving one's life or feeling safe rather than choosing to leave for greener pastures. Refugees and asylum seekers belong in this "push" category.

Pull factors are the opposite of such a negative scenario, and the terminology is used to describe reasons that attract, lure, or become "pull" factors for individuals, like better economic opportunities, possibilities for good education, or an overall better future for self or/and family. Although all migration stories are different, and also specific, even so, the "typical" template that applies in the case of economic immigrants is the pursuit of enhanced opportunities and a brighter future. Even so there can be, and often are, secondary and additional reasons that make circumstances in the home environment conflict prone, or less than satisfactory and undesirable. As Sabina remarked:

> At least we feel safe here, and I don't have to worry about my children on an everyday basis. There are challenges here, but it helps me to settle here when I know that there is no option for us to go back.

Despite suffering from serious depression due to repeated disillusionments, Bahio was realistic and expressed himself in the following way:

> You didn't allow me to get into the system, won't give me the opportunity to enter, but I don't have bitterness. They didn't invite me to Canada. I sat on that plane and came here. I was not forced to come.

Push-pull factors then become a frame utilised in migration research to describe causes or motivating reasons to analyse the migration trajectory. Such a conceptualisation has potential to go beyond, to understand in-depth the "experiential" aspects of migration. For example, among factors that shape the settlement experience, making it perceptible to individuals going through it

in a certain way, are the expectations they bring with them on this journey. Most often, these expectations are directly formed by the circumstances people come from, and those they leave behind in their homes, and they shape both aspirations of individuals host country while constructing the reality they encounter here. This topic has been discussed in the literature review section.

INTEGRATION

"I cannot close the chapter of my past, cannot see my future here"

Integration as it relates to migration could be described as a broad term for processes of settlement and experiencing a sense of belonging in the host country, and several factors need to be in place for it to be realised (Esses et al., 2013). It implies then the presence of resources, tools and strategies being available that make people feel comfortable and at home, ready to move on and pursue their dreams and life goals, feeling a sense of belonging in their new chosen environment where well-being for the entire family can be assured.

One of the significant factors that can affirm a sense of "being yourself," and validation of personal and professional identity, especially for a migrant in the economic class, is their ability to be a contributing member of the workforce as that is a pathway to self-actualisation for them, often possible through affirmation of their professional, and interlinked to it, personal identity.

One of the research questions addressed perceptions of the respondents with regard to their personal integration process and any related issues that emerged for them.

According to Jamil:

> Being insider to community, society, means you are able to see yourself just as a native in that place. You understand them. They understand you. You don't necessarily understand fully their language, but you still accept each other. If those I meet shy away, don't have the courage, conservative society here, I have to work twice the energy, as people here are shy and reserved, laid back.

Ayo sounded confused and angry:

> I don't know what [integration] is. What does it mean? How do you operationalize it? What has to be in place for you to feel integration? That you belong. That this is home. That you are a contributing member of society and the workforce. For me it begins with getting a job, central to integration, that's how you have basic needs fulfilment, and build relationships with others.

Although Ayo was looking at me, it seemed like he could hardly see me. He appeared to have gone to a far away place somewhere, appearing quite disconnected from the present and from his environment, his body expressing a lack of animation. He looked as though he had come to the end of a long road, and did not know where he might go from here. Sometimes the tone of a particular conversation, or the body language of an individual, is even more important than words they use to express themselves.

> Suman said:

> Integration begins from the time when basic needs are taken care of, to enjoy the Canadian dream. If you're spending your own money, needing to spend even bus money to get somewhere without having an income, you are bound to feel constrained. It has to be worth it. You have to be strategic about it because you're just chasing a dream.

Harpreet expressed her views on integration as follows:

> Depends on what you're looking for. When your qualifications don't mean anything, and reality will determine what you can do, the nagging thought is "I'm wasting myself." Sometimes I think, "Is it ever going to happen?" Being here makes me less confident about what I can accomplish. I'm operating at a deficit. My wife had to go through school, and her education came from our savings. Before you come to the end of your money you have to find something stable. If you feel like you belong that's integration. You need to deal with low self-esteem first.

Integration then becomes a central frame and concept that signifies successful and optimal settlement. This is the ultimate goal from the perspective of the individual and the family.

One of the key informants, an independent research consultant who responded to this question, articulated it as follows,

Integration for newcomers is about establishing their lives and careers here in Canada, and being able to thrive and contribute in fullness to the new society.

Other members of the key informant cohort described it variously as follows. According to

Heema, one of the consultants working with professionals noted:

Since each immigrant journey was different and specific, as were their aspirations, so the term should be understood as being on a spectrum, or seen as a process.

Bella provided employment and navigation supports, and she added:

There must be a two-way street for integration to be successful, and immigrants cannot be expected to integrate just on their own from their side.

Will observed:

It's not about becoming Canadian, it's about being happy.

Integration is complex, both in its conceptualizing and operationalising, given it is such a

subjective and personal experience. Based on the range of "lived experience"-based descriptions

above, it could be viewed as a settlement goal, and it could also be visualized as a continuous

and onging experiential process. Further, it can hardly be straightforward or one-dimensional,

linear or uniform, as many scenarios in people's lives come together to shape it. The fact that all

experiences are specific, particular and heterogeneous adds further complexity. See further

discussion on this topic in this chapter, and also in the literature review section.

REGRETS REGARDING THE MOVE

"At home I had a secretary, driver, janitor; I'm back to square one here"

Having regrets or not, in relation to leaving one's home country and moving to Canada,

depends on several factors: for instance, the quality of experiences an individual has had while

being in the host city and country, and if their journeys of migration, relocation, and settlement

have been largely positive or negative; also what their reasons for moving from their homeland

(or elsewhere, in case they had chosen to live in another location prior to migrating to Canada) were in the first place. Other variables may impact their responses too.

Perez was affirmative in her statement:

> I have lots of regrets. Seven to eight years of my work experience and life wiped out. For an ambitious person like me, this is difficult.

Much depends on expectations too and the gap newcomers find between those and realities they experience as professionals in the new environment. As Harpreet said,

> If I am given the second chance of coming here, totally I will not come *[laughs]* because I found it very shocking and I found it very confusing. I found it very difficult to get into the process. The things that I never expected. I think if the right things are put in place, people will have a better experience. Maybe if I had another opportunity to consider this, I probably wouldn't have come with so many expectations. I was so disappointed when I came. I know government is trying really hard, but then probably it would be good, like to connect from where I am coming from, even if it means going from like an entry-level into the system. Yes, I would be better prepared.

All situations are different, and perceptions vary, so there is bound to be a range of responses to every question, for instance, the following, provided by Sumi,

> I won't regret my decision to come here because if I were in India maybe I won't be able to work. I will be at home doing nothing so it is better like I came here. Maybe I'm working in a survival job here right now, but I will get where I want to be. So I am not regretting it right now. So maybe it will take some time, one year, two years. But I will get there. So I had expectations like he said, but expectations are different than reality. So I have to deal with it.

Discussion around push and pull factors is relevant here too, being directly related to questions, perceptions, and experiencing of regrets. For individuals who left their previous homes due to war or conflict-ridden situations will have insight deep down that even if things are not ideal in Canada they are better off here than they were back at home. As participants pointed out, their lives were not under threat here. Their previous experiences shaped their aspirations in the host country, and they were more patient and willing to try harder. The data suggests that their levels

of resiliency were higher when they had fled from challenging, maybe life-threatening circumstances.

For Suman it was important to be reflective and realistic, and she said:

> So far it was the honeymoon phase, and now reality is hitting us. If highly skilled, don't come to Canada. If you're in your 30s and 40s, it's okay. But don't come in your 50s. Anyways I will sacrifice. Kids doing okay. Husband doing fine. No perfect life anywhere.

As the objective of this reasearch is to explore "lived experience" of labour market integration for professional immigrants, it is a subjective study that tries to insightfully understand how these individuals perceive their experiences and how they narrate them.

The stories highlighted in this study are about ways in which a particular cohort of migrant professionals `experience' their employment integration in Winnipeg. They are not representative, and nor do have potential for extrapolation and generalisation. However, they are contextualised within the broader narrative and general profile of the "typical" economic immigrant who moves to Canada to find greener pastures. This may include the situation of having left a perfectly comfortable and high-paying job with good status and a well-established life, in pursuit of better opportunities both for professional and personal reasons. In such a situation, their experiencing of settlement challenges and successes may feel different from others whose pre-migration scenarios are more challenging. It is the subjectivity inherent in this topic that gives it nuance and makes it multi-layered. Moreover, the fact that there are multiple variables at play makes the discussion, and analysis, vary according to the individual, and it shapes their perceptions.

Summarising Findings

This chapter discussed themes that emerged directly from questions I asked research participants during our open-ended interview conversations. Research questions were used as triggers for creating a space for relationality and dialogic conversation, as well as to help create an overall environment where individuals felt safe sharing stories of barriers and challenges they were facing that often appeared insurmountable to them. Themes that emerged helped create a backdrop against which respondents were able to voice their impressions of employment-related issues they had encountered in the Canadian context.

The intersectional nature of challenges, leading to a feeling of being overwhelmed and unable to control their environment, came through predominantly in the responses. High expectations coming out of a strong professional identity; coupled with a sense of loss; and disappointment and frustration, are themes that came up in the data as did hopelessness and dejection at finding that their job search efforts were proving to be regularly unsuccessful. These first thoughts moved the discussion forward to considerations relating to identity-making during the settlement process in the new country.

CHAPTER SEVEN: Real Stories, Authentic Voices

> it is geography—especially in the displaced
> form of departures, arrivals, farewells, exile,
> nostalgia, homesickness, belonging, and travel
> itself—that is at the core of my memories of
> those early years.
>   (Edward Said, *Out of Place: A Memoir*, xii)

This current chapter on findings delves deeper into the voices of participants of this study

as they share experiences of struggles and successes they encountered. The chapter highlights

general barriers and challenges immigrant professionals encounter as part of their employment

transitions and economic integration when they move to Winnipeg. Next, it discusses in some

detail factors that relate to occupational settlement as these play out in the local context. This is

followed by a section that provides somewhat detailed sketches, in the manner of case studies,

of four immigrant professionals, all from different occupational sectors. The purpose of telling

these stories is to highlight a variety of challenges individuals face in their particular

circumstances. The next section moves towards solutions-thinking through returning to interview

questions that were posed to participants, and through responses they provide, they voice

concerns and bring attention to processes and structures that would have helped them if only they

had been in place. Finally, research participants make some general suggestions and

recommendations. The last section explores additional sub-themes that emerge from the data-

analysis.

Barriers and Challenges

Distilled down to its basics, one major umbrella theme surfaced, and this was barriers and challenges faced by IEPs. Deconstructing this central theme to unpack it was not so easy due to the essential element of intersectionality at its core. However, the following sub-themes have been broken down and segregated although they mostly intertwine, impacting each other. These sub-themes also affect and shape perceptions, feelings, and ways in which immigrant individuals conceptualise their experiences. I provide this detail by way of disclaimer as the way I present these sub-themes and their analysis will likely have a similar quality of blurring between boundaries. For example, at times it becomes problematic to know if an issue is a barrier or a consequence emerging from a barrier because it becomes a challenge in itself too. And it certainly aggregates the previous difficulty, coloring perceptions and enhancing intensity with which individuals experience their lives. The sharing of challenging experiences on the part of study participants often communicated their self-perceptions that they felt trapped in situations where they did not have a sense of control on their circumstances.

Constructing a "Generic"Migration Story on the basis of "Lived Experience"sample

I summarise below some predominant responses that formed the content of conversation-based interviews I had with my study participants, and the range of themes these included. For example, when immigrant professionals narrated their migration stories, the following themes (based on thoughts, emotions and thought processes they shared) emerged in quick succession and in the following order: excitement, as well as professional aspirations and high expectations on arrival; certainty that soon they would find that dream job in the field where there was a skill gap as that is the rationale upon which the point system to invite migrants in the economic class is founded; their skillset had matched because there was a need and a shortage in the area where

they had expertise. They confirmed that they had been looking for jobs on online websites, and everywhere else; sending out electronic applications and delivering in-person resumes every day; days and weeks and months had gone by and no responses have been received; some had attended interviews but no luck and they feel like they're back to the drawing board on a regular basis. They felt confused, and experienced a lack of clarity about what this unexpected turn of events in their lives meant; and the following emotions followed, disappointment, disillusionment, frustration, lack of self-confidence and self-esteem. It seemed to many like there was no light at the end of this tunnel, and as a consequence, they were constantly battling questions like "Am I not good enough?" as well as the inability to understand why success was eluding them. Meanwhile savings are running out as family settlement was going on side by side along with job search.

Winnipeg being a smaller city and centre compared to other metropolitan Canadian cities, there is a lack of job opportunities for well qualified individuals, certainly in certain niche areas of specialization. Mismatches exist too, between employer expectations and ability of immigrant (professional) clients to satisfactorily meet these. In addition to cross-cultural differences leading to real communication barriers, their stories told me that issues of bias, discrimination, and racism were also a relevant part of the mix.

Many of these are grey areas, and in subjective terrains such as these, factors like attitudes come into play, acting as additional constraints or as enablers. Skilled immigrants who come through the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) encounter additional barriers as they (and their sponsors) are subject to regulations as a result of which they cannot leave the province for a few years so moving elsewhere in Canada in search of job opportunities not available in Manitoba is also not easy.

A Brief Note on Sources and Methods of Data Gathering

My understanding of migration, settlement, and integration scenarios as experienced by immigrant professionals is based on the following sources: research and practice based literature reviewed in previous chapters; data gathered (and analysed) through qualitative interviews and focus groups with fifty respondents, and ten key informants; being embedded in the field (settlement environment) through my role as front line staff delivering direct service provision to newcomers and opportunities for participant observation such a situated-ness made possible; as well as my personal "lived experience" as a professional migrant dealing with labour market integration barriers. As discussed in the methodology chapter, auto-ethnography is one of the methods used to collect and analyse data for this study, and as such my own lived experience as an immigrant professional is one of the data sources that adds another layer to my understanding and analysis. Issues in relation to research rigor have been discussed at length in the methodology chapter.

Gap between expectations and reality

For individuals who migrate to Canada without having a network of family and friends; and little information about the employment situation or about processes relating to job search, come to the city with unrealistic expectations. One of the biggest barriers they struggle with is the yawning gap between their expectations and the ground realities they find on arrival here. If only they had known better they would have ensured better preparedness, they shared during the interview process. The following excerpts are from interviews that were conducted with research participants, and they communicate this huge gap between their expectation and the ground reality they find.

> I had lots of expectations due to my educational background. And with North American experience under my belt I never really expected that getting a job, being part of the

workforce, will be difficult at all. And I get it that when you start from that kind of beginning, obviously the fall and reality check will be that much more confusing, discouraging, and frustrating. (Brian)

I came with high expectations because of my background back home in terms of my education and work experience. (Sunshine)

I was so happy and surprised by how good everything was here. Negative experience was the job search experience—shocked at things being very different in these matters. (Meme)

I thought I would reach a climax in my success here, but was wrong. Had to begin again here, people said. I have to wait because I'm new. A man who had never waited, always hit the ground running, told to wait a year. (Andrew)

Don't know why people don't like immigrants! They come with knowledge, experience, and are the core partners of development. I have so much diverse work experience, and a Canadian degree too. I don't understand why they won't hire me. (Perez)

Need to educate Canadians, otherwise they think all black people are refugees. And they also feel like refugees are a kind of animal. (Ayo)

In contrast, those who migrate armed with information, and a more realistic understanding of what they will find once they arrive in Canada, save themselves some time and heartache whatever choices they might make. They also feel more in control of their lives, and this sense of agency they have helps them feel better ownership of their own circumstances.

Settlement is Always in the Local Context

It is true that local context is the master key that opens doors to settlement success or failure, just as it is ground realities of a specific city and professional (and general) community that create that nuanced environment where individuals "experience" varied stages in their migration journey. In this study then, I would like to clarify and emphasize the role of local context and factors in their ability to not just impact but also shape the settlement process. The story I call generic may play out quite differently in another geographical and provincial context as factors like local labor market opportunities, sector-specific jobs, employer attitudes, and

specific supports available to newcomers in certain locations vary provincially, regionally, and city-wise, and these differences make settlement narratives look and sound different.

While my findings are specific to economic-integration experiences IEPs go through in the geographical and local context of Winnipeg, the literature reviewed in this study, however, maps the landscape on this topic primarily in terms of the broader Canadian context although I make inter-provincial comparisons, and reference studies based in Manitoba too. As obvious, there is way more data available in the broader pan-Canadian context, and many more qualitative and quantitative studies too, that bring to light experiences of, and themes in, migration and settlement as they play out in bigger cities like Toronto, Vancouver, Montreal and Edmonton.

While there is survey-based quantitative data relating to overall settlement and general factors relating to employment in the context of Winnipeg and Manitoba (Esses et al., 2013), this study bridges the knowledge gap by providing much needed experiential and qualitative data relating to economic integration for this cohort.

Many factors are critical to the feeling of warmth of welcome, or lack of it, that newcomers sense when they relocate to any geographical location within Canada. Some of these are listed below: infrastructure and funding that provide resources in the economy; labor market realities; the role of businesses and employers, and of the corporate and social sector; settlement support services; population diversity and mindsets towards newcomers; systems and processes granting occupational certification and licensing. The above list of factors forms the bedrock of resources and attitudes needed for newcomer settlement and they mostly fall under provincial jurisdiction. In terms of funding, although the settlement sector is funded both federally and provincially, specific needs and mandates, as well as their fulfilment, is reliant on provincial policies, these in

turn shaped by ideologies and campaign promises led mostly by provincial and municipal dispensations.

Occupational affiliation as a variable

In the case of IEPs there are so many occupations as laid out in the NOC (National Occupational Classification), and oftentimes processes of all professional requisites coming together, as well as timelines in which this happens for each field of work, and for each individual, are unique. By way of clarification, although most respondents participating in this study belong to the regulated professions, self- identifying as engineers, doctors, teachers, social workers, lawyers, accountants, counselors, supply chain management, (others), there are still other occupations that do not need credential recognition and licensing in the same rigorous and stringent ways.

As an example, some of these are individuals with experience in the development field, or those who previously held positions as university professors or academics, and researchers and individuals with doctoral degrees. Although employment opportunities are dynamic, changing from time to time, in certain occupation sectors they are more limited or unavailable, and so it becomes more challenging, particularly for those job seekers in Manitoba. For example, employment options for forest and marine engineers, teachers, and for those aspiring to work in the oil and gas sector, jobs are difficult. Individuals often have no choice but to seek career options that are unrelated.

The way things work and the factor of time taken is so variable because of being grounded in a range of factors, from personality traits of an individual, like their attitudes and persistence, to the specifics of hard skills in their application request. It is then impossible to provide a blanket kind of monolithic response when a question is asked regarding what the "typical"

timeline or settlement path for individuals might be even when their profession is the same. Certainly when individuals belong to different occupational fields it can often be a case of comparing apples and oranges.

Research Participants' Profiles: Honoring a Few Real Voices

The short section below provides a description of a few participant profiles. In addition to respectfully introducing a few individuals who participated in this study to add some rich flavor through detail, it recapitulates highlights of their experiences in their own words. The section includes summations of a few theme-based responses that emerged when certain key questions were asked during the study. Using "thick description" and participant voices to express a somewhat nuanced range of experiences, this section aims to offer a range and diversity of views that may suggest a kind of counterpoint to the broad-stroke generic migration story told above.

One of the reasons for picking these individuals for showcasing their stories was that most of them came from unregulated occupations where the trajectory of employment settlement is unpredictable and erratic. Also, with work-experience backgrounds like theirs, multiple factors being in the right place at the right time needed to be in place for them to be able to attain their goals, including their personal traits like attitude, and perseverance, and their abilities to integrate into the host society through actively pursuing opportunities for networking and volunteering.

One of these six individuals (four are men, and two women) whose stories are highlighted belonged to a regulated profession. He compares the credential-recognition-related challenges he was experiencing being in Winnipeg with the circumstances of his peers who were in other parts of Canada, or in other countries where things were much easier. His story also brings into the mix the factor of family reunification being a consideration in people's lives as he picked Manitoba for settlement because his family was here and he was able to get sponsorship through

the Provincial Nominee Program. It is chance that all highlighted stories are men's stories. Excerpts from several women's stories have been presented in other findings chapters.

Dylan, a Marketing and Sales Professional

Dylan had a good job at home, one he enjoyed and that helped him pay his bills. He enjoys marketing, sales, advertising, and using his creative energies to explore and experiment. He's young, in his mid- thirties, with over five years of work experience in his area of work from his home country. Dylan expected a smooth transition when he moved to Winnipeg with his small family. He submitted many job applications, and all he received were rejections. At the time of my conversation with him, in addition to his previous education and work experience, he had procured a few diplomas in related fields like online marketing and computer graphics here in Canada, thinking it would add value to his qualifications from back home. However, although having been in Canada for about 4 years when I first met him, he was still struggling to get a foot in the right door here in Winnipeg, and was at the point of giving up his dreams to settle for a transitional job. He was feeling positive though, hopeful too, as well as "excited and keen to find out how things operate in my area."

Jackson, Computer Engineer, Managing Hardware and Repairs

As an independent contractor working with computers, Jackson had his own clients back in Russia. He scheduled his work-days, and his life, based on his own needs and preferences, feeling quite satisfied and taking responsibility for his successes and failures. When he decided to move to Canada he thought it would be a piece of cake for him to be up and running in his own field of work. In his mid-thirties, he was happy, mentally prepared and keen to start from scratch right at the starting-point as he wanted to learn how things worked here in this new city

and country where he and his family had decided to make their new home. His many job applications received no response, leaving him confused and uncertain about why reality was so different from his expectations. He had been in the city for over two years, doing part time "survival" kind of jobs when I met him. As he explained to me, although initially happy to learn the new environment and processes here, by now he wanted a "real job" as he was confident in his abilities to work with computers and with people, and solve problems. About a year on I ran into him (Winnipeg being a mid-sized city and a small place this is not unusual), and he was now working with a non-profit organisation managing their computer systems. However, this was a short-term part time job as a majority are, the organization reliant on government funding which was at best low, and particularly at that time was unstable and uncertain. Jackson sahre that this job was barely even fulfilling his basic needs and certainly there was no stability that could help him envision and plan a future for himself and his family. Certainly he was far from meeting the broad range of expectations, desires and goals he relocated to Canada with.

Sigmund/Grace, Educators, Academics and University Professors

This is about Sigmund but it is also Grace's story. Particularly in the case of academics making job transitions post-migration, with a straightforward way forward not being an option, based on the smallness of the sample in this study, gender is not the most challenging barrier. So Sigmund and Grace, professors at the best universities in their respective countries had hoped to find similar openings here in Canada, although, being realistic, they knew that any opportunities that came their way in this new home would not be at the level they were at earlier, with the years they had previously invested in the profession back at home. Both in their late forties, they felt (and appeared) excited to be in Winnipeg, keen and ready to take initiative to meet influential people in their area of work who might point the way forward.

Their hope was to have abilities and opportunities that would help them utilise their experience in this new context, both contributing, as well as learning, new ways of building, applying, and sharing their expertise and skills as educators. However, all they encountered was confusion, disillusionment and frustration that grew every day. They found that penetrating the system was impossible as all meetings they had with university personnel, or those engaged in research and teaching in his field, yielded zero response. Often, any attempts even to schedule meetings went nowhere. Even when re-adjusting expectations, and lowering desired outcomes to settle for "less" rather than more, for example, being able to play a role as part time educator in a volunteer capacity at a high school in the area of their own disciplinary training, there was little success. I am not aware of where they currently are in the job-search-and-find journey, given this interview was conducted almost two years ago.

It would certainly be helpful to get a longitudinal perspective on experiences that individuals like Sigmund and Grace go through, as in the case of other research participants in this study. This might add other variables for understanding contexts of settlement and economic integration, and contribute more layers of perspective and nuance to the research. Sigmund's experience, and Grace's too, certainly does demonstrate that highly qualified professional immigrants, especially those in certain disciplinary and occupational contexts, do not find it easy, or straightforward, to find work opportunities.

This is especially true in the case of job transitions for academics and ex-professors as no templates or established career pathways exist that individuals can pursue. As a point of comparison, although the situation for those in regulated professions is often no easier, in practice and in terms of desired outcomes, there are at least recommended processes in place that they can follow to attain their professional goals. Based on the experiential data gathered and

analysed in this study, it could be said that the above can be a source of optimism, and can feel empowering initially as individuals feel they have recourse to a structured process. However, there are built-in constraints, including those that require financial investments and time commitments on the part of the individual, and this often leads to frustration, discouragement, and disillusionment.

Another factor that exacerbates challenge levels for the cohorts described above who have worked internationally before migrating to Winnipeg is that majority of graduate students at Canadian universities, including international students, are eligible and interested in finding teaching and research opportunities that help them build their resumes and get that first foot in the door that might lead to permanent employment. Compared with newcomers, they are certainly insiders to the system, understanding how processes work, as well as having networks that enhance their social capital. The professors too know them, their work and their abilities, and all these factors often make them more suitable (marketable) candidates for available jobs.

Additionally, the current focus within immigration policy, with the new Canadian Experience Class (CEC) route to immigration in place to encourage international students seeking permanent residency in Canada, further institutionalises the bias in their favour. This fact is mentioned here also to affirm that the issue of employment integration can hardly be viewed as a simple one, or in isolation for one cohort alone, as opportunities for the skilled professionals can only be situated as contextualised within a bigger and more complex picture.

For example, it makes sense on the part of Canadian immigration policy to have a program like CEC in place as it is a win-win situation for both parties. In the case of international students, their Canadian education and work experience too, gained through internships and co-op assignments, work-study programs or through other means, ensures that any learning curves

are minimised, and their time already spent in Canada can perhaps more easily lead them into full citizenship (Bhuyan et al., 2015; Canada, 2012; Lowe, 2010). From a policy perspective too, fewer resources need to be funnelled into integration, and labour market shortages and skill gap issues can be navigated more easily too. However, if viewed through the lens of employment options for IEPs, this further exacerbates barriers for this cohort not only through minimizing opportunities but also enhancing discriminatory mindsets on the part of employers and perhaps even the general public.

As discussed earlier, in general, the job market is neither easily accessible nor hugely supportive for IEPs. Further, research participants observed that based on their experience, it seemed to them that in a city the size of Winnipeg demand far exceeds supply, especially in the case of academic opportunities or even non-academic jobs within academia. Moreover, thye added, positions in academia, even when regulations mandate them to be advertised, are not based on meritocracy, or qualifications, and experience alone, but rather rely heavily on a candidate's "insider" status, wherever that may come from.

Given such a reality-check scenario, newcomer professionals are in one of the most disadvantaged categories when it comes to finding meaningful employment in sought-after niche areas. It is important to clarify that the above discussion hardly pertains only to long term or tenure appointments but applies equally to barriers newcomer professionals encounter when they seek positions that are part time, contractual or sessional. Graduate students are often the natural fit and obvious go-to for such academic research and teaching-related employment opportunities.

Sunshine worked in International Development and now works as Settlement Staff

As expressed in her own words below, Sunshine came to Canada with very high expectations because of her background back home in terms of her education and work experience:

> Like every immigrant or refugee, I too was in search of something better than what I had and I expected Canada to provide me and my family with a better platform. I know no transition is without its challenges but when I saw that my behavior, way of speaking and other body language was given a different interpretation from my country's interpretation, this put me on the path to start thinking of re-inventing myself which was a huge challenge for me.

She had completed two years in Canada at the time of this interview and had secured a related job, felt "integrated" (her words), but still felt she had to learn some of the Canadian behaviors, both in her personal relationships with others and her workplace interactions.

As part of her suggestions, Sunshine referred to the term "visible minority," saying the concept would be a great idea if newcomers are not only offered a job as affirmative action but are trained. In her experience the concept is good because it gives opportunity for newcomers to get jobs in their related field but she also didn't want to feel that the job was because of who she is and not her skills. She perceived herself and other members of her community as belonging to a minority group and felt that they needed the support of the system to help them integrate faster, otherwise it will take longer than necessary.

Bruno is in one of the Regulated Professions

Bruno compares his current situation being here in Winnipeg, Canada, to how things would have been for him had he not migrated from his home in the Philippines. Back at home, said he, he would have found a job after graduation and no registration or licensing would have been required for him to practice his profession. He moved to Winnipeg as most of his extended family lives here. As a young man and part of a closely-knit ethnic community, Bruno's family

insisted he relocate to Canada to pursue a life with new opportunities in the developed first

world. At the time of my conversation with him, he was feeling frustrated with the tediousness of

licensing processes here as they seemed to him so time-consuming and endless.

Bruno told me that he would often compare the challenging experience he was having in

Manitoba to the stories he heard from other colleagues in his profession in New Zealand and

other parts of the world. He complained about the absence of clear-cut career pathways for

professionals keen to work in their areas of training here in Canada. He also expressed

discouragement about provincial professional licencing requirements and expectations being

variable, and as a result, transition between provinces not being seamless. This meant that the

same process would need to be repeated if he found an opportunity in another province and

wanted to move there. Besides, procuring documents like transcripts and work experience

certificates from the home country where he had received education and training was not easy.

Bruno was exploring possibilities for moving out of Manitoba as he was deeply disappointed and

disillusioned by his struggles and overall lack of professional opportunities in his area of

specialisation here.

Rachel, one of the key informants, with long years of experience and expertise in the

settlement sector, in writing proposal grants, managing programs, and also in a position to

impact policy, pointed to the same as a hugely daunting challenge:

> At the end of the day, even if you pass all exams and assessments, one of the most
> overwhelming challenges well qualified economic migrants face is the lack of clear cut and
> guaranteed pathways of finding that real job in one's own area of expertise and interest.

She attested to the experiences of individuals like Bruno who come to Canada through the

Provincial Nominee Program and are caught in constraints and bureaucratic tangles as their

sponsors are accountable for them to remain in the province for at least two years.

Articulating a Need for Relevant Supports

I asked the above participants, and others who took part in this study, three other questions

to gather data for this study. These questions as well as a gist of responses that were provided by

respondents are presented in this section.

(a) Based on your current experience, and if given a second chance, would you

migrate to Canada again?

Instead of going into details of how each of them responded, I summarise below the gist of

responses I received. They are presented within quotation marks as no names are appended, and

to separate them from each other for easy readability:

> "Shocking, confusing, had no idea it would be so difficult to get into the system, would
> definitely not come again."

> "If I come again, I would not have so many expectations, to avoid disappointment."

> "I'm happy to be here as, being in India, won't be able to work as no freedom for a woman
> like me, being from the class, region and community I come from."

> "Reality is always different from expectations anyways, so I understand why things are
> like this."

> "I would still move to Canada but will make sure I'm better prepared."

> "I will think two hundred times, Canada is not for old people."

> "I didn't find anything in my field, need to start from scratch, spend three to four years to
> get job in same field so makes no sense."

> "I came to escape discrimination, and I didn't come for myself but for my sons so it's
> fine."

At a first glance, these responses may appear to read like a litany of grievances but if we go

deeper in we can note a multiplicity in these observations that is telling. They range from

authentically trying to understand the real issues that pose persistent problems, to developing insights based on which one's own assumptions can be re-evaluated.

Further, individuals articulate the reasons why in their particular situation it still makes sense to be in Canada, for example, the woman who can feel a sense of freedom that awards her agency that would have been denied to her in her home environment. Or the difficult situations some individuals have left behind which makes them do a reality check and appreciate the opportunity to be here. All the above responses work at a level of personal story while they also have the power to offer us space to extrapolate and understand some shared commonalities.

(b) What supports did you have, or find here, that helped you in your journey?

Research participants were asked to consider the above question related to experiences they had in the city that they found useful. I also asked them to think about other resources that, if available, could have helped them better in dealing with challenges they were facing. These questions elicited the following responses.

Taslima had a very positive experience despite encountering barriers in her job search journey. She attributed the positive experiences to the existence of community supports, good relationships and friendships, and presence of relatives and friends already settled in the city. She felt these factors shaped her settlement journey. Besides, her experience of people in the city, strangers and casual acquaintances too, was that everyone was very friendly and willing to help.

Bruno whose struggles with getting into his regulated profession have been narrated above, could find some strength and a positive outlook as a result of his community networks. Besides, as a single person who had close family taking care of his accommodation needs, as well as other requirements like food and other supplies, he said he appreciated the fact that he had nothing to

worry about in that regard. Hearing heartbreaking stories of struggles others in the focus group were facing due to their role of fulfilling family responsibilities as breadwinners and caregivers was eye-opening for him. It helped him develop new understanding about how fortunate he was and how overwhelming overall settlement for newcomer professionals could be depending on individual family circumstances. Bruno felt that this peer-learning environment was helpful as it made him more aware, as well as appreciative and compassionate towards other newcomer professionals, as he could see his life was quite different and much easier despite the professional pitfalls he encountered.

Neeyan had prior information about what he would have to face when he migrated to Canada as he had friends and community members who had gone through the journey before him. Even so he found the situation challenging. Being part of a middle class family back in his home country, and having gone to the UK for a Phd before moving to Canada, he was under a lot of debt. This financial drain made his situation particularly difficult and he had no time to seek out a dream job or take any further training to equip himself. In his words:

> It was difficult to get a job in my own area, but process of immigration had prepared me, I already expected that I would not get job in my area. So had to make attempt here and there to get any job, it paid my bills, I got my own apartment, car, paid off debt. I got support of friends, stayed with them two to three months.

Being in the UK before moving to Canada was helpful for him as he was more used to documentation, and working at all job levels. He observed,

> Any job, dignified here, only self-satisfaction is a problem, personal, family, and societal expectations matter, and that expectation has not been fulfilled.

Examining it objectively too, for an individual with qualifications (including a Phd from England) and work experience in a highly specialised field, it could be viewed as a waste of human capital to stay most of his life in an unrelated job that does not utilise his education,

complex critical skills and intellectual calibre. It could also be argued though that even when starting out as a health care aide in Winnipeg, with his inherent high-level capabilities and potential to transfer skills, he would climb that ladder to the managerial level easily and quickly, and this is indeed what happened in his case. Perhaps, with his entrepreneurial initiative, money saved, and having learnt the system bottom up, he may start his own business and ultimately provide employment to others.

Another way to look at the situation might be that if this particular trajectory of employment settlement is one that helps Neeyan achieve his goals, feeling affirmed in himself and his life choices while believing himself to be successful, then does there still need to be a specific given yardstick of employment settlement by which to measure success? Does anyone other than himself have a right to prescribe to him what exactly the shape and form of success should look like for him?

Besides, the definition of success, pathways to attain it, and the satisfaction of having found it is such an individualized and subjective experience, one so variable and relative that it is not easy to categorise or quantify it objectively. For those working with newcomer professionals though, it is certainly helpful, even essential, to open up dialogue around the topic, providing a variety of examples from real-life trajectories of real people with similar backgrounds to demonstrate a range of possibilities that could be pursued to attain it.

As an example, Simil was in her early thirties, and as an extremely career oriented young woman, she described her migration journey as an interesting one, seeing it as full of positives and negatives:

> Now I know, best way to live with it, be positive. If you look at it day by day, you will be depressed, not happy. If positive, you get by with the day and don't feel depressed. I learnt to be persistent and positive.

Once you're not Canadian educated it becomes a barrier to getting into the system; looks like your qualifications from where you're coming seem not good enough. To get someone to allow you to showcase your talent is difficult. Where you may be "allowed" to work will be places where people don't want to work, especially if you're very educated, you don't want to come to a country and start working in the store, or sell things to people on the phone.

But once you come here that's where you find people actually allow you, just because they don't have anybody to do it. Because people don't want you to showcase what you have. So in my experience, lots of times I've gone for interviews, I ask for feedback, sometimes they avoid me.Success and failure become terms hard to quantify or understand in any uniform ways as they often have variable connotations for individuals, being rooted as they are in multiple factors that are specific to each individual. In addition, in the context of migration, success is often linked to expectations of others, and one's own "idea" of who they wish or aspire to be in this new context. Also, often the notion of success needs to be re-configured and re-set based on the experiences an individual is having and integration outcomes they are achieving.

(c) Any gaps in job supports you came across, and other overall supports you believe would have been helpful?

When asked about participants' experiencing of gaps in their overall settlement journey, a general consensus emerged that related to gaps in job supports. The following suggestions were made. Participant responses have been summarised and presented below in single space while analysis is differentiated through being in double space.

For example, majority of study participants noted that:

It would be very helpful if a system could be in place that could facilitate individuals entering regulated professions through interrelated and related areas of work with some salary as people have to pay their bills.

Some individuals expressed it a bit differently, saying,

I wish accessible jobs related to my occupation, at entry level, would be available right away so I could focus on fixing registration and licensing issues.

Individuals playing the role of breadwinner, specifically with family settlement responsibilities, reiterated:

We need extra support and guidance so it may be possible to have a "soft landing."

Families who have no relatives, friends, or community networks in the city hoped for:

Government supports that would provide guidance for home rental options to deal with dangers of people getting stuck in yearly rental contracts.

The most urgent gap pointed out, and repeatedly, related to:

Access to open, and easily available detailed information that would help make smooth job-related and overall settlement processes both in the short and long term.

Being new to the country, individuals perceived and experienced record checks, credit card checks, and reference checks as barriers that they felt they needed support dealing with.

Individuals, especially those who had been in the city for more than three to four years and had faced employment related challenges more seriously, and over a longer time period, expressed their need for support groups, as well as psychological support and counselling to help them deal with unexpected problems they had to face in the new socio-cultural environment. Both in the case of dealing with disappointment in the job search process, and issues that emerge in relation to employment maintenance, most often during a first job, individuals expressed a need for professional psychological support. In most cases such needs may be in the category of nuanced needs and are likely to go undetected, unacknowledged, or dismissed, even when mildly perceived by individuals themselves or service providers.

It was significant, for instance, that a gap and need such as the last one was specifically pointed out and highlighted. It came up during a focus group conversation and not during a one on one interview. Since such a request was quite unusual in the context of a group such as this,

as a researcher I observed that an environment of mutual trust, safe space, and a kind of

anonymity had developed as a result of group dynamics that made participants perceive

themselves not being on the spot but feeling safe and comfortable in expressing themselves

openly.

Suggestions and Recommendations Made by Participants

There was a long inventory of general suggestions that research participants wanted me to

document, with the hope that their concerns would be presented in the appropriate forum and

their voices heard. Some of these are highlighted below, along with comments and analysis.

Their words have been used to title each thematic thrust that is later discussed. They have also

been italicised and are in inverted commas to communicate authentic voices. However, no names

have been assigned to these both due to the generic nature of these responses as well as because

of the fact that these views could easily be ascribed to a majority of respondents. Only a few

main suggestions have been highlighted in this section to communicate a general sense of

participant perspectives. The final chapter, however, details more fully all recommendations that

are based on the findings in this study.

(a) "So I can access free pre-arrival services only after my application is approved?"

> There should be services back in the home country of the kind available here in Canada so
> immigrant professionals can get good information, be able to ask their general and specific
> questions prior to arrival in Canada, and get a better chance at preparation. (Zhang)

IRCC-funded Pre-arrival services do exist for this very reason, and are provided through several

centres in the home country (in some overseas locations) as well as in Canada, both

electronically and in-person. However, it is important to note that individuals can only access

them when their application to immigrate has been approved.[39] Obviously by then not only have they fully paid up the entire application fee, they have also made plans which may include quitting a job in their home country, and other critical migration-related decisions that include the entire family.

The fact that the pre-arrival program offers no potential options for seeking robust and customised information and support without full commitment on the part of the individual was described as "disappointing" by some of the participants.

One of the suggestions offered by study participants was that this program have a component where for a small fee some consultation would be available that provided economic migrants better resources upon which they may base their life changing decisions to leave their optimal professional life at home before moving to a new home in Canada to seek even better economic opportunities for self and family.

While I do understand reasons for pre-arrival policy that makes full fee mandatory right at stage one of enrolment, not expecting the Canadian immigration system in the economic class to be grounded in a philanthropic or humanitarian impetus, it must also be acknowledged up front that the desired goal of immigration in Canada is a means to meet population enhancement targets and achieve economic growth. If the above goal is recognised as one of the core mandates, then the impetus of immigration policy as a singularly money making project could be interrogated.

Further, another frequently offered argument is that Canadian immigration policy is grounded in nation-building, and if that is another one of its purposes, some initiatives could be tested out that simply keep immigrant individuals' interests front and centre too. For instance,

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[39] See https://settlement.org/.../what-are-pre-arrival-services

charging partial fees at the pre-arrival stage for a percentage or limited number of economic migrants as part of the program could be considered, with options for individuals to withdraw if, based on robust information received, they realise that their educational and occupational credentials will not translate effectively for them to achieve optimal labour market outcomes.

There are anecdotal accounts and documented stories of economic migrants who incur heavy debts in order to achieve their dream to migrate to Canada, and after years of frustration and failure, they return back to their countries of origin. Or worse, for those unable to return as for many those options are forever closed with migration, their well-being and mental health are compromised, and the family falls into a cycle of poverty that goes beyond the first generation.

(b) "Government should provide more "soft landing," opportunity for entry level to make basic minimum wage in related work areas to be able to pay bills."

In the section below there are a few examples of ways in which respondents express their views on the kind of initial opportunities they would find beneficial during the time of their early migration-transition to Winnipeg. They believed that these would be very useful in addressing their short term needs and also in the potential these measure have to provide individuals with possibilities for achieving their long term employment goals in a timely manner.

> Since Canada has a skilled labour program, there should be internship opportunities, not just unpaid work experience—at least provision for some allowance, not exactly full salary. This will be beneficial to Canada as people are leaving because of no suitable jobs. Province losing good people and newcomers are losing too. Government should provide more "soft landing." For example, entry level work for skilled workers, opportunity to make basic minimum wage in related work areas to be able to pay bills, and settle down more easily in a timely manner in Canada. (Sebastien)

According to GG,

Since people transition in their careers on migrating to Canada so there should be more opportunities for re-training in occupations where there is need and shortage, as well as more bridging programs in a range of fields.

Individuals should be better prepared and bring more money with them was another suggestion.

If they arrange to have more money, training possibilities too would be enhanced. However, as

Nasirg noted,

> People expect training to feel ready for work. But education and training are not the remedy for everything. There is need just to align with the new system. In any case, even if it were needed, the state can never fulfil everyone's need and demand for retraining. Important to be connected with the right company, and the right job opportunity so as to learn the tools and manage to fit in where economy needs people to fill skill-gaps.

Ayo, Ahmad and Sunshine were part of a focus group and they offered an inventory of

suggestions which were based on their experiences of personal challenges,

> Need to develop entrepreneurship opportunities and support such a mindset, hold hand of immigrants so they can understand system and align with it.

At a first glance, these responses may appear to read like a litany of grievances but if we go

deeper in we can note a multiplicity in these observations that is telling. They range from

authentically trying to understand the real issues that pose persistent problems, to developing

insights based on which one's own assumptions can be re-evaluated.

> "Be brave, go and knock on every door, go forward, don't wait for processes to work as systems don't work here."

> "Instead of going back to school and doing the whole study program provide gap training for 2-3 months and see how a person performs."

> "They tell you apply online, but nothing happens, resume goes into trash can unless you know someone."

> "It's not what you know but who you know is what works."

> "MB will lose out on skilled labour till newcomers are connected with job opportunities and with employers."

> "Bring employers together and onboard to hire immigrants."

The above recommendations are intersectional and intertwined with each other. Based on my work as researcher and front line worker with "lived experience" in the formal settlement sector while being an immigrant professional exploring my own career options, I can easily affirm that creating networking opportunities that bring employers and newcomer professionals together can be a huge win-win scenario, and it is being done through employment settlement agencies as part of the programing they offer their clients.

Networking events (and mindsets that push them forward) go beyond match-making too, not just helping employers have direct access to a pool of pre-selected and appropriately prepared candidates, and supporting recent migrants find the right job fit, but have further added value. They go way beyond through the ripple effect they create, helping foster more awareness among employers, and in hiring personnel, as well as in the community setting (through outreach activities). This often plays a positive role in enhancing people's perceptions regarding skills and professional work culture that migrant professionals bring to the table. Educating and supporting employers during the time newcomers are doing internships and availing other on-the-job training opportunities, during monitoring and mentoring activities, as well as through running special training modules for management personnel, are all helpful strategies. They help create an environment for people to better understand the value immigrant professionals bring with them, and attain broader mindset change.

(c) "Lack of good information, electronically, and urgent need for a one-stop-shop in the city."

I heard story after story from individuals who complained that information available online was inadequate, inaccurate and unhelpful. It was hidden too, like the "hidden job market," and

difficult to find. In my role as service provider supporting clients, I had similar personal experiences. Searching online for resources, even for basic information, when individuals felt stuck due to doubts and questions, they would request me for help. This was not always easy because even when available, much information resources are hidden, and not easily accessible.

There was consensus around the view that much needed to be done to make robust and targeted information resources available that would also be easy to navigate. Simain observed,

> I had lots of information, but it was not accurate. We need correct and detailed information that's easily accessible online—not hidden as it is right now—so we can plan and prepare ourselves better. For example, no sources available online told me that Canada needs young people, so don't come at an older age, like in your late 40s and 50s. High education, big family, older age—that's a bad idea and a perfect recipe for failing.

Another response was as follows:

> The market is a hidden market here, not just for jobs but for information too. If people are not proactive, they won't even know all these services are available. Is it deliberate that this information is hidden? (Aryan)

> Besides, the absence of context in a new environment makes it doubly challenging to

interpret even the information that is available, or ask the right questions. Oftentimes, as a result of altered economic, social, and cultural context there is little frame of reference for knowing if a particular resource or a kind of training, internship opportunity, small grant or loan, may be available to them.

> There are options and organisations that help with subsidising licensing fee and other grants, but information about all these resources is not openly available. (Sumi)

This is true and even service providers are often unaware of the full range of available resources as there isn't one single portal where everything is listed, and much information is hidden too, and as study participants openly observed, either by accident or by design. It is also true that resources and services fluctuate as they are subject to availability of funding. Ensuring that

information is accurate and updated on a regular basis is a task in itself, one that depends on continuity of funding too.

Research participants would suddenly and accidentally hear from one of their peers about a grant opportunity that they would have found life changing in their circumstances, and nobody had told them about it. Neither had they found it anywhere in their all-night long online searches. They would wonder then, and enquire too, if one of the reasons for not having an open portal with easily available information was to limit large-scale access to key information about resources.

Based on my experience as a practitioner, things generally get better if one or more of the following happens: with passage of time, newcomers learn the ropes, and begin to feel better connected and oriented; develop more contextual understanding that helps them formulate relevant questions; they come across peers in similar circumstances; or they meet a service provider who understands their needs and volunteers some useful information. Unfortunately, all of the above, or indeed any of it, may not happen for many individuals in a timely manner, and in countless cases, it may not happen at all.

The opposite was true too as research participants and clients also complained about information overload through settlement services. I recall during one of the feedback sessions after a workshop, someone started a conversation about how stressful and overwhelming it was to have to take in so much general information that they won't remember later. It is true that people learn differently, and some people are interested in knowing only what may be directly relevant to them rather than learning about the overall context and systems. These responses make sense as in early days when individuals are new to the city and country they don't know

enough about their general environment even to process all they are told, and sometimes all it creates is more anxiety and stress.

Although a lot of information is available online that relates to settlement after migration, even those individuals who have done their research while still back at home are caught unawares by the ground reality they find when they get here. Many of my study participants told me that if only detailed and more targeted information had been available online or through conversations with experts they would not have sold all their possessions back home to come to a city with minus double digit temperatures and little potential to achieve their employment goals.

While there are common denominators in migrant stories, the specificity of each individual story needs a targeted response. This is impossible unless there are support services that include personalised live agents who can walk individuals step by step of the journey. The sad fact though is that settlement services are often stretched beyond capacity and unable to provide one-on-one hand holding support of the kind needed for optimal employment integration that is only possible through a targeted case-by-case approach.

An observation on the above response is that this fact of services not being visible to a good majority of newcomers is well known to service providers. To an outsider unfamiliar with ins and outs of how things work, it would appear logical that such a lack of awareness must be addressed, and indeed easily can be. This can be done through awareness campaigns in civil society, outreach activities in targeted centres and ethno-cultural sites where newcomer communities live or congregate, also simply through making online information and websites more user friendly, and through using other relevant methods.

However, awareness raising strategies that would successfully plug this gap are deliberately not utilised as funding only allows for a certain limited quota of immigrant newcomers who can be served on a yearly basis.

Staff time to provide meaningful services is more often than not constrained due to funding-related limitations. Also, extra time would need to be factored in for outreach-related activities, and staff time for this too is severely limited, if available. Besides, organizations that have established their credibility in the community due to their long standing status and good outcomes easily meet their funding targets through word of mouth transmission alone and they simply serve individuals who take initiative or are fortunate enough to hear about available supports and reach out to them. It is then no surprise that a majority of newcomers never hear about this whole network of the formal settlement services sector that many others use regularly to achieve their overall settlement goals, including those related to employment.

Leading in to a Discussion of Sub-themes

As indicated above, several themes fall under the broad topic of difficulties professional newcomers faced. The data indicates that these challenges became insurmountable barriers for many. In the disciplinary world of PACS, this would be similar to the way intractable conflicts are conceptualized, with factor upon new factor piled high upon what may have been an initial root cause.

The manner and voices in which research respondents expressed their views demonstrated that employment-integration challenges they faced had potential for negative impact that was proving to be long term and holistic, with long lasting inter-generational impact including being trapped in a cycle of poverty. Each of these sub-themes will be discussed in this section, participant voices telling their stories and substantiating their views with the help of examples

from their experiencing of their journey. Their understanding of factors responsible for creating each barrier will be highlighted through the analysis I provide. This analysis of topics is brief in many cases for fear of repetition as most themes are recurrent, and have been part of the discussion either in the context chapter or the literature review section.

As a result of the interconnected and intersectional nature of the barriers IEPs encounter, it is sometimes challenging to see each one in its separateness, or be able to differentiate between factors that are barriers and factors that exacerbate barriers. In such a situation some of these sub-themes will be discussed together. Besides, the study takes a holistic view as individuals and families are being impacted broadly by the difficult situations in which they find themselves. Solutions too need to be searched for and situated within that multi-track model of conflict resolution.

Intersectional Nature of Challenges and of Barriers

The intersectional nature of difficulties faced by IEPs exacerbates these barriers further as individuals often experience them together and at once, as though several arrows were being shot simultaneously at a single target from different locations making it impossible even to discern where to hide, who to guard against, or how to protect yourself. A few participant responses are presented below:

"After visiting so many job fairs how come we still don't have a job?"

"If they don't like you, your qualifications don't matter."

"Full work experience in home country is not recognised for licensing process- I've worked ten years but they recognised just five years."

"Fee to evaluate credentials is too high."

One of the key informants, Lisa, who has long years of experience and expertise acquired through performing multiple roles developing, delivering and overseeing programing and services, described the nature of these intersectional and aggregated challenges acting like a "bottleneck with intentionality." The incremental nature of challenges that pile one on top of each other and impact professional migrants lead to individuals feeling overwhelmed, seeing themselves as having little power to control important events in their lives. Such a scenario, faced by a huge majority of immigrant professionals, leads them down a path where dejection, hopelessness and depression become their only viable options.

How should I look while looking for a job?

This is the worst mental and physical state to be in while job searching in any cultural context. The mental and emotional condition of an individual looking for employment is even more relevant in an environment that is unfamiliar and cross-culturally unfamiliar. This is because particularly as a newcomer, a person must stand out and make a good first impression that highlights their job related soft skills, and showcases their expertise and previous work experience in a demeanour and with an attitude that is confident, passionate and committed. It is for this reason too that supports are needed for immigrants that can help provide information and guidance on employment-related topics, and if needed, go step by step on the how-to of the job search process and overall economic integration journey. Similarly, on an as-needed basis, mental well-being related psychological supports should be part of systems and processes to help not just with problem solving but even more significantly for conflict prevention, building preparedness, capacity, and resiliency.

(Unrealistic) Expectations Individuals have from the Immigration System

There are well documented stories of highly educated individuals who held good positions back home but then embarked on the migration journey to chase their careers and life dreams, believing full well that they would achieve success while others before them did not. The way Canadian immigration is set up doesn't help either, with the point system luring those with high qualifications into the country, giving them unfounded hope by not revealing the "whole truth." Bella, one of the respondents in the key informants category commented with outrage and frustration: Canada is "selling a false bill of sale by never telling the full truth." This full truth reveals itself to new migrants only when they land on Canadian shores and begin their job search, and as the interview data indicates, they had to deal with multiple and aggregated barriers ranging from receiving no response to their resumes to not succeeding in interviews, and others.

Hussein, in Winnipeg for 6 years, with his struggles behind him now works with the government and teaches courses in his area of expertise at the University. Although he feels "settled" now, and happy too because his children are getting a good education in Canada, he thinks back about his early struggles in the city and complains that the nomination letter confirming his PR was misleading. He added:

"If I knew more of what happens here I may not have decided to move." (Hussein)

Some responses from other respondents are presented below:

Where you may be "allowed" to work will be places where Canadian people don't want to work. Especially if you're very educated, you don't want to come to a country and start working in the store, or sell things to people on the phone. But once you come here, that's where you find people actually allow you just because they don't have anybody to do it. Because people don't want you to showcase what you have. (Sabina)

Canada has the point system. That's why they gave me PR because of my area of work. Now they want me to work only in Tim Horton's. I don't even drink coffee! I don't understand. (Jamil)

Large gap between real workplace and labour and immigration in Canada, no sync, otherwise if there's a sync, there would be understanding of what you bring from wherever

you're coming from, what they have then it matches or doesn't, then you don't get those people in. Because of that gap, I believe wide gap, between employment itself and people certifying certificates and licensing that you come with, needs to be a way they can marry each other, or integration, or interception, so they begin to understand that even if you're coming from outside, not inside Canada, doesn't mean you don't know what it means to be in that field. (Ian)

I worked at the best university at home. Getting a job here is not as easy as I was thinking. And penetrating the system is very difficult here. (Aryan)

According to Simain, and based on her background in counselling, she said:

The first year is very difficult psychologically as people try to get into relevant field. So psychological supports should be available so people don't change their field, and don't go back. Many engineers are working as cashiers, don't want to go back to study and retrain, don't have enough will power, time or money for further training. They should be able to talk about their problems. For example, a mechanical engineer is working as machine operator, doesn't want to retrain. (Simain)

The above examples demonstrate a range of scenarios and factors that led these individuals to feel lost, alienated, and helpless. Surmising from their narration, this was a a result of them encountering an environment that was unfamiliar, unexpected, and unpredictable. Additionally, particularly in relation to their aspirations as skilled immigrants, they were experiencing situations where their expectations were continuously belied and their dreams shattered. In their self-perception, this exacerbated their feelings of unfairness, injustice, and alienation, and made them feel they did not really belong in Canada.

Lack of Canadian Experience and Canadian Education

The following responses from participants communicate their frustration and lack of control upon the environment they find themselves in.

I took any jobs to get experience. Was highly qualified—MBA and Phd—but I had to go back to go forward. (Martin)

How unrealistic and silly of them to expect me to come from my country to Canada with "Canadian experience"? (Celine)

There's a lot of value put on Canadian education, and expectation of Canadian degree. And if you're not Canadian educated, it becomes a barrier to getting into the system—looks like your qualifications from where you're coming seem not good enough.To get someone to allow you to showcase your talent is difficult. (Richard)

In my own case I want to suggest for the skilled workers that are coming in to the system I know the government is trying to protect the citizens of the country by way of regulating some jobs but I think ah they can make an arrangement for the skilled workers just coming in, like arrange for a pre-employment at an entry level that would be much more easier for the skilled workers to get a job and at least to be paying their bills and so in the interim they will be able to settle down with their family and get something to be able to pay their bills and as well move on with their getting their job their trained jobs, so I think that would be excellent. (Ayo)

There are certainly strategies migrant professionals are encouraged, even strongly advised, to follow by those providing them guidance through the formal settlement sector, for example, career transition counsellors, or other professionals who have walked the same path before them. Strategies like volunteering, networking, and securing mentorship opportunities, have been proven to be beneficial to achieve successful employment outcomes. The advice consistently offered to newcomers by individuals who had been successful was that receiving timely information and support is important, as is hard work, openness and creativity, and resiliency on the part of individuals themselves.

Summarising Findings

Searching for the right job is a composite experience, and for many aspects of learning the how-to of seeking employment, including getting hands-on experiences with networking and volunteering, individuals need to be on site in Canada. Networking, being mentored by a professional from the same background, volunteering, doing observer-ships and internships are steps that are known to lead to job opportunities. For these a job aspirant has to be physically in

the host country. Options to procure pre-arrival information are available through IRCC funded Pre-Arrival programs to individuals while they are still in their home country.[40]

However, these are available in certain select locations, and can be accessed only at a stage when an application for permanent residency is approved. None of these information- sharing tools come with job guarantees and neither do on-arrival employment assistance programs that offer free settlement supports to newcomers. Rather it is more about helping newcomers better understand the general Canadian context and specific workplace environment while also providing skills training relevant to bridge their specific gaps. As with any information-based service, these too can help provide knowledge-based tools that could support better decision-making. It depends too on the user and their abilities to seek and navigate available resources, utilising them optimally through sifting out what is relevant in their particular situation.

This can help a newcomer feel more oriented and have some idea regarding how to act in a situation they have not faced before. It is also about building familiarity with the background as well as appropriate tools and management strategies to help with employment related and other challenging scenarios. As there is an absence of linear and established career pathways that newcomer professionals can walk with certainty of success, those who move to Winnipeg with prior information, which is accurate and balanced, experience advantages as they feel better prepared, even if it is just to accept ground realities here more easily.

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[40] https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/new-immigrants/new-life-canada/pre-arrival-services/eligibility.html

CHAPTER EIGHT: Story-ing Migration, Deepening Thematic Analysis

> A story is always situated; it has both a teller and an audience. Its perspective is partial (in both senses of the word), and its telling is motivated. (Lila Abu-Loghud, p.15).

This last chapter, based on findings, has two sections. It begins with a vignette based on another leaf taken out of my real migration story. Next, it circles back into stories and views research participants shared with the objective of exploring experiences and themes in some depth that have only been touched upon in previous chapters.

Call Me Sisyphus [41]

On some days, if asked my name I want to say "Sisyphus."You may be aware of the famous story about Sisyphus, the King of Corinth as Greek legend has it, and as Wikipedia confirms. Punished by the gods for his deceit and craftiness, Sisyphus was condemned to eternity to roll a heavy boulder up the hill, and each time he would almost reach the top, the boulder would roll back again and he would have to start over. It is right from the heart of that mythical story that the notion of an impossible task emerges. This story could be a metaphor too for a situation where an individual finds himself/herself in the midst of circumstances where the odds are stacked heavy against them, and they have no option but to swim against the tide. In fact, life

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[41] About Sisyphus https://www.britannica.com/topic/Sisyphus

demands of them that they act in complete contradiction even to the laws of nature, including sometimes the very force of gravity. A typical Sisyphean predicament then may easily lead an individual to experience feelings of being trapped forever in a hopeless condition, with no pathways open for escape.

Much poetry, treatises, and other creative works including allegories, have been inspired by this powerful legend of Sisyphus. Philosophers, absurdist, and others, have philosophised at length regarding its relevance to expound on the human condition, including positive interpretations that extol the individual's capacities for painstaking perseverance and persistence, keeping hope alive in the face of despair.

Many of my research participants described their journey towards employment settlement in what I would name as Sisyphean terms. For example, their feeling that becoming the professional in Canada that they had been back at home, and hoped to be here in their new home, was a process that meant continuously taking two steps forward and three back. Even the first basic act of sending out resume after resume with no result felt like being tasked and condemned, just like Sisyphus was, with that boulder. Besides, doing the math on that two-steps-forward-three-back trajectory appeared to them a reality that was heart-breaking and frustrating, and it made them feel disheartened and disillusioned both with the system and themselves. Unfortunately, this is an all-too-familiar story scenario that most new migrants come up against. It is also one that resonates with me personally when I reflect upon my role as a professional who went through economic and family migration in my own life.

I moved to Winnipeg just over a decade ago and, as a past academic for most of my previous life, all I was trained for was teaching, research, writing, and other related tasks that need to be performed in a university setting. Even as I say this, I'm conscious that this is actually

a lot of life and work experience if accumulated with commitment and passion, as was true in my case. This is true not just for me but is the reality for a majority of economic migrants who move to Canada, in whatever disciplinary field their home may be. I couldn't help but smile sadly at the irony in my use of the phrase "all I was trained for" in the above sentence as I suddenly became aware of my instinct to be self-deprecatory. It demonstrated clearly to me that I was discounting the gifts I was bringing to the table. If I was playing down my own strengths when I knew them so well, why was I blaming evaluating processes prevalent in Canada as well as individual employers and interviewers who did not know me at all, for doing the same? In such a scenario then, where should I and other new migrants turn to look, these medical professionals, engineers, management gurus of their pre-migration lives, for that lost confidence and self-esteem that used to come so naturally to us back in the day, I wondered?

There were other migration-related factors that added significant layers to the skills, education, and work experience I came to Winnipeg with. Some of these factors could be grouped together as a confused jumble of paradoxical emotions simultaneously experienced, like excitement and trepidation; and a desire to move forward at breakneck speed alongside a fear of the unfamiliar dragging me back. I came with aspirations too, excited and eager to reinvent myself anew in my professional avatar in this new environment. I came also with a lack of understanding about where the starting point of my career journey was going to be on this convoluted post-migration trajectory. It is a well-known and oft-acknowledged fact that the journey towards employment settlement and economic integration for professional migrants is not linear and straightforward and can in fact involve several twists and turns, a lot of chance, and multiple other factors being in the right place at the right time.

As a family, our plan was that I would play second fiddle for some time as my partner was the one with a job offer. This too is an all-too-familiar scenario, and trope, within the family/spousal integration story. It is equally applicable, be it migration for migrants in the economic or family class, indeed in most situations in any class through which newcomers migrate to this country, or indeed to other parts of the world.

It made sense for us as it does for most other families when they move to Canada that one of the partners in the family would focus their attention and time on the process of transition and setting up home here, while the other would work at a job so that as a family we may become financially stable and self-reliant as soon as possible. The other part of this, our plan A, was that I would hold on to my university job back in my home country till the time we were certain that we would both be able to pursue our career dreams and feel generally satisfied with the way things were working out for us in this our new home in a brand new city and country.

Many of my research participants had similar profiles, the partners taking turns working, going back to school for further training, both taking the time for child care, and managing pressures of everyday life while learning an environment that was unfamiliar, cross-culturally and otherwise. We were fortunate that we could, at least in the abstract, dream and make plans about potential options to return home in the event that things did not turn out as we had expected. In that, and also in the fact that we had a stable source of family income with my partner's job and career in place in Canada, there were significant differences between our family profile and those of the so-called more "typical" professional migrant. We were a kind of exception that proves the rule which applies in the majority of instances for migrant individuals where migration is a journey with a one-way ticket and transitional jobs often a necessary mode of initial survival.

All stories have variances, and many individuals and families come with Plan B. We did too, or at least we had a template for one. This was that if things didn't work out in Winnipeg as we envisioned, we would go back home, and then at least one of us would still bring to the family, much needed security accruing from my stable job, and that would tide us along till we figured it all out one more time. However, in the absence of concrete and customised information, back-up plans can often be off mark and for that reason, not very helpful.

While I knew vaguely what my dreams of self-actualisation might look like, I did not have the advantages of hindsight that would prepare me for the realities of their pursuit. I was in my early euphoric stage of settlement then, also described in the literature as the "'honeymoon phase," *and lacked the awareness I now have of the multiple challenges that were waiting in the wings that I have a better understanding of now.*

Fortunately, in those early days I did not have enough experience of what my life would look like in the next few years and it's a good thing too because I did not then define my journey in disheartening Sisyphean terms, as I now do, certainly on occasional bad days. Extrapolating from the above then, it makes sense that for human beings, it is in the nature of things that we do not have the ability to see beyond that fork in the road. Even so, this journey towards self-actualization, career goals and employment settlement, always conceptualised as ongoing and dynamic goal posts, can certainly pose a Sisyphean challenge.

Indeed I feel grateful that the peeling off of the layers of the onion-world happened for me day-by-day, often at a slow pace and serendipitously, not suddenly or all at once. It was not just a comforting way for life to unfold in the short term as though in bite-sized pieces, but also provided the opportunity to learn the ropes, become more observant and aware of my own strengths and weaknesses. The process of slowly "integrating" in this manner also helped me

become more aware of the many equally interesting and useful ways to move forward. The struggles are ongoing but I feel the power of the process as it has helped build in me more patience and resiliency, capacity and agency.

However, the above view is a positive spin on a situation that is far from satisfactory, and really amounts to a case of trying to see the glass as being half-full. Besides, it does not take into account the toll uncertainties can take on an individual's mental health, or ways in which feeling blind-folded can negatively impact processes of integration, and experiencing of well-being.

Personal Story Archives

Certainly, the above story is a version of my truth, and viewing storytelling at a generic level, much of it could be so described. The purpose of presenting personal deliberations and dilemmas to book-end the research is to take an approach that helps me dive into deeper emotional and analytical terrain as the study develops and progresses. The data and voices of research participants however, remain always at the centre.

Reflections on Situated-ness and Research Process: Aligning with Methodology

This mining of my own experiential self, using an auto-ethnographic lens, is in the true spirit of the way my data collection progressed. Just to explain this further: during interviews and focus groups when my participants struggled during the telling of their moving stories or it appeared that they needed to feel supported I would share some of my own real personal dilemmas and challenges as a professional migrant as these were (are) continuous and ongoing. Methodologically and otherwise, such a perspective being organic to the research process was a win-win situation as this story-exchange helped us sense that we were together in this, and that this was authentic sharing of our experiences and our learnings in a space of mutual trust.

Besides, open-ended conversation-based interviewing in such an environment of mutual trust was beneficial to the process of data-gathering as it allowed respondents to access self-reflexivity, through making it possible for them "take the interview in a direction that was significant for them" (Holstein and Gubrium, 1997). As pointed out by Ives, "the most interesting material of all may turn out to be what you catch from the corner of your eye. This is the principle of serendipity, and it is always working in your favour, if you let it" (1995; 52). Further, the ethnographic process, including my in-depth immersion in the "field" through my work in it as practitioner, provided me opportunities to observe, hear, and participate in events and that helped me reflect about the multiple "social" contexts that were shaping the lives of my research participants. In line with Ciriviri-Gjuric's view, my situated-ness and my research methodology together allowed me to "discover critical phenomena that (I) could not have detected otherwise." (2002; 28).

I will reiterate the purpose of my research study at this point to clarify how its objectives align with the methodology and methods I used. The central goals of this research are firstly, to learn (and document) as actively, variously, and deeply as possible, from respondents' narration of their lived experiences of migration, settlement, and labour market integration; secondly, apply evidence and learnings from the study to explore pathways that have potential to support both skilled immigrants and organisations that work with them in the creation of solutions that are enabling, and that can help individuals build capacity, agency, and resiliency; thirdly, include the voices of my participants to highlight conditions, gaps, and migrant aspirations to knowledge already widely known through previous studies in this field; and lastly, underscore emergent policy implications based both on specific recommendations offered by research

participants, and also other big picture interventions that followed from analysis of theoretical and empirical data in this study.

As an example, these interventions could take the form of streamlining the co-ordination of intersectional processes needed for optimal labour market integration to make them more effective and responsive; create innovation-based tools, including those that propel strategic advancement of career-pathways for skilled migrants; utilise the PACS framework to bridge the silo-ed worlds of research, academics, praxis, and policy to ensure that collaborative modes and mental models can be functional and accessible to all stakeholders.

On the one hand, my research participants viewed me as a role model to aspire for because they thought I had already "made it" as a professional in the new work environment. At the same time, hearing my story helped them see that I was still struggling and by no means thought that my professional goals had been achieved. Although this could have made them feel disappointed, ironically it uplifted many of them as they felt better about their own situation, more hopeful and optimistic too. Perhaps this was so as it helped them see that there could be multiple ways of being who they wanted to be in this Canadian environment that they were still trying to make sense of. Certainly both parties learnt more optimal coping strategies through this sharing of experiences, and this enhanced our capacities and sense of agency.

The General and the Particular, and the Spaces In-between

As was the case in previous chapters that focus on data analysis, i.e., Chapters Six and Seven , the truths revealed hang in the half-spaces that lie in-between the realms of the general and the particular. In other words, the stories shine a light on the manner in which the particular individual has been impacted and their small story shaped by exigencies of their experience.

They also go beyond the specificity of personal experience though to highlight the common ground of shared reality which is the master narrative of migration, settlement and integration for migrant professionals in Canada in the context of Winnipeg.

Variable Aspirations of Individuals

This theme has been briefly touched upon in previous chapters and is an important marker of differentiation between individuals. It is thus also a significant aspect to consider while examining settlement processes and outcomes. Choice and the freedom to choose as an implied factor should be kept in view too. For example, one of the well- known tropes in popular culture that signifies extreme dissatisfaction with the settlement process for this cohort is the assumption that all professionals who drive taxis are compelled to do this due to lack of other job opportunities. This is generally the case and it is true that many individuals are faced with few employment options and so pursue such a path to their livelihood. However, there are certainly also other individuals in the mix who voluntarily choose such an option. Many willingly choose this option as it supports their migration goals of making enough money to support their family both in Canada and back home, and through that enjoy the good Canadian life. Besides, they add, all jobs are dignified and acceptable here, certainly when compared to other parts of the world, so why not.

Freedom to choose to drive that Taxi-cab

Anecdotal evidence, like conversations I have had with taxi-drivers, recent immigrants and not so recent suggests, as do stories prevalent in popular culture, that many well qualified immigrants to Canada are perfectly happy pursuing such an occupational course over the long term, finding they make enough money driving taxis. This helps them be financially comfortable to take care of their needs and satisfy family aspirations. Among them, those new to the city and

in the younger age bracket though, often worry regarding long term career prospects, reporting that they anticipate lack of job satisfaction as time goes on, and that such a scenario makes them feel anxious thinking of their future. This makes them feel pessimistic and frustrated despite being content in the present moment.

This is true particularly in the case of individuals who have previous work experience as skilled professionals, and do have aspirations to achieve "higher" professional goals. In such cases too, oftentimes the prospect of going through the task to re-train and re-qualify, losing time and money to update skills and credentials seems to be an uphill one, and families decide to settle for less. Less, they convince themselves, is more in the long term as optimal family settlement is about enabling their children to enjoy a better life in the future. After all, they reiterate, to convince me, and themselves too, that they did move to Canada not for themselves but for the good of the next generation. This view is popular and well-established, and many individuals really subscribe to it. Others, it seemed, repeat it to others and to themselves, as a way to convince themselves of it but scratch that surface a little and often a different truth is revealed.

It may be true that in many cases the plan B to work in a completely unrelated occupation is the path an individual decides to pursue as plan A to stick to what s/he really would like was rocky and overwhelming. This is what the master narrative of migration asks us to believe. However, the opposite could be true too, and unless we learn the nuances of pre-migration stories with the same emphasis as what happens post-migration, it's hard to know clearly what the career and life trajectory of this particular immigrant professional was before they moved to Canada. The term "professional"' too is one where the broad brush effect is all too evident. Lisa

who heads one of the organizations in the city that works specifically with migrant professionals in the employment context voiced her frustration in the following words,

> We have documentation and records for our clients, and we hold on to the files for seven years. I used to do the follow-up every few months but now there just isn't the staff resource to do that. And we never get funded to do the research. So we have no idea if a particular individual who was hired as an engineer by X company was able to retain his job; did they go up the ladder in their organisation?

Unfortunately, there isn't qualitative research in the context of Winnipeg where occupational and other variables have been studied that can help us understand these issues with depth or nuance.

As expressed above by a key informant with more than three decades of work expertise and passion to make a difference in the lives of skilled migrants, agencies that document and store raw client data do not receive funding to conduct this research. Neither are they consulted when program focus areas suddenly change as a result to policy changes and their funding is cut or significantly reduced. However, to return to the previous argument about newcomers who don't achieve success in ways they would choose ending up convincing themselves that the rationale for moving was the next generation. Such a reminder to themselves helps individuals view their situation more positively and reconcile better with their new circumstances. On the one hand, each situation and story is different and must be heard respectfully on a case-by-case basis for resolution to be accessible. At the same time, there are commonalities too on the basis of which frameworks for resolutions can and should be structured, albeit loosely so that responsiveness and flexibility are the operative principles.

Individuals Make Decisions Based on a Broad Range of Variables

Not only do individuals make decisions, reviewing and revising them too, based on a varied range of factors, we also have an inbuilt mechanism by which we may find rationale to justify our decisions to ourselves, or be adaptable and subjective, modifying our perspectives in

order to find satisfaction and well- being in our lives. Some useful objective factors though could be the following: where individuals are coming from and what their motivations were for making their migration move, what their lives were like before migrating, and also their particular personality traits.

A comparative yardstick that can help people realistically evaluate their before-and-after (migration) life situations is critical to settlement as are abilities to be open, adaptable and positive even in the face of challenging odds. Further, the process of weighing pros and cons in situations in the past back home with those in the present in the new home is an inbuilt, organic and continuous one that remains always a work in progress at subconscious levels even when not entirely obvious.

Finding that Perfect Balance Between Loss and Gain

Newcomers who succeed in figuring out that it's not all about loss or gain in absolute terms, but about finding that fine working balance that can make them feel positive and engaged, are the ones who keep moving forward towards successful settlement. Looking back at their own experiences of transitioning to a new environment, individuals shared that if, prior to migration, they had known better what to expect, it would have helped them feel better prepared to deal with challenging stressors and dilemma-causing thoughts. This may have helped them apppreciate all the good things that they had no idea would be part of this new deal.

Why do IEPs choose to go back to school?

Nearly thirty percent of individuals from the skilled migrants cohort who participated in this study, sooner or later during their migration journey, aspired to pursue the course of education. They saw such a pathway as one that would also help them gain insider-status, and as a consequence of that, lead them towards the fulfilment of their employment-related goals.

Examining the age variable in some detail, many individuals in their 30s and 40s, even early 50s, and depending on personality differences and family circumstances, were keen to pursue their educational goals as they saw themselves continuing on the course of lifelong learning in order to keep moving higher in their careers, preparing themselves to access work opportunities at senior managerial levels based on their new Canadian qualifications. For some, pursuit of educational goals fitted into larger life goals like growing and evolving in a professional setting so as to contribute and make a difference, maybe gain enough work experience and cultural integration and be able to be entrepreneurial, starting their own work and providing employment to others.

Others walk this path of upgrading through education as a strategic way to help themselves maximise the transference of their previous skills, and hopefully transition to new fields of work where they could monetise their expertise better than in their own previous occupation where licensing and certification processes present daunting challenges. Adamuti-Trache (2016), among others, presents his study findings about choices educated immigrants make to pursue further education in Canada to counter negative impacts of underutilisation of their qualifications and to improve their employment outcomes.

Still other professional immigrants told me that they took the education route as for them migrating from less developed parts of the world, Canada appeared like the perfect new opportunity where you can start afresh and achieve your dreams at any age, including feeling free to pursue an educational path at any stage of your life. This might turn out to be helpful in finding employment higher up in the supply chain, they expressed, eventually making more money and providing more options to their children in the future. Economic and professional

success can be a continuous and ongoing journey for many, particularly among the cohort that is the focus of this study, and lifelong learning is an important prerequisite for that.

However, aspirations of individuals are variable and get shaped by many factors, and so there are those who find it overwhelming, irrelevant, or too much of a financial drain to go back to retrain, especially as there are no guarantees of positive desired outcomes at the end of that education and training journey. Lisa, (cited above), who has depth and long years of well rounded experience in service provision, leadership, and policy implications, at one of the longest serving settlement agencies for skilled immigrants, said that among the engineer cohort of professional clients that their center serves at least fifty percent fall in this category. They lose interest and initiative to continue on the rocky uncertain path to pursue occupational settlement in the engineering sector and prefer to start afresh doing something that seems easier and will be quicker.

Finding my Next Best Option

Individual variances exist not just in expectations, aspirations, and career path options only but these are based also in the fact that in the case of certain work sectors, a mid- sized city like Winnipeg has limited employment options. For example, in the case of Robyn (one of the interview participants), an aeronautical engineer with international work experience and training, observers note that he is young, well-educated, and presents himself with an above average culturally appropriate demeanour and should not have to work as a health care aide. On his part, Robyn was realistic, and having struggled in early weeks of moving to Winnipeg to find suitable employment related to his area of expertise and his dreams, he quickly made his peace with the next best option, the pursuit of money. He commented on his decisions,

> I went to an agency for job preparation, got cracking, and now my job pays bills, I got my own apartment, car, and paid off all my debt.

Even when his self-esteem took a hit, he reminded himself that he was used to working in all jobs at all levels, and that any job is a dignified one here in Canada; only self- satisfaction is a problem.

By pursuing such a path, he knew that he could pay off all his debts and take care of his immediate family here in Canada, and the extended one in his home country. Being a true professional, he brought the best of his responsible, motivated and hard-working self to his work as a health care aide, and managed to make himself an indispensable employee, getting twice the number of hours others got, as well as good opportunities to move up the company ladder.

Networking

Networking can be described as a way to get to know others in one's field of work or occupation as it helps provide exposure to how a certain area of work or profession is set up in Canada. As a potential new entrant to a particular occupation in the new local context, it is really important to "see" what things look like; how in fact they are different from what an individual already knows of a particular field; and what the expectations might be from a new employee joining this field of work in Canada. Moreover, the old adage "in Canada, it's who you know not who you are, or what you know" is well known, and it is true not just in this geographical context but in other part of the world. It becomes a stark truth when spoken of here because it is being said in the case of "newcomers" who statistically comprise a bulk of the work force, and being new they are the ones who have no previously established networks. This lack of social capital gets further compounded when other forms of discimination get added on based on their racialised status.

Moreover, pursuing and utilizing networking opportunities often has a learning curve associated with it. Study participants observed that this activity was not widespread and part of

their previous job search experience in their home country, and as such did not come so naturally

to many individuals who migrate to Canada from cross cultural contexts. Workplace norms,

scenarios, and expectations vary based on geographical and cultural environments, and

networking, for example, is not insisted upon in other parts of the world as it is in Canada.

Certainly, as expressed by most study participants, and as was additionally clear from

experiences shared with me by my clients, networking is not as homogeneously established in an

international context as an essential prerequisite in the context of all occupations as it is in

Winnipeg and in other parts of Canada too.

Further, networking takes on more relevance here in Canada as it is perceived and

understood as a stepping stone to finding a professional mentoring opportunity, ultimately

leading to something more concrete, like employment, or at least a good reference. George &

Chaze (2009) discuss the role of networking as "self-created social capital" that can help

mobilize immigrant expertise to better align in a host country context. Repeatedly "practising

networking," as a soft-skills based activity built-in into several workplace-training programs,

helps newcomers prepare themselves better, learning to present themselves to employers and

hiring managers appropriately. Perez noted:

> I understand now that as an employee setting myself up for success it is all about being
> well prepared in terms of knowing the context as fully as possible, having a realistic sense
> of anticipation regarding hard and soft skills that might be needed, and work towards
> developing those to attain the right workplace fit as that will help in working hard towards
> achieving my goals.

Orientation to networking, and working towards acquiring it, is often an uphill task for many. It

it is also a skill integrally rooted in an individual's abilities to get out of their comfort zone,

initiate conversations strangers and professionals. Besides, language proficiency, communication

skills, confidence, and openness to new learning and different ways of doing and being are important elements that also play a role.

Another important role networking plays is to help newcomers get to know individuals in influential positions. Building professional relationships is one of the important ways to foster social and cultural capital for a new entrant to a city or country. Employers, hiring managers, business owners, and other personnel in senior and middle management positions, can provide an overview, knowledge and better understanding regarding general and profession-specific information, as well as useful guidance and mentorship. GG noted,

> Now I understand that once they get to know you, and begin to recognise and appreciate your skills, they are more likely to be comfortable making recommendations to their networks. During my early years of job search in Canada, I had a negative view of networking as I always believed in being selected for my merit.

It took GG some time to understand the value of networking, and he noticed his own comfort levels with professional and personal communication rise once he began to feel more " himself" in an environment when he was meeting new people and also when he needed to make presentations at work.

Xue, (2008), refers to the role of individual abilities in the context of positive aspects of networking, and ways in which informal and network-based strategies can create employment pathways for individuals.Additionally, based on my practitioner experience and understanding, as well as views expressed by study participants, one of the the biggest advantages of networking being systematised and normalised is that individuals are encouraged to become more self-aware to recognise their strengths and weaknesses; and to develop skills based in communication so they feel confident in presenting themselves to employers and hiring managers; organising and structuring their thoughts and materials for everyday meetings, delivering work presentations, and other similar advantages accrue. In-depth career transition exploration and counselling as

well as employability skills training can go beyond and deeper by incorporating much more, like assisting people in really understanding the nuances of the new workplace systems, developing skills and attitudes through peer learning that are more likely to lead to successful integration; and other strategies for success that could almost be seen as needed life-skills in a new work environment.

Soft Skills, Employer Engagements and other Strategies for Learning the Workplace

Majority of visible minority professional migrants come from non-European contexts and less developed parts of the world, and they share several commonalities. One of these is the insistence on hard skills to the extent that when they struggle to find employment here in Canada, one of the first gaps employment support specialists make them aware of is the need for developing soft skills. The ability to network effectively too is one such soft skill, coming more easily to an individual who is extroverted and not shy and timid. For instance, as part of employment skills training, service providers support newcomer individuals in understanding what soft skills are, including the crucial role attitude plays, and this awareness is often enough for individuals to begin to work at developing them to help them achieve success.

Individuals with international training and experience who find it challenging to be great at "networking" bring other qualities to the table that may be equally or even more significant, leading to productivity and other desirable workplace goals. Both the individual and the system lose by focusing too rigidly, and single-mindedly, on certain specific abilities a person may have, (in this instance, networking), but there are similarly many others. It may be helpful if employers have both open and non-discriminatory mindsets, as well as processes in place, to evaluate job aspirants on grounds of merit, but also holistically and objectivity to achieve good outcomes, and a win-win scenario, for everyone.

Through employer engagement sessions newcomers are provided opportunities to interact with employers in a simulated setting, sometimes in a speed-dating format. These are safe spaces where it is possible to practice professional communication, receive feedback, learn from it and make improvements. One of the strengths of this environment is that the employers who participate in such events are truly committed to these goals and activities, and believe in talents, expertise, and experience newcomers bring to the table. So they too are happy to support them through volunteering their time, support and mentorship through such events.

Through such structured networking events, chances are that someone or other, sooner or later, will discover the skills and value an individual will bring to a task or job. There is no denying that building relationships is a crucial part of fostering social capital, and that there are many ways to do it, even internalising it as a soft skill based activity that a person learns to make a part of who they are. Unfortunately, many other things need to be in place for this to happen and come together. For some individuals, meeting and talking with others, at a personal or a professional level, comes more naturally and effortlessly than it does for others.

Lack of Canadian Education and Canadian Experience as Barriers

Among the professionals interviewed, the repeated messaging they received from most sources they came across was that they would need to start over, go back to school and re-train if they wanted to work in their area of expertise, and that unless they procured a Canadian degree they had no chance of making it here. Relatives, friends and community members already settled here, as well as many settlement service providers to whom they went to seek employment assistance, reiterated that their education and training were not good enough for the Canadian workplace.

The above discussion applies particularly to the economic class of immigrants who are already highly qualified, often at well-equipped international centres of excellence. They have received a fair amount of training in their area of expertise, and by and large have work experience to be able to meet the needs of the Canadian labour market. Further, as this study is based in Manitoba, specifically Winnipeg, it is informed primarily by the settlement experiences of research participants who migrated to this province. The literature review however, examines this aspect from a broader perspective too. It is true that at an early stage of moving to a new country, individuals do not have a detailed understanding of the context or frame of reference to make sense of the nuances of what the disparaging messages they receive from employers (or others) imply. In some cases it may be true that the individual will benefit greatly in the long term by going back to school and indeed starting over. Sometimes it is simply a lack of confidence and a feeling of inadequacy a person can feel being thrown into an alien environment where things are set up differently and work in ways that they don't understand.

Going back to school to re-train in their previous field or a new one, could give them opportunities to learn from scratch how things work in a new cultural and professional context. In the self-perception of participants, they believed that the experience of pursuing educational opportunities in Canada made them feel more confident, and they felt like insiders to the system. Age, personality, family circumstances, and specific occupational training individuals bring with them can all be important factors that will help determine the education-related trajectory they should follow through. Oftentimes, professional immigrants are keen to change occupational tracks, choosing to transition to related or completely different areas of work because they view their move to Canada as a wonderful opportunity to learn and do things they did not do before. However, it takes on problematic overtones when such a course gets recommended to individuals

as a natural and default one as it uses up their financial resources without necessarily connecting them to meaningful long term employment opportunities.

Additionally, as the literature around employer biases (Block, 2012; Blustein et al, 2013; Li & Li, 2008) demonstrates, the default aspiration and expectation on the part of an employer, to hire a "newcomer" who already has Canadian work experience, is problematic. Such messages confirm over and over that although Canada needs a highly skilled workforce to meet labour market needs and manage skill-shortages, migrants with high levels of training are not good enough (*Career Advancement in Corporate Canada,* 2007; Flynn & Bauder, 2013; Javdani, et al.; *Matching Economic Migration with Labour Market Needs*, 2014*)*. This can be confusing as well as discouraging and frustrating, particularly for the economic class of immigrants who have been provided the rights of permanent residency based on the point system, which should have already taken into consideration their field of work, as well as their education and training. Certainly, as this is the rationale upon which the point system is founded, this is a fair expectation on their part.

Melanie, one of the key informants, could not control her outrage while speaking about some of these mind-boggling and intertwined issues that she felt presented roadblocks to meaningful economic integration for immigrant professionals. She said,

> The government says they have no control on the labour market but actually they do, there's no sync between economic standpoint and market standpoint, underlying it all is severe discrimination, workplaces should have racism policies that have teeth.

One of the goals of this study is to understand with objectivity, depth, and nuance, ways in which individuals subjectively experience these challenges, how they get impacted by them, as well as ways in which they deal with them. It is equally significant to shine a light on the systemic

factors that contribute to creating these difficult scenarios, as the ultimate goal of the study is to think through strategies multiple stakeholders can employ to help alleviate these.

Systemic Barriers Become Policy Gaps

I examine below some of the systemic factors immigrant professionals encounter when they arrive in Canada, and these make them believe that their only option is to seek education as the first and only route, both to counteract these biases and to find easy employment settlement. One of these systemic factors is often based in an attitude on the part of employers and hiring personnel that devalues international educational credentials and work experience. Such a mindset could be a result of arrogance and a lack of understanding on the part of the receiving culture, an absence of mechanisms to evaluate international educational credentials, as well as disinterest on the part of systems and individuals to pay attention, and this again is based in a discriminatory and biased way of thinking.

It is true that all international educational centres are not "equal" or even comparable, and it is in everyone's interest to make sure that quality standards are maintained but this problem can be resolved if there were a robust way of assessing and categorising institutions. Accreditation validating programs like World Education Services (WES) do a lot of work to evaluate international credentials and educational qualifications.

However, an overall default kind of evaluation that other parts of the world do not provide at par education and training prevails, and this appears to be founded in negative perceptions that are discriminatory and racist, or at best Eurocentric. Whatever may be the reasons or provocations for the above assumptions, whether due to deliberate commission emergent from bias in policy, or simply omission because nobody paid enough attention, the final result is the

same and this is the devaluing of education and credentials international professionals bring with them.

As described by Ahmaed, one of the key informants with a wealth of experience in the non-profit sector as well as previous work with the government,

> On the part of licensing and regulating bodies, this attitude of "shutting the door behind me now that I'm safe and working in my field" is problematic and makes for an intractable situation.

Heema works in policy analysis in the labour market settlement context, and she finds it a serious issue that setting up frameworks and implementing them for streamlining credential recognition systems was so impossible,

> This topic is as alive now as it was two decades ago although in some progressive provinces there have been minor improvements.

Research participants shared their experiences of being encouraged, oftentimes even pressured, by family, and friends who arrived in Canada at another time, to get a Canadian degree to enhance their employment opportunities in Canada. Service providers too provided them the same advice, they said. This may well be true but when such advice is offered generally and without consideration of specifics, either of an individual's current training, or their professional aspirations, or existing job opportunities, it becomes problematic. For one, it conveys a strong message that previously acquired international education does not count and so newcomers must start from scratch. The other problem is that it is not necessarily accurate and can sideline focused job search efforts. It also leads to expereince a sense of inadequacy and diminished self-confidence.

Given the above context as it relates to highly educated newcomers, pushing education and training down at large upon newcomer individuals who are still struggling to understand how things work in this new environment while working a transitional job to put food on the table

seems suspicious and fraudulent as well as unjust. And when the advice to take this route comes from certified sources, funded through settlement dollars where official partnerships exist with educational centres, there is little option but to conclude that things are deliberately set up by the state in this manner to make money through immigration. It begins to seem then like a money-grab that burns an unnecessary hole in the pockets of newcomers who can ill afford it.

In my role as front line service provider, and researcher, witnessing internationally educated professionals face insurmountable barriers despite being highly motivated critical thinkers, and demonstrating serious engagement to work hard and contribute to the Canadian economy, it was evident that something critical is wrong with credential assessing structures and processes. If only the system did not have such a territorial and closed door approach it would be more of a win-win situation for all parties. Enough literature in this field provides evidence of financial gains that would accrue for the state from taxes as a result of return on investment if systemic barriers were to be eliminated and newcomers got into the labour market in a timely manner. The literature review section discusses this issue in some detail, citing several sources.

In the context of already well qualified professionals pursuing educational opportunities in order to hasten and optimise their careers, if financial calculations were made to assess loss and gain, it would be clear that enough newcomer professionals actually choose to go back to school as they find the pursuit of education in Canada to be one of the most meaningful paths to attain optimal integration, and through that achieve social capital, and this would put them (and their future generations) on the path to achieve success in the long term.

The participants I interviewed or did focus groups with voiced their expectations in the context of what their work meant to them or why they valued it with complexity and in life defining terms. In general, barring exceptions, for such a view or value to be actualised in the

work environment an individual must feel well integrated and understand the system like an insider, and often education makes this possible.

The point I make through the above analysis is that such individuals may still seek a Canadian education of their own volition, and they may do so a bit later after developing better clarity regarding the path they now know for certain they want to walk on. This would be a win-win scenario for all as individuals would upgrade their education to align well with an in-depth understanding of their current professional goals.

Sense of Belonging: How Important is it for Integration?

Integration, feeling well connected as part of a network, and self-identifying as an equal and contributing member of the society where an individual tries to make a home for themselves and their families, is critical to feeling a sense of belonging. As interview data in this study indicates, a large part of feeling a sense of integration and belonging is about being gainfully employed, and having the self-perception of being a contributing member of society with the ability to be financially secure to meet personal and professional needs, including needs of the family. It's also about achieving a comfort level where you can be yourself, feeling free to pursue your dreams, able to choose what you wish to do, and empowered to make a life for yourself and your family in the ways you decide works best. For myself, when I feel like I don't belong, it is a self-perception of being out of place, feeling self-conscious or diffident, and that compromises my ability to self- actualise on my goals, and be unable to contribute the best of myself to the world around me. These thoughts and emotions have the potential to impact me negatively and are detrimental to my abilities to access available opportunities. These for me are all signs suggestive of a lack of feeling at home in my surroundings, another way to describe integration.

Attitude as the Key to Success

Several factors impact the settlement journey, shaping the experience as primarily positive or negative for individuals. One of these that may be controlled and managed to some extent by individuals themselves could be encapsulated under attitude. Based on my front line work with newcomers, professionals or otherwise, I can say it can also be a formative factor in its ability to impact how people perceive their own journey of adaptation in the host culture.

As an example, Simain, struggling to make sense of the roller coaster of scenarios and emotions she was experiencing in her first few months of settlement and job search in Winnipeg, shared the following words,

> And now I know—best way to live with it is to be positive.
> If you look at it day by day, you will be depressed, not happy. If positive, you get by the day and don't feel depressed.

Meme and Zhang laughed and joked about the hundreds of resumes they sent out every day, saying this task was the job they had found for themselves in Canada. They had both been dealing with frustration and disappointment, and had seen others part of the same cohort struggle with disillusionments and regret too. They were seeking support systems that would help them prepare for the long haul this job search journey might end up being. Zhang shared,

> It seems that individuals who have positive, open and flexible attitudes have much better likelihood of perceiving and accessing new opportunities. They go out and proactively make contacts, seek out mentors, and then someone shares some information that takes them to the next level.

Meme agreed with him saying,

Yes! it almost seems like a treasure hunt here, let's follow the clues!

In relation to specific employment and economic-integration- related challenges then, especially for IEPs whose aspirations are often complex, and solutions they're seeking neither linear or straightforward, the role of attitude is important. In fact, speaking as a practitioner, and based on

conversations with colleagues working in the settlement sector, we have seen it as the deal breaker that impacts settlement outcomes. Individuals who were able to pursue opportunities with an open mind and a positive mindset usually did better, and certainly their well-being was better sustained even when their success was not assured. However, as this was not one of the research questions, detailed discussion on this topic is not undertaken in this study but could be valid area of enquiry in the future.

Extrapolating from data presented so far in this study, research participants who had strong networks of family and friends, and those more easily able to forge relationships through informal networks and by finding membership in professional communities perceived their job search experience as positive, and spoke of it as such.

One of the most intense examples of acculturative stress, as described by Berry (1970), who replaced an earlier concept "culture shock" or "anxiety that results from losing familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse" (Oberg, 1954, p.1), emerges for professional immigrants through employment related stressors they encounter. Berry and Anis (1974) claim that immigrants generally are susceptible to hassles and tensions emanating from the acculturation process and have termed this phenomenon as acculturative stress. In a study on acculturative stress and Amerasian refugees, Nwadiora and McAdoo (1996) refer to the process as "psychological stress due the cultural differences found between a host culture and an incoming culture marked by reduction in the physical and mental status of individual groups undergoing acculturation" (p. 477). The more radical and extreme the differences between the host culture and the newcomers, the more intense and forceful are the acculturative stresses (Cox, 1985).

Understanding resilience as a counterpoint to adaptive stress in the context of employment-related stressors for IEPs can be useful. Resilience is defined as a "dynamic process," and not a

fixed personality trait (Hooberman, Rosenfeld, Rasmussen & keller, 2010, p.577). Shaped by "internal and external predictors," (Taormina, 2015, p.36), it is a kind of skill development process that responds to external events and internal resources and enhances an individual's coping mechanisms. As described by study participants, among external factors that they found enabling or disempowering, (considering individual variations), were the housing supports and social networks of family and friends they could rely on, as well as attitudes they encountered among employers and the host community at large. Where the above variables were positive, and individuals found acceptance and validation through the environment in which they were situated, resiliency led to better social adaptation and cultural integration. Some individual traits upon which resilience for individuals was predicated were their personal abilities, like goal setting; good understanding of the labour market context and a realistic sense of their own challenges; taking initiative to learn and accept norms of the host culture; a positive attitude and the state of their mental health; and their determination to pursue their professional aspirations.

Practitioner Note

As an aside, and to further corroborate the above finding, as part of my practitioner position, I was asked to perform the role of observer and supervisor for a group counseling program that we ran at the agency where I was employed, in partnership with the university. This was an eight week program to be completed in three-hour weekly sessions that were held in the evening. It was conducted by two graduate students taking a group counseling class at the university, and was part of their practicum requirement. Utilising guided questions, and peer learning, the focus during these sessions was to explore the experiential component of settlement as related to employment and economic integration for internationally educated migrants. It was targeted towards building better insight of the experiences of migrant professionals, the objective

being to facilitate capacity building using processes of peer learning and group counseling. The findings and learning from this project were similar to the one described above, the need for psychological supports clearly expressed. Participants forcefully requested for other similar group sessions where relationships could be fostered so individuals could freely express themselves in a safe space while learning from each other's experiences in a workplace setting. They felt that such an opportunity to share and process their experiences in a support group setting would help them psychologically, and they would learn better coping strategies from each other that would enhance their adaptive abilties, as well as build their resiliency and sense of agency.

However, the argument made above, for creating frameworks through theory and praxis where capacity building is targeted, resiliency developed, and adaptive attitudes actualised, cannot be used to let policy makers off the hook. Nor should excuses be made for the absence of thoughtful, robust and responsive systems that recognise and value international education; or for regulatory and licensing bodies that keep individuals hanging on a fragile rope, losing their expertise (deskilling) and self-esteem while they wait. For individuals keen to fulfil their life dreams through pursuit of their professional aspirations in their field of training and expertise, there should be processes in place that operate in a smooth, supportive and enabling manner.

There are numerous examples of settlement that demonstrate how well IEPs do once they understand the new employment environment here in Canada, often finding out that as time goes on and they begin to know it better, it really isn't that much different from what they knew before. Structural barriers on the other hand, like credentialing and licensing processes, and discriminatory and racist assumptions on the part of employers, present persistent roadblocks. It is for policy makers to ensure that processes are accountable and that legislation has teeth that

can help smoothen employment settlement and integration for professionals and skilled

immigrants so that the promise of migration is upheld.

Summarising Findings

This chapter pulls together the auto-ethnographic element of the research through narrating

personal story while exploring similar scenarios and issues as they manifest in participant stories.

One of the learnings this discussion highlights is that policies and processes that make migration

and settlement operational for professional migrants should be more "predictable, reliable and

accountable" and at the same time the rights of individuals to choose the trajectory of their

settlement must be respected, and viewed with nuance. Together, these factors can support

immigrant professionals in achieving optimum economic integration.

Additionally, it is helpful also to acknowledge and affirm that individuals must inculcate

the right attitude towards job search, employing positive strategies to manage disappointments

and success in the employment integration journey as these are factors upon which they can

exercise control. However, the above argument cannot be used to let policy makers and other

stakeholders like licencing bodies and employers off the hook for their important share of

responsibility. Systems must be streamlined and processes strengthened so that migrant

individuals can experience a seamless transition and achieve a holistic integration trajectory post

migration.

One of the successful strategies for alternative career pathways exploration and settlement

for skilled professionals that could be developed and enhanced would be one that is well

grounded in a "related occupation" paradigm. This can be pursued through considering

educational options, including bridging programs, based on matching skill shortages in the

labour market with the expertise and transferable skills of immigrants. It is not like this is not being done, but these processes can be enhanced and scaled, learning from best practices in other provinces and adapting them to regional needs and resources. Perhaps some of the settlement dollars invested in supporting this kind of strategy may be helpful to get groups of professionals up and running in different fields of work where there is a need for skilled individuals. High levels of motivation and ability to work hard are important transferable skills too, and channelizing these in positive directions through providing training to individuals in areas where jobs exist would be a win-win.

CHAPTER NINE: Concluding Reflections and Recommendations

> Creation of new knowledge requires intentional blending of systematic multi-modal data analysis with a mindful, reflexive engagement with the process of research and its impact on researcher and researched alike.
>
> (Four Arrows, aka Donald Trent Jacobs, p.100)

Based on interviews with the research participants, who have all experienced first-hand the challenges in migration and integration, this chapter begins by summarising key recommendations that would help eliminate some of the challenges, to achieve the objective of making employment integration and holistic settlement easier for immigrant professionals.

It is no surprise that as researchers, we stand on each other's shoulders as we build on each other's work. In all research, we seek to make connections that may not have been previously made, sharpening our understandings through seeking new knowledge and deepening our insights through reaching towards half-explored terrains. The section that follows the first highlights contributions of this research, pointing towards new directions that further research and practice could take.

Further, it is a good thing that inherent in the nature of most studies is that they end with a sense of unfinished business. It is also helpful to note that in the interests of retaining focus and depth, and keeping in view the goal of completion, a study can and often does exclude even what may have great signification to the particular topic being studied. This is where we begin to understand both what the limitations of a study may be, and how these could in the future be those gaps where other scholars and researchers would find spaces to build further, moving

intellectual and emotional conversations forward in new directions. The last section of this chapter highlights just these limitations.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant for a number of reasons. At this time, very little in-depth qualitative data is available that documents and narrativizes employment integration experiences of immigrant professionals in Winnipeg.

My research will address this gap by making stories and narratives of this cohort in their own voices heard. The nuanced and layered stories will add "thick description" to the statistics available (Esses et al., 2013) . At the theoretical level, this is significant as it will offer analytical approaches to study migration, particularly from the perspective of labor market integration, using approaches that bring together a conflict transformation and a social justice lens, ethnographic tools, including auto-ethnography; and theoretical and practical perspectives from the PACS field.

Moreover, as described in more detail in this section, this study explores the potential of bringing together a range of theoretical paradigms to study the topic of migration. The research also conceptualises economic integration related scenarios, in the case of economic migrants in Canada, as intractable conflicts, and proposes a specifically practice-based lens to consider solutions. In doing the above, this study is innovative and moves the conversation in interdisciplinary terrains of PACS and migration studies in new directions.

Suggestions and Recommendations

The first set of recommendations are related to programming and ways in which immigrant professionals can be better supported by the infrastructure, including practices and systems set up to facilitate their economic integration. Based on barriers faced due to lack of familiarity with employment related systems, lack of networks, and discriminatory practices like the hidden job market, one of the suggestions that came up repeatedly was provision of coordinated services on arrival that are better targeted to meet both job related and other needs of newcomers to the province, including easy access of information about them.

On the one hand such services are already available. However it would help if they were better streamlined; more widely propagated so more newcomers are aware of them and have information about them. The lack of stable and consistent funding is one of the systemic issues faced by the nonprofit sector, and this applies equally to settlement sector agencies, and this compromises staff time that could be allocated to serving more clients in need.

As mentioned above, this model of service provision already exists and has limitations not only because of inherent structural issues, but also because it is ultimately human resources that manage services. For this reason situations on the ground continue to remain uneven and will not always be totally satisfactory. In order to ensure and manage service provision efficiently and optimally it is critical that organizations and agencies set up processes and robust frameworks so goals of providing and efficient optimal settlement supports may be actualised.

Newcomers, among them those in the skilled and professional class, when on arrival in Canada, discover the world of support being offered to them for free by dedicated settlement sector staff, their expectations are raised further. In their comments and suggestions, they had unrealistic expectations of receiving information on a platter, job preparation training, and other

re-skilling and education options that can get them ready quickly for timely success. It is recommended that clear and direct information should be made accessible in a user-friendly format, widely available electronically, so skilled individuals while considering migration to Canada and located overseas, do not come to Canada with unrealistic expectations about their opportunities and associated timelines on meeting them on arrival here, and that they have resources that help them in their preparation.

The above applies also to those who do not prepare adequately pre-arrival, and agency staff can then support them early on, including through IRCC prepared resources that can be standardised and uniformly available across the board. Surely, local context will play an important role and provincial governance structures can step up to the plate in a responsive way, making information resources easily available through citizen engagement events and community collaborations. Clarity should be provided so complexities inherent in the nature of settlement can be better understood, especially as it relates to employment, bringing in speakers who have gone through the journey so both the problems issues, and potential for success can be highlighted.

Training and policy alone can hardly meet the complex and multiple needs of all, and so the role individuals themselves must play in their own success should be emphasised by service providers early on, including reiterating the significance of building their own capacities, and resiliency, while proactively seeking opportunities to reach out to others who can mentor them, and develop traits in themselves that can lead them towards success. It would be helpful if more out-of-the box thinking is applied to ways in which newcomers can be supported to initiate, develop, and pursue entrepreneurial possibilities as that will help expand the economy as well as

enhance availability of jobs. Examples of social innovation based pilot projects from other jurisdictions and provinces can be sought and tweaked to fit the local context.

Career pathways in related-occupation paradigms are being pursued and developed, streamlined and recommended, in other provinces, and Manitoba can learn from these best practices to develop our own. These must be based on robust labor market information and research that provides evidence about skill shortages, specific labor market needs, availability of information on occupation-based skill gaps, and transferable skills available through data on jobseekers and those who are currently under-employed. Both qualitative research and longitudinal quantitative and qualitative studies are needed in the Manitoba context that follow the employment integration journey of skilled migrants profession and sector-wise to track labour market entry and retention over time. This would help provide information regarding people's abilities and interests in pursuing opportunities in their pre-migration occupations. Collecting and crunching such data, combining it with more specific stories, would likely present a more realistic view of what is needed and would indicate directions policy makers should pursue.

Career transition counselling provided through settlement agencies can learn from research in paradigm shifting ideas and theories in career exploration practice that come from self-construction and life-design theories. In-sector courses and in-service learning programs can be designed and offered to staff so they feel better prepared to support newcomer clients who are caught in the maelstrom of new market economies where precarious work is fast becoming the norm.

Funding should ensure regular staff time allotment for professional development activities for front line service providers who work directly to support clients. Need and respect for the

research and feedback loop is theoretically being valued in the migration field as a result of its application to policy and is being sought after by policy makers.

As a result research alliances between researchers, practitioners and policy makers in the settlement and integration sector exist, through projects like Metropolis[42] and Pathways to Prosperity, and enormous amounts of robust data and evidence is generated. However, it would be helpful if knowledge mobilization strategies could be better streamlined to reach front line staff more widely. Processes and funding models for this should be strengthened so system changes can be effected.

Further Recommendations

Based on earlier discussions on complexity theory, in Chapter Four, and reiterating multiplicity and interconnections between challenges faced by migrant professionals, the following issues are highlighted, and recommendations are made with the objective of targeting systems change.

Interconnected challenges are listed below: licensing structures and non-recognition of foreign credentials; added onto devaluing of international education and training; combined with discriminatory employer mindsets that ask for Canadian work experience; and financial resources needed for further education and licensing applications are some of them. All these requirements exist separately for individuals, and organizations and bodies responsible for problem solving are disconnected from each other. Ideally these structures should be so set up

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[42] See research, community, and policy alliances like the following: www.metropolis.net;
https://carleton.ca/metropolis/
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metropolis_Project; https://ceris.ca/; p2pcanada.ca/

that all required steps are connected and can happen through continuous and seamless processes. Co-ordinations and collaborations among these bodies and processes would make transitions much easier and stress-free for economic migrants.

Political will and institutionalised structures that believe in such a worldview and project can bring in solution focused paradigms within structures. It is also important to make more visible through research based evidence, quantitative and qualitative, as well as advocacy, both to the policy making world and in the mainstream, that there are huge economic benefits accruing from tax revenue when optimal and timely employment and integration become a norm for skilled migrants. This research and data is already widely available but it needs to be mainstreamed better so that it is more visible and accessible. These measures will also help provide a counterpoint to harmful anti-immigrant rhetoric pervasive in society that leads to negative consequences for everyone.

Employers and economic development based organizations like Chambers of Commerce are important stakeholders. However, the corporate world is often governed by the profit motive. Frameworks through which corporate responsibility gets delivered are often skeletal and end up being mere token gesticulating while more is needed. For this to be actualised substantively, employer education and engagement must be enhanced and this again can truly be realised through making more visible the value of new, innovative and problem-solving perspectives and strategies "outsiders" (immigrants) can bring to the table. More public-private partnerships to facilitate these collaborations will be helpful.

The world of social innovation can provide thought experiments, creative tools and innovative strategies both to understand "wicked" problems like this one and make suggestions that target solution building. Johal (2016) maps the "social architecture" of the new labour

market (precarious, contractual, part time, and digitalised) and the need to develop new tools to re-assess and conduct skills training in this new eco-system to be better prepared to meet upcoming challenges. Focusing on transferable skills rather than job matching seems a better way to achieve positive outcomes and productivity goals thereby ensuring more successful transitions for individuals. Cukier & Gagnon, (2017) and (Buchanan, 1992) explore frameworks, thought experiments, and practice based models to understand Social Innovation (SI). There are alignments at multiple levels between SI and ways it can be employed for workforce development, particularly in relation to career transition needs.

Taking lessons from systems theory formulations, it is recommended that robust follow-ups be made an integral part of systemic processes and structures be strengthened, so the many pieces are coordinated and in sync. This is only possible through using multi-sectoral approaches. Only if that happens would human talent, specially recruited from overseas to benefit the Canadian economy, will not be lost or fall through the cracks through being unemployed or underemployed.

Moreover, while coordinated processes and robust structures must be put in place, being both streamlined and accountable, they must also in equal part be nimble and responsive as ground realities, needs and availability of human and infrastructure resources (including funding) are factors that will always be unstable and dynamic, not fixed. For example, projections about the future, in terms of sector-wise job shortages, and available skills to match them, can never be completely accurate due to factors like policy changes and time lags within the immigration process, abilities of individuals to fill the gaps just as and when needed, the role played by employer biases, and other relevant considerations.

Contributions of the Study and Suggestions for Further Research

The most significant and innovative contributions of this study are that this research moves the interdisciplinary field of conflict transformation and peacebuilding in new theoretical, methodological and practise-based directions by bringing together the worlds of economic migration, career transition and career development, and auto-ethnography.

The linkages between conflict transformation, complexity theory, and systems analysis are understudied so far. The burgeoning field of migration will continue to grow as it is a field relevant in the context of one of the most pressing mainstream world issues today. The phenomenon of migration and issues within it being conceptualised through the lens of social conflict will be a meaningful opportunity for these disciplines to align with and learn from each other. With application of perspectives and practitioner tools from PACS, peace-building and social justice to the field of migration, new avenues and paradigms of research, analysis and praxis are likely to open.

Within migration, career development practice and career transition counseling are growing fields of practice and research, and the application of life-design principles and self-construction will add more dimensions, depth and participatory tools into the mix.

Further, the life-blood flowing through this study is its practice-based situated-ness, and as such the objective is to view any insights it produces through the lens of implications it might have for developing more targeted programs and policy improvements in immigration and settlement. The hope is that lessons learned from listening to participant voices and data analysis will help create thought and practice paradigms that can better address intractable barriers faced by economic migrants, and that some critical gaps in immigration and settlement policy can be successfully addressed.

The field of social innovation research (Buchanan, 1992; Cukier & Gagnon, 2017) is an exciting new interdisciplinary field that incorporates many of the key ideas, and principles, tools and practices discussed in this research. Besides, SI too is very practice based and rich in thinking about and creating frameworks and prototypes that are targeted to address intersectional and complex problems. As applied to migration studies it would provide interesting and useful paradigms for experimental explorations, including work that helps strengthen the feedback loop between theory and practice. Interdisciplinary alignments between SI and conflict transformation too are worth exploring as the focus in both is on achieving transformative social change. The vision and avenues for ally-building, stakeholder collaborations, and collective impact; as well as relationality and reflexive practices are other common interests these fields share.

Limitations of the Study

One of the limitations of this study is that it was conducted in the context of Winnipeg only. Since this research takes a systems view, examining barriers and solutions from a three-tier perspective, including utilising an auto-ethnographic lens, it was not possible to go beyond the precincts of the urban context as localised in the geographical bounds of the city of Winnipeg. A similar study conducted to examine ground realities in other parts of the province would be insightful. Additionally, it could provide a comparative lens that additionally studies an urban-rural variable.

My research included several variables, for example, age, gender, ethnicity, occupational and geographical location, but these were used simply as identity-markers in order to recruit a purposive sample which would provide a balanced cross-section. As this study is broad based, taking a holistic view of challenges with the objective of providing theoretical frames for

understanding them, and proposing some solutions, it does not study these variables separately to conduct an in-depth intersectional analysis.

Follow-up studies could be done to assess the impact of these identifiers, including using a comparative lens between them. Much ongoing conversation goes on that points to skill shortages in the labour market, and at the same time there is highly trained available talent that is unemployed or underemployed. There should be processes, especially in the tech age we live in, that can create ways and means to bridge this gap.

Furthermore, a much more substantive study can be conducted that gathers and analyses data on the experiences and perspectives of key informants. Although attempt was made to include most stakeholders, since this is a big and significant field, there are more sites and constituencies from which stakeholders and partners can be solicited, and their numbers too can be expanded.

In terms of methodology, I found through my engagement with this research that the world of auto-ethnographic research is vast and varied, and in the last few years it has been continually growing in creative ways and meaningful directions. As the scope of my study was multi-level, and in addition I used a practitioner lens too, it was not possible to do an exhaustive and in-depth assessment of this aspect. Researchers interested in these areas and topics, especially if they are keen on exploring practice-based perspectives within PACS, may find these directions valuable.

Summarising the Conclusion

This chapter offers concluding remarks that summarise issues that emerged from discussions undertaken in previous chapters. It makes suggestions for problem-solving and

recommendations that will be helpful for programming and policy that point towards creating

solutions. This section also highlights areas for future research and practice, with the objective of

building bridges between several disciplines through bringing them in conversation with each

other. All these areas of research and practice- PACS, auto-ethnography and migration studies-

share common ground that manifests in the coming together of storytelling, reflexivity, research

positionality, situated-ness perspectives in research, going beyond positivist forms of discourse

to have a world view rich in nuance and contingency. In doing the above, the study makes a

significant contribution to expanding theory and practice in the field of Peace and Conflict

Studies.

CHAPTER TEN: A Post-script

A Tribute to Lederach's *The Moral Imagination*: A Personal Case-study

This last vignette, in italics below, is an ode to serendipity, and a shout-out to my PhD journey. It was written during the time I was writing this dissertation when I suffered from writing block as I often did, and writing would come to me but not in dissertation form. On one of those occasions when I agreed to succumb to my inner creative cravings, allowing the writing to choose its own favourite ways to be, the piece that follows is what appeared. I decided to simply learn to be grateful for the gift.

I share it and pick this spot in my dissertation to append it for the following reasons. One, it is part of the messiness of process that as a researcher I have learnt to respect and honor. Particularly as part of ethnographic research methods, including auto-ethnography, I believe a researcher's field-notes tell an important back story.

Two, just as my research participants shared their stories with me, I share mine back with them. This is part of indigenous tradition, and having found a home in Winnipeg and experienced resonances between the cultures I carried inside of me as an immigrant, and cultures and practices that surrounded me in my new home, I believe I must acknowledge the connection I feel deeply. Also, just like my research participants trusted in me, seeing that sharing their stories with me was important, I believe too that both my story and my voice must be heard, and while somewhat personal, I must have courage to make my reader participate in this exchange.

Three, sharing this story helps me acknowledge Lederach's critical message because it resonates with the peacebuilder that lives inside me. As a practitioner this message is one that fuels my imagination with energy and brings me passionate courage. Also, I see Lederach's moral imagination as reflected in his book, as being integral to the world of peacebuilding.

Finally, the vignette below that serves the purpose of bookending this research, is a story of migration and of identity making. As a newcomer to Canada I too made decisions without really knowing how they might define me years later. I have told little autobiographical stories throughout the study, planting and interspersing them in between stories of my participants, and the narrative of my research. I have done this to make "real" on the ground, as it were, the idea of auto-ethnography.

Last but not the Least

John Paul Lederach, for those not so familiar with the field of Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding, is a pioneer and trailblazer in Peace Studies, and among his many books, The Moral Imagination (2005), is a resonant discussion about the coming together of story, serendipity, and the moral imagination as necessary pieces in the complex jigsaw world of conflict resolution. As readers we are aware that we must see ourselves as truly blessed when a certain piece of writing seeks us out at that exact moment in our lives when we feel most ready to receive it. I do believe in fate, and so I believe that it was meant to be when I had such a serendipitous encounter with The Moral Imagination. As part of a casual conversation, a friend mentioned she was reading this book for a course, and the topic of that particular seminar class interested me. In the middle of an already crazy schedule I decided to do the extra reading so I could sit-in during that class. Well, long story short, I was hooked. The book triggered an epiphany, and urged me to explore some of my own confusions and dilemmas.

I will seek the permission of my patient reader to indulge me through this last ramble… As this dissertation has already stated, and demonstrated, one of the intersectional identity frames within which my life's journey has been locked in the last few years is that of a graduate student

pursuing an interdisciplinary PhD program. It is my second doctoral journey, no less, the first being in Literary Studies, I confess under my breath, almost ashamed and guilty. Further, my identity was additionally defined by my ABD (All But Dissertation) status for more years than considered reasonable by decision-making bodies like the Faculty of Graduate Studies. I couldn't agree more as this time-to-completion dragging on was no cake walk for me either! I felt the weight continuously, lugging for what seemed like a timeless forever, this endearing monkey on my back. On bad unproductive days when the burden of challenges outweighed the joys of achievement, I thought of my ongoing PhD project as my proverbial albatross.

"To be or not to be," agonised the bard of Avon,[43] and speaking through his Hamlet a few centuries ago, he spoke for all of us who live the human condition bit by bit every day. For me, more specifically I recall I asked often, to do or not to do: do I bring this ever so relentless PhD journey to its logical completion, arriving at destination degree, or quit before finish line? I asked this key question over and over, in the true spirit of 'she loves me, she loves me not!' (repeating the refrain as I plucked out each petal off the stem). Do I love it, do I hate it? I know not! On difficult days self-doubt assailed me. Do I have all it takes to rein in this monster so much bigger than myself? Indeed the dilemma was alive and well, and these dark clouds traveled with me some distance. There was some clearing though and the following rumination came during those quiet moments of reflection. I have shared my story using other personal snapshots earlier in this tome, but now, the kaleidoscope shifts one more time and another story frame is revealed.

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[43] Poetic name for William Shakespeare (1564-1616), well known English dramatist, playwright, poet, and actor whose place of birth and death was Stratford-upon-Avon. 'To be or not to be' are well-known opening words of a soliloquy by Hamlet, the main protagonist in Shakespeare's famous play Hamlet. Going beyond the play itself these words have taken on their signification as an iconic representation of the condition of essential human dilemma.

It seems now an impetuous and not-so-well-considered an act, when moving to Canada as part of a family move after working (and fully enjoying, I must add) a full-time career as an academic, and educator in another part of the world, I made this bold career move as a way to define my second professional innings. Friends aggressively forbade such an unlikely choice, well-wishers shook their heads with dismay, professional colleagues said, oh just write a book instead, family members refused to bless the move, but free-spirit-me was defiant. Who was anybody to discourage me, I reiterated to myself as I dismissed all advice. I was sure I wanted nothing to do with nay-sayers.

I enrolled in an interdisciplinary PhD program with social justice and potential-for-real-action-oriented engagement at its core. So, convinced was I at the time that this was for me, that this indeed was the integral "me" I was born to pursue, that I threw all caution to the winds. I felt liberated by the heavy student backpack, perfectly satisfied by my life as grad student second time around, sitting on the other side of the room again, soaking in new pedagogies, pursuing my dreams, and fully enjoying this gift of new experiences my fortunate life had brought me. Life couldn't get better, I thought to myself. Truth be told, it's been an amazing and variegated roller coaster ride, one that helped me find not just new ways of thinking, new tools and methodologies to learn about life, but also different ways of being me through finding new work-related directions, and countless intellectual and emotional friendships.

So much for pleasures, which we know well, in life always walk side by side holding hands with pain. Although this is not the norm, but it certainly could be in the nature of PhD programs

that they come to individuals who have had enriching full time previous careers [44] *as was the case with me.*

It is the aspiration to go back to school with the gift of experiential maturity that can sometimes be the lure, and it may be the luxury of finally finding time in one's life-odyssey to take stock of oneself in mid-life that may further urge an individual to push the bounds of self-discovery. I also thought I was taking a break from teaching, so, instead of educating others, I was circling back towards learning for myself the many things that I had no clue about. And all this at a stage in my adulthood when I knew I had more of the ingredients in me that would help me value and appreciate such a rare gift. Looking back, it may also have been the seductive power of pursuing intellectual challenges, seeking book-adventures and new ideas that made this such an attractive option. By the way, I also thought I was taking a wonderful break, pursuing guilty reading pleasures that so-far in my busy work life there was little in-built room for. Now, with better understanding I say, PhD a break? Hell, no! What was I thinking??

So I ask myself, what's the worst part of pursuing doctoral studies, for me at any rate, at this stage of my life? Perhaps others in a similar situation struggle with their own issues, and nurse their own grouses, which translate into reasons for procrastination for them. Without

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[44] For recently aired CBC Radio 1 documentary on this theme click link below (The Sunday Edition, Oct 12, 2018) https://www.cbc.ca/.../aren-t-you-too-old-for-that-the-late-life-plunge-into-a-phd-1.48..

It tells stories of other older adults like myself who took the plunge towards graduate school in their mature years, either after pursuing fulfilling previous careers, or in other cases, due to the life circumstances creating inabilities to chase their educational dreams in their youth.

I must add that in response to this documentary there were countless responses from listeners who shared stories of dissatisfaction and depression they suffered as a result of the ongoing timelessness in the nature of the PhD journey, leading them to quit and pursue their dreams in other ways. This story, containing such a heterogeneous sample, is pertinent when examining migration-related transitions too.

It is this sense of variety and a slice of life itself aspect (rather than a one-size-fits-all idea) that was remarkably present in my participant sample too. However, a common theme that ran through differing stories was that any post-migration decision individuals made to pursue their work and life-goals could potentially be either the right decision or a wrong one. And some causes for this are a sense of the unknown triggered by migration as well as urgency to make quick decisions due to high stakes involved and a lack of full knowledge regarding where any life-changing decisions might lead.

really getting into specifics for a moment, I think it's fair to point towards the time factor inherent in such a pursuit. How long a haul can this be? The problem is that for some, the bookends of this wonderful rites de passage, in other words, the time you start and when you finish, may have nothing to do with each other in terms of where you're at in the trajectory of your bigger life! And there's the aspect of life-stages too. Most friends and colleagues who were/still are a part of my previous-life are now relaxing, enjoying travels to exotic destinations as they have retirement pensions saved up. Many seem to have found new vocations in their grandchildren, living (seemingly) simple and stress-free lives reading them bedtime stories, or they may be busy just checking off long-left-undone items off their bucket list. As for me, I'm secretly hatching (and exploring) plans for my next gig, thinking of what new (work) adventures I can have till one day I cannot...

Certainly, while I wander in these dreamy pastures I do also worry about real-life obstacles like ageism, another barrier to employment that looms large, both for me and many of my participants, along with other challenges listed in this dissertation.

Grad school aspirants, I have no advice for you as your life story I'm sure is different from mine, and you must indeed live and learn life lessons on your own terms. But if you're considering embarking on such a journey, remember the difficulties that overlapping lives might cause. The PhD will live with you, hogging extra space, amidst your everyday joys and sorrows as you live and work, among your families, communities, and the world at large.

Besides, oftentimes I find it is the work we do outside PhD parameters that fuels fires that keeps the breath warm, adrenaline rushing, and the heart pulsating. And then, as life wears on, uncertainties of timelines; the aggressive nature of commitment this endeavour can demand with complete disregard for the passing on of seasons outside your window year after year; and all

this at the exclusion of everything else called life may be only some factors that make it seem like an arduous journey. A rigid and pre-arranged finished tome in a certain pre-designed format, called a dissertation, that we as grad students sign up to produce by way of finished product can seem stifling. Oftentimes we may not consider how we may change and evolve as human beings and need different forms of self-expression.

Lederach is playing his part in my inward tussle, and so he must re-enter the conversation at this point. With kind clarity, honesty and openness, he asked me a question in The Moral Imagination, *one of my favourite books ever. I must admit it was a question I had lost sight of, a question nearly buried under piles of data, the weight of deadlines, and the gravitas of having to string together, and coherently, hundreds of pages of academic writing. Lederach caught me unawares, as he asked, almost in a gentle whisper: 'why is it we do this work and what sustains us' (x)? His question helped another raise its ugly head inside of me: in dealing with the need to produce a well-researched finished product that must pass the rigour test, is the clock ticking away too fast for me, thereby pushing towards rigor mortis new ideas and transformative action plans that may inspire social change if implemented right away? Needless to add, if I continue to put my life on hold, and myself in abeyance, am I not missing out on meaningful opportunities that walk past me every day? If I don't permit myself to take a walk on this beautiful summer day, life will indeed pass me by. It will forget me as I sit at my desk trying to make it to the final point on the finish line. Worse, that point may not be the endgame at all but just another turning point in the winding road or worse still, yet another mirage.*

Lederach reasonably argues for the need to 'hold (myself) close to the actual messiness of ideas, and processes, and then from such a vantage point, speculate about the nature of our work and the lessons learned'(x). Now that makes sense as such a view is respectful of authenticity,

growth, and change. Such a statement rings true as it affirms the dynamism and dialectics inherent in life, and elementally during the pursuit of this research project too. It also acknowledges that our potential for self-actualization and our needs, both personal and professional, are contingent on other life-factors because these criss-cross in their intersectionality. In being so, they are subject to change not only because we cannot always decide who we will become when we "grow up," but also because we have little control on the forces around us that impact this direction in which we grow. And so the forms in which our aspirations and goals may truly be realised and made authentic are bound to take new shapes. In fact, Lederach's words in the above statement resonate simply because they acknowledge and legitimate everyday "messiness" at the heart of living as the only way to be. He places this awareness of messy raw process front and centre on the table and in our faces so we have no choice but to deal with it.

And when we too allow ourselves to deal with our "messiness," reflecting with absolute honesty about the logic of having fractured, provisional, and dynamic lives, we may find it easier to question structures that straitjacket us. We may then be more willing to think about really legitimate and good reasons for deciding to stop the PhD journey before arriving at finish line if that's what we want to do. Maybe the ABD milestone is a really important destination in and of itself, or if we conceptualise the PhD journey as on a continuum, at least it's a valid point of arrival with no compromises that need be made to self-esteem. And then, if, as graduate students, some of us strugglers, though certainly not stragglers, are able to speak to this loud and clear, with good examples of what we do even as we end up not finding that holy grail, we may help move the ABD-point from a conversation tainted by deficit to one about strength, and then live it

proudly as a badge of honour. Maybe that may help take away some of the structural shame, stigma and inadequacy associated with ABD status.

In other words, if living with a PhD seems akin to being in a long relationship that has outlived its place in your life, maybe it's time to move on. If the relationship no longer provides you with sustenance you deserve, at the least find the courage to ask yourself why you're in it. I'm doing just that! Of late I have begun to tell myself: maybe the possibilities of finding that joy of nurture are endless, but they may not come to me while I chain myself to my desk.

Besides, it is a sticky problem and indeed a real challenge to straddle contrary spaces, to be both thinkers and doers simultaneously and at once, as many today in academia, and indeed outside of it, may wish to be. We are aware that the ranks of scholar-practitioners and pracademics are growing every day, and the feedback loop between the two is becoming more fluid, seamless, and meaningful, at least in some fields of study. The rise of inter-disciplinary studies in the last few years has much to do with this. This dialectical space is also being more valued and evidenced to be life-affirming for those who find their work and life's purpose in that dual space.

Policy makers are proactively seeking out engaged research, and academics and others who believe in it, as they need good data to write policies that may be more likely to affect systemic change. Where does data and empirical evidence live if not in people's lives, and so grassroots and community networks are of great interest to scholar-practitioners, as they are to academics and governments. However, in practical terms, given the pressures of a twenty four hour clock and other constraints, it is not always easy to multitask efficiently and be that trapeze-artist who doesn't fall off the wire. And aren't there dangers of something being lost in this everyday tug of war? In other words, what change do we need to see in the halls of

academia so they may be nimble and more responsive to work being done by pracademics? But that perhaps is stuff that belongs in another conversation.

It is certainly true that Lederach has caught me in my tracks. He has insisted that while I write this dissertation, and especially on days when I struggle with it, I pause and ask myself what it is that moves me forward, and what pulls me back. Also, he urges that I pay attention to the story, to the presence of serendipity, and of happenstance with which an idea can suddenly spring a surprise, and the need always for critical reflection in the work I do. His words nudge me on, albeit in a subtle manner, while they remind me too that as practitioners of conflict resolution we are also social theorists and philosophers who continuously must ask "root" questions. My musings reiterate to me that many roads can take me to the destination I want to get to but that above all I must believe in the work I do, and know what drives me onwards. Most significantly, it is less about the avatar I take on in my life's journey and more about being clear about the rationale I have for the work I do.

Well, thank you dear John Paul Lederach, for this opportunity for rumination, reflection, and rejuvenation. It is important to renew your vows I figure if they continue to mean something. And so I return to my PhD project, also one I lovingly call my dear pet albatross, reiterating once more my avowal of our love-hate relationship. But I also come back to a new page in my life, refreshed and centred once more, hoping the writing will come easier this time round! Don't stress, and write two hours every single day, at least that's what esteemed members of my committee said…

Personal Story Archives

APPENDIX: Research Questions

The following key concerns and questions guide this study

- How do visible minority immigrant professionals perceive and understand their experiences of finding meaningful employment and settlement in Winnipeg?

- What role does integration into the labor market play in their overall settlement and more holistic integration into Canadian society?

- What are the current meanings and implications of the term 'integration,' and does it accurately describe the vision, aspirations, and anticipated (as well as actual) experience of settlement for immigrant professionals in their host country?

- Based on the experiences and perceptions of the participants of this study, how inclusive are the structures and systems they had to navigate in order to achieve their professional and personal goals in Winnipeg and in Canada?

- Is it possible to distil from previous research, and these immigrant narratives, any patterns, or factors that we may be able to classify as possible determinants of success or failure?

- How useful, relevant, and appropriate is the terminology 'visible minority' in the current context of immigration, settlement, and integration, in present day Canada?

APPENDIX B: Interview Questions

The following questions were directed at migrant professionals who participated in this research study. Research Instrument 1(a) contains questions that were proposed in the ethics proposal. These were slightly modified to make them more appropriate to a conversation-based style of communication and this modified list of questions is presented below as Research Instrument 1(b):

Research Instrument 1(a)

- Could you please tell me about your experience of migrating to Canada and settling in Winnipeg? Any stories of challenges, triumphs, or surprises you would like to share.

- How has your experience of finding work been? What does your work mean (or meant) to you?

- How would you describe your experience of adjustment or integration into the Canadian system and society? Is there some other word you consider better (than 'integration') that describes how you feel?

- Do you feel any regrets about migrating to Canada and coming to Winnipeg?

- People sometimes use the term 'visible minority' to describe immigrants of colour. Do you think it applies to you? How do you feel about it?

- Anything else really important to you that you would like to add?

- Do you have any questions for me?

Research Instrument 1(b)

- Could you please tell me about your experience of migrating to Canada and settling in Winnipeg? Do you like it here and why/why not?

- What does (or did) your work mean to you? Would you say you are 'successful'? Do you recall a time in the past when you felt that you were successful, and how would you describe that, what did it feel like, smell like? What does it mean to you to be successful? One thing about your life here that you like and one thing you don't like. Does Winnipeg feel like home?

- Do you believe that you have achieved your goals? Would you say that you have 'integrated' into the Canadian system or would they use another word/term that describes your experience better?

- Did you receive any guidance or assistance with regard to job search and settlement when you came to Winnipeg? Could you please describe your experience of receiving any support?

- Would you go back to your country? Why/ why not?

- What does the term 'visible minority' mean to you? Do you think it describes you? Has it been used to describe you and how do you feel about it?

- Name three most pressing needs you see in this sector, and what suggestions do you have to meet them?

- Can you point to any important policy gaps that need fixing, or any new policy initiatives which would make a positive difference to experiences of economic and social integration/inclusion for professionals who come to Winnipeg?

- Anything you like to add, suggest, that should be included in this study?

APPENDIX C: Focus Group Questions

The following questions were used with migrant professionals to guide the data gathering process during focus groups:

- Can you describe your experience of going to work back at home? How does it feel being here doing the job search for your dream job?

- What kind of help did you find to help you settle both in your job and otherwise? Do you have any thoughts about what could have been in place that would have made your transition easier?

- Do you regret being here in Canada? (and a follow-up question) Now that you know the situation here, would you do it over again yourself? What would you advise somebody else who may be interested?

- What do you think about the term "visible minority"? Being named or referred to as visible minority, is it good, is it bad – any responses? Do you like it, do you not like it? (based on follow-up group conversation on this topic, regarding its role in providing employment equity, the following question was asked). From the perspective that its purpose is to give an advantage to newcomers (not to discriminate), do you think it is a good idea?

- Have you learnt any skills, or are you aware of any new learnings being in Canada which you think are special and unexpected, and feel empowering for you?

APPENDIX D: Interview Questions for Key Informants

The following questions were used to guide the interview process with the second group of research participants, i.e., key informants.

- How would you describe the experiences of immigration, settlement, and labour market integration in the case of immigrant professionals in Winnipeg?

- Would you say that Winnipeg is a welcoming and an inclusive city? If not, how do you think it can be made better?

- Do you think there are any barriers to economic success, and social cohesion for newcomers who come to this city? Could you please tell me about them.

- The terms "integration" and "visible minority" are often used in relation to newcomers. Do you see them as relevant and useful in the context of the work you do in this area?

- According to you, what are the most pressing needs in this sector, or policy gaps? What suggestions do you have to make things better?

- Anything else you feel is significant to such a study that you would like to add?

- Do you have any questions for me?

APPENDIX E: Ethics Protocol Submission Form

1. Summary of Project:

Purpose:

The proposed research explores the immigrant experience from the perspective of visible minority professionals and skilled workers who migrate to Canada and settle in Winnipeg. Broadly, the study aims to build better conceptual and empirical understanding around processes of immigration, settlement, and integration into Canadian society, as experienced by internationally educated professionals. In particular, it focuses upon the `lived experience' of individuals as they seek labour market integration through finding employment in their own professions, or closely allied occupations. The researcher seeks to learn from the data collected, to get a better sense of challenges and triumphs on this journey, and to insightfully understand how this experience impacts processes of holistic settlement in Canada, and personal well-being, for men and women who have been in the city for at least two years, and up to a maximum of ten years.

Methodology:

This is a multi-method qualitative study. Study participants in two categories-immigrant professionals, and key informants- will be invited to be part of the study.

In the case of the first category- immigrant professionals- sampling will be purposive, and differential variables based on occupation, gender, age, economic status and class, and duration of stay in Canada, will be considered so as to have an inclusive sample. Requests will be sent via

email, regular mail, telephonically, or verbally. Participants would be recruited through the settlement sector or service and community agencies, or individually using personal networks.

These participants, whose immigrant experiences are the subject of the study, will be recruited either through an email call that will be sent out through service providing agencies; community organizations; ethno-cultural bodies; and more broadly through word of mouth among individuals, as well as community networks, and the snowballing process.

(For example, I will send out the following email, to communicate with service providers who are on the listservs of immigrant serving community-based networks like NOWAN (Newcomers and MIRSSA (Manitoba Immigrant and Refugee Settlement Sector Association)

`I am writing to request your cooperation in the process of recruiting participants for a research project entitled "From Pre-Arrival to Citizenship: Visible Minority Immigrant professionals in Winnipeg: Issues, Processes, and Policy Making for Economic and Social Inclusion"

I am looking to collect data on the immigrant experience from the perspective of visible minority professionals and skilled workers who settle in Winnipeg. The study focuses upon the `lived experience' of internationally educated professionals as they seek job market success and integration through finding employment in their own or related occupations. All newcomers, both men and women, who have been in the city for at least two years, but no more than ten years, are welcome to participate in the study. If you know any individuals who fit in these categories, and are willing to contribute some time to my research, I would greatly appreciate you connecting me to them. If you would have other ideas about how I could go about this, your input is very welcome.'

Personalized recruitment request emails, using similar content, will be sent out to previous clients of the organization where I currently work, and to other immigrant professionals through other service provider agencies in the settlement sector; community organizations; ethno-cultural bodies; and more broadly through word of mouth among individuals, as well as community networks, and the snowballing process.

In-depth, semi structured interviews, of about 60 minutes duration, that are conversation based, and use guiding questions, will be conducted initially with each participant. Follow-up interviews with selected participants may be conducted depending on need to collect more specific and detailed data.

In addition, four focus groups, each with six to eight participants, will be conducted. It is intended that these be formed on the basis of gender in order to provide an environment that feels intimate, and free of constraint, both so that participants feel comfortable in expressing their views freely, and the gender differential for analysis can be considered. Data collected through these methods will be shared with participants individually to ascertain that they are comfortable with the ways their stories and voices have been presented

The second group of participants who will be invited to participate are key informants who play a role in the settlement, employment, and integration of new Canadians, for example, policy makers, service providers, employers, recruiters, and human resource personnel. Only interviews (not focus groups) will be held with this second group.

For both categories of participants, interviews will be transcribed, and read several times to get an accurate understanding of participants views in their own voices. They will be color coded to segregate and categorise themes before analysis. After completion of research, the typed

transcripts and any hand written field notes, and journals will be destroyed. It would be ideal if recordings, carrying no identifying details, could be preserved in the University Archives, or uploaded to a website for better access. Prior informed consent will be requested for this from the participants before the interviews and focus groups commence. Thus permission to facilitate this, and guidance to operationalize it, is being requested through this application.

Another aspect of the methodology used to gather data for this study is auto-ethnography, and this will be done through utilizing my researcher positionality, experience, and story of settlement, as a visible minority professional who moved to Winnipeg. The goal of using this method is to attain a layered and empathetic understanding of the experiences of study participants through rapport building. Moreover, I will interweave and intersperse my personal story into the narratives of those of my participants, in the form of `interludes', thus actualizing the auto-ethnographic method and process.

2. Research Instruments:

Research Instrument 1 will be used to interview immigrant professionals (group A) whose experiences of integration are the subject of this research. The facilitator/interviewer will ask the following open-ended questions to guide the interview process:

Research Instrument 1:

(a) Could you please tell me about your experience of migrating to Canada and settling in Winnipeg. Any stories of challenges, triumphs, or surprises you would like to share.

(b) How has your experience of finding work been? What does your work mean (or meant) to you?

(c) How would you describe your experience of adjustment or integration into the Canadian system and society? Is there some other word you consider better (than `integration') that describes how you feel?

(d) Do you feel any regrets about migrating to Canada and coming to Winnipeg?

(e) People sometimes use the term `visible minority' to describe immigrants of colour. Do you think it applies to you? How do you feel about it?

(f) Anything else really important to you that you would like to add?

(g) Do you have any questions for me?

Research Instrument 2 will be used to interview Group B participants (key informants). The interviewer will ask the following questions to guide the interview process:

Research Instrument 2:

(a) How would you describe the experiences of immigration, settlement, and labour market integration in the case of immigrant professionals in Winnipeg?

(b) Would you say that Winnipeg is a welcoming and an inclusive city? If not, how do you think it can be made better?

(c) Do you think there are any barriers to economic success, and social cohesion for newcomers who come to this city? Could you please tell me about them.

(d) The terms `integration' and `visible minority' are often used in relation to newcomers. Do you see them as relevant and useful in the context of the work you do in this area?

(e) According to you, what are the most pressing needs in this sector, or policy gaps? What suggestions do you have to make things better?

(f) Anything else you feel is significant to such a study that you would like to add?

(g) Do you have any questions for me?

No guiding questions for focus groups are provided at this stage as it is anticipated that interview responses will lead to further questions that will be explored more deeply during the interactive and dynamic focus group format. Each focus groups will be of two hour duration, and will have about 6 participants. The intention is to structure and separate the focus groups according to gender so as to include an analysis based on this unit of analysis, but it would also depend on availability of participants.

Research Instrument 3: The researcher is also one of the research instruments in a study like this that uses an auto-ethnographic approach. Please see the following section for more detail on this aspect.

3. Participants:

Participants in this study fall into three groups.

(1) 25-30 immigrant professionals belonging to the visible minority category, who have been in Winnipeg for at least two years and up to a maximum of ten years, will be interviewed. It is their experiences and voices that are the subject of this research. They can be professionals belonging to regulated or unregulated professions; economic class migrants, and those in the skilled workers category; or if they came through the Provincial Nominee or Refugee Programme but their qualifications locate them in the economic category. Spouses too would be eligible for participation in the study if they meet the economic or skilled class criteria.

(2) 10 (ten) key informants will be invited to participate and they would constitute policy makers at the municipal, provincial, and federal levels; service providers from the settlement sector; employers, and human resource professionals; personnel from Labour and Immigration, and committee members from the Local Immigrant Partnership.

(3) Auto-ethnography: I play the roles, both of researcher and participant in this research. My own story and trajectory of migration is one of the core aspects of this research, as is the need to self-story, narrativize, and document this experience, and include it in the study. Auto-ethnography by definition is a personal form of ethnography, and broadly it could range from the sociological to the poetic. Some of its central tenets that apply to this research are as follows: (a) researcher is a full member of the research group or setting, (b) visible as such a member in the researcher's published texts, and (c) committed to an analytic research agenda focused on improving theoretical understandings of broader social phenomena (Anderson, 2006, 375). For example, in *The Body Silent* (1987), Murphy likens his personal struggles with disability as an anthropological journey critical to his understanding both of himself and the socio-cultural-medico world in which his experiences of disease suddenly situate him. In line with the above view, it is my goal to locate, understand, and interpret experiential data with respect to my personal migration story in the broader and macro context of the literature review and the narratives that my participants will share with me. I too will respond to the same questions that I will ask my participants. The experiential (personal) data produced through such a process will be presented in a literary-creative-poetic format and will be inherent in the texture of the writing. Auto-ethnography in the context of my study will, through such a process, provide me with a lens, a methodology, and a dialogic, two-way process that will help to illuminate and interpret the social through delving reflexively into the personal. Particularly to study the cross cultural experience of migration the following are relevant: Denzin's description of auto-ethnography as `constituting an emancipatory tool, because the radical reflexivity of this methodology offers a challenging counter to ideological and political discourses' (2000), and the view that auto-

ethnography shifts the observer's gaze towards the self as a site for interpreting cultural experience.

4. Informed Consent:

See attached consent documents which will be printed on the letterhead of the Mauro Centre.

Procedure for obtaining informed consent:

i. Introduce self as student researcher from the University of Manitoba

ii. Explain the purpose of my research with internationally educated immigrant professionals who migrate to Canada and live in Winnipeg, to understand how their experiences of labour market integration impact the processes of holistic integration and inclusion, as well as their personal well-being.

iii. Give consent form and highlight main parts.

iv. Indicate that individuals may choose a pseudonym. They will be provided a list of names to choose from, or they may pick a name of their own choosing.

v. Request their email or mailing address so I can send them a summary of the findings.

vi. Ask individuals if they have any questions.

vii. Assure individuals that participation is voluntary and that they have the option to pull out of the study at any time without penalty by contacting me.

viii. Ask them to sign the form if they understand fully and agree.

ix. Give individuals personal copy of the consent form.

5. Deception:

There is no deception involved in any part of the study. I will inform the participants of my role as researcher and prior to conducting interviews request informed consent. If participants have been recruited through an organization, all additional consent protocols required by the specific organization will be adhered to. Please note that I work as Labour Market Specialist with one of the immigrant serving agencies in the city, and it is likely that some of my participants will be recruited through my employer, a not-for -profit organization in the settlement sector. However, among those, although I would have facilitated workshops with them it is unlikely that many will be my direct clients as the participant cohort in the study is limited by minimum two years duration of stay in Winnipeg, and currently my duration of employment with this organization is one year and three months. I expect the data collection to be complete in the next few months.

6. **Feedback/ Debriefing:**

   a. After each session, there will be debriefing with the participants to ensure that information is accurately gathered, clarifications are provided, and that interviewees feel comfortable with the process, and are able to express themselves as they choose.
   b. Participants will receive preliminary feedback immediately after their sessions to check for accuracy, as well as to provide the opportunity to clarify or expand upon points discussed.
   c. A summary of findings will be sent to participants within six months after the completion of field work.

7. **Risks and Benefits:**

1. Group A Participants: Immigrant professionals:

   a. The potential risks for participating in this study are that participation may be difficult or emotionally draining as individuals are likely to share their experiences of challenges faced in the processes of settlement, job search, and finding meaningful integration in relation to the Canadian workplace.

   b. Participation in the study may provide individuals a safe space and setting, and thus an opportunity, for memory work, leading to reflection, and learning from previous experiences, and this may be engaging and energising. It could help in moving an individual towards a realization about what s/he may be doing wrong in terms of attitude or action that may be proving to be an obstacle for them, or at least what they may want to do differently so as to achieve better outcomes.

   c. Further, sharing of personal, and similar, experiences by the researcher can help in building solidarity, and hope, leading to scheduling follow-up interviews or focus groups as the case may be. These follow-up conversations have the potential to be focused around solution-based thinking and action planning, leading to capacity building, and rediscovering one's own sources of strength and resiliency.

2. Group B Participants: Key Informants:

   a. The risks for participation are minimal. However, for some who have worked in the area for long and are engaged at a deeper emotional level, participation may be emotionally exhausting. Further, many key informants may be quite busy so it

may be inconvenient for them to make the time. They may be approached by other researchers on a regular basis and there may be fatigue related to that.

b. The benefit may be that this conversation is enriching, or insightful, and has new perspectives as it is with a researcher (myself) who is a part of the service providing sector, and also shares the profile of a recent immigrant professional, thus understanding issues from a personal standpoint. It may be an opportunity to brainstorm, leading to future networking and relationship building that can throw up different solution-based ways and possible problem solving alternatives for consideration.

Group C Participant: Myself, as participant-researcher-self:

The risks to myself are at an emotional level. However, I have friends, and family who are supportive. Further, the benefits far outweigh the risks as sharing experiences, and reflecting upon them in a group setting, or one-on –one with others who understand is an experience that is both cathartic, and supportive, and it has potential that leads to hope, solution based thinking, capacity building, and to action oriented paradigms in general.

8. **Anonymity or Confidentiality:**

i. As indicated above, although the participant identities will be known to the researcher, their real names, or any other signs that could identify them, will not be used in any part of the study. The consent and confidentiality form previously signed ensures that all identity related information will be kept strictly confidential. Pseudonyms will be used to identify interview participants, unless

any of them specifically choose to use their own name. Interview transcripts will not contain any identifiable information, and they will be kept password protected on my home computer.

ii. Another safeguard for confidentiality is having interviewees review their transcripts. They will have the option of removing any part of the interview that creates discomfort for them.

iii. The digital voice recorder that will contain the interview recordings will be in my personal home, and once the transcription is completed, the recordings will be erased. All other data collected, including field notes, will be destroyed once the research is completed. Within one year of completion of my written thesis all confidential information will be destroyed.

iv. However as indicated and requested earlier, if there are ways to preserve the digital interview recordings while adhering to anonymity and confidentiality protocols, the request for preserving this data as archival material is reiterated. Any guidance regarding processes and policies in this matter will be much appreciated.

9. **Compensation:**

I will offer to pay for coffee or a light meal for the first group of participants- immigrant professionals themselves- to thank them for their time. If we meet at a coffee shop to conduct the interview I will pay for what they order. Alternatively, if we meet in different circumstances, I will thank them for their time by giving a Tim Horton's 10 dollar gift card.

As for the key informant cohort, no remuneration will be provided, but I will give them a thank you card to express gratitude and appreciation for their time.

10. Dissemination:

The findings and results of this research, including excerpts from interviews, will be published in my doctoral thesis and may be included in books, scholarly journals, position papers, or other types of written material for academic and general circulation. I hope to speak about my findings at public lectures, conferences, or to the media. In addition, the objective is that, based on my research, suggestions and recommendations would be made that lead to reviewing current policies and programing, thus eliminating gaps highlighted by the study. The stories collected through the interview process may be the source material for a non-academic, more mainstream publication later on, as that format is more likely to be accessible outside the academic community. Any ways by which the research can be utilized in its application may be pursued.

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE: Internationally Educated Immigrant Professionals in Winnipeg (printed on University of Manitoba letterhead)

The following consent form was provided to the Ethics Board, not as part of the initial ethics application submission but later, after they reviewed the request. They sought clarification regarding questions that would be used to facilitate Focus Groups, and it was submitted in response to their request. Appendix C (above) contains questions that were used to facilitate Focus Groups.

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

Research Project Title: From Pre-Arrival to Citizenship: Visible Minority Immigrant Professionals in Winnipeg: Issues, Processes, and Policy- Making for Economic and Social Inclusion

Principal Investigator and contact information: Alka Kumar, PhD Candidate, Peace and Conflict Studies, Arthur V Mauro Centre for Peace and Justice, University of Manitoba. Contact information:

Research Supervisor (if applicable) and contact information: Dr Jessica Senehi, Associate Professor, Arthur V Mauro Centre for Peace and Justice, University of Manitoba

Purpose of Study: This study explores the immigrant experience from the perspective of those internationally educated professionals and skilled workers who belong to the visible minority group, and who settle in Winnipeg. The study seeks to understand their journey of immigration, settlement, and integration into Canadian society as experienced by them, including the process of finding employment in their own or closely related occupations.

Nature of Participation:

Focus Group: (please see clarification, item 4, also provided in my response to the feedback provided by Ethics Board) Participants in the focus groups will be immigrant professionals who are invited to take part in the study.

Participation in this study will involve your participation in a group format. If you have already participated in a personal interview with me then this will be a kind of follow up. It is entirely up to you to participate, refuse to answer any questions, or withdraw at any stage. Focus Groups will be formed of 6 participants belonging to your gender group. You may know the other participants or you may not. The duration of a focus group will be approximately 90 minutes. We will be meeting in a room in my office premises, for example, lunch room or training room, and this will be large enough to comfortably accommodate all focus group participants. This will be an opportunity to reflect on your experiences, and share them in a group setting, as well as learn from experiences others have had. You may find this experience rewarding and supportive. As in the case of the interview, the results will be shared with you. I will provide you with the transcript of your focus group participation by email or post, within three months. You can check this for accuracy, ask for clarifications, and request for any changes if you feel uncomfortable with anything in it.

Risks: The potential risks of participating in this study are that the researcher cannot guarantee confidentiality of data from other participants as it will be shared in a group setting. This research involvement may make you feel emotionally stressed as you will be sharing experiences of migration and settlement that may have been difficult or challenging. Please feel free to take your time, skip questions you do not feel comfortable responding to, or withdraw from the study anytime. However, I confirm that at all times, the researcher will be understanding and supportive. In case you need I will be able to refer you to appropriate counseling services.

Reasons to participate in the study, and benefits: Participation in the study may help in energising you as it will provide an opportunity to reflect upon, and share your 'lived experience' in a safe and supportive setting. The focus groups will help you connect with other professionals who have gone through experiences similar to yours, thereby growing your network, find mentors in each other, and continue these relationships that further build solidarity, and share information.

Recording: I request permission to record focus group discussions. I will use these recordings for research purposes only. I may also take hand written notes.

Confidentiality: The researcher cannot guarantee confidentiality from other participants as data will be shared in a group setting. However, at the start of the focus group we will go through a verbal confidentiality agreement confirming that information shared among group members will not be shared with outsiders, and all efforts will be made to create a respectful and safe space for sharing and maintaining confidentiality of all information.

Digital information and hard copy data will be stored in the researcher's home, on a password protected computer, and in a locked cabinet, respectively.

Transcripts will be destroyed after completion of research. Regarding digital recordings however, permission is being sought from the Ethics Board to preserve these in the archives for future research possibilities. However, even if this permission is granted, you are free to refuse consent regarding preserving the digital recording of your focus group, and your wishes will be respectfully adhered to, and your digital recordings duly destroyed.

This research, including excerpts from interviews, and focus groups, will be published in my doctoral thesis, and may be included in books, scholarly journals, and other publications. I may speak to individuals from the media, and at conferences, seminars, and other public events about my study and my findings.

Remuneration: Participants will be modestly compensated for contributing their time and attention to this study. You will be given a $10 gift card from Tim Horton's as a token of my thanks and appreciation.

Withdrawal: You may withdraw from this study by phone or email, or in person, any time, without fear of any negative consequences.

Debriefing: At the end of the focus group, we will review the researcher's notes to check accuracy and our understanding. We will also take time to debrief the session. The focus group transcripts will be returned in three months to receive your feedback. Please review within 30 days and send any changes or modifications to me at

If you would like me to omit any information, or quotes, please let me know. If I do not hear from you in 30 days, I will assume that you are fine with my using your focus group transcript in my thesis as is.

Dissemination: This research, including excerpts from the focus groups, will be published in my doctoral thesis, and may be included in books, scholarly journals, and other publications. I

may speak to individuals from the media, and at conferences, seminars, and other public events about my study and my findings.

Summary of results: A brief summary (1-3 pages) of results of this study will be sent to you within six months of completion of the data collection. (a) Please confirm if you would like a summary of the results of this study to be mailed to you. Pleas provide below your email address for this purpose: _____. (b) Your responses to questions asked in the focus group and interview will be audio- recorded. Do you consent to this? Yes/ No. (c) Participation in the study is entirely voluntary, and you can withdraw from the study anytime without any negative consequences.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and /or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

The University of Manitoba may look at your research records to see that the research is being done in a safe and proper way.

This research has been approved by the Joint Ethics Board of the University of Manitoba. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-

named persons or the Human Ethics Coordinator (HEC) at 474-7122. A copy of this consent

form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Please indicate the research component you are willing to participate in. Circle one

response per question:

I give permission to be interviewed   Yes   No

I will participate in a focus group   Yes   No

-------------------------------------Provide for Signatures as Required--------------------

Participant's Signature _____   Date _____

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