Working Together? Settlement Services and Immigrant Employment in Mid-Sized Canadian Cities

by

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation challenges the narrative of Canada as a welcoming and inclusive nation. Critical race theory and intersectional feminism provide a framework that assesses newcomer labour market experiences from the perspectives of two different stakeholder groups, immigrant professionals and service providers within the immigration settlement sector. The experiences of immigrant professionals, particularly people of colour, demonstrate a disproportionate risk of labour market exclusion. Sixty semi-structured interviews held in two mid-sized Canadian cities (Winnipeg and Edmonton) with immigrant professionals and settlement workers provided two different positions for understanding the barriers, challenges, opportunities and advantages that encompass the immigration journey. Upon settlement, while many immigrants do well and secure career-related employment, over half of immigrant participants in this study experienced significant labour market barriers, disappointed expectations and un- or under-employment. Additionally, settlement services provided valuable assistance, but not necessarily the type of anti-oppression advocacy or specialized supports that immigrant professionals required. This dissertation also acknowledges the inherent conflicts that result from colonial capitalism itself. I argue that while this colonial project must be disrupted, newcomers should be able to live fulfilling and socio-economically stable lives and enjoy meaningful career-related employment opportunities.

Four papers outline the experiences of immigrant professionals as they navigate the labour market. Paper one, *Teaching Somebody to Fish*, reviews the philosophies and strategies that settlement workers adhere to in their work with newcomer professionals. While I expected overwhelming dominance of neoliberal expectations for clients, there were complicated results that both reified neoliberal influences while simultaneously creating space for meaningful anti-

racist advocacy that questioned both immigration and settlement policies as well as the broader narrative of Canadian society as welcoming and inclusive. Paper two, *Should I Stay or Should I Go Home*, switches the focus to immigrant participants' disappointed pre- and post-arrival expectations and the plans or wish for return-migration. Paper three, *Perceptions of Settlement and Employment Challenges*, brings together the diverse perspectives of the two groups of participants to determine if both groups have similar understandings of labour market challenges. Paper four, *Working Together or Not*, synthesizes many of the previous themes that link these chapters together to determine if services are helpful, how they can be improved and interrogating narratives around a distinction between the "right" and "wrong" kinds of immigrants. In an Appendix, I critically reflect on the role of white anti-racist scholarship and activism within the colonial white supremacist context of Canada.

PREFACE

This dissertation adheres to the paper manuscript format specified by the Faculty of Graduate Studies and the Department of Sociology at the University of Alberta. Each substantive chapter is a standalone manuscript with interrelated, but independent, theoretical, and methodological sections. Since one of the chapters has already been published, it contains references. This list is also included in a consolidated references section at the end of the dissertation. The introductory and concluding chapters reiterate the overarching context, research objectives, methodology and contributions to the literature. In the introduction, I provide an in-depth overview of all the theoretical perspectives and bodies of literature relevant to my dissertation research. As such, there are sections of redundancy, particularly the theoretical and methodological sections in each manuscript, and this dissertation may be best utilized via engagement with the individual substantive chapters (Papers 1 – 4). At the time of defense, I had published the first paper in *Canadian Ethnic Studies* and it should be cited as follows:

> Thomas, J. (2015). "Teaching Somebody to Fish": Implications for Immigrant-Serving Organizations and Employment in Edmonton and Winnipeg. *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 47(1), 157-177.

My dissertation research received ethics approval from a University of Alberta Research Ethics Board under the Project Name, *Working Together? Settlement Services and Immigrant Employment in Mid-Sized Canadian Cities*, Pro00036176, January 7, 2013-January 6, 2014. Due to the timeframe during which fieldwork, analysis and the writing of this dissertation occurred, it is important to acknowledge the federal government change from the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada to the Liberal Party of Canada in late 2015. Additionally, I refer to Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) throughout this dissertation rather than Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). Put simply, while I acknowledge these broader political changes

and substantial adjustments in policy, future research should assess the impact of the 2015 federal election on immigration policy as this is beyond the scope of my project.

The Canadian state, for example, has a lot of work to do. It not only has to mediate and express the usual inequalities of a class and patriarchal society, but also the ones created through colonialism and racism which inflect class and patriarchy. It has to maintain some notions of individual rights and citizenship, along with a historically racialized hierarchy of labour importation and regulation and what David Theo Goldberg (1993) has called "racist culture."

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AINP – Alberta Immigrant Nominee Program

APEGA – Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Alberta

APEGM – Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Manitoba

CIC – Citizenship and Immigration Canada

CIIP – Canadian Immigrant Integration Program

CISSA-ACSEI – Canadian Immigrant Settlement Sector Alliance

CMIA – Canada-Manitoba Immigration Agreement

COA – Canadian Orientation Abroad

CRT – Critical Race Theory

ELJDs – Employer Liaisons and Job Developers

EMCN – Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers

ERIEC – Edmonton Region Immigrant Employment Council

HR – Human Resources

I/B/POC – Indigenous, Black and People of Colour

IRCC – Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada

ISOs – Immigrant-Serving Organizations

IQAS – International Qualifications Assessment Service

LGBTQ2S+ – Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, Two Spirit +

LSIC – Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada

MPNP – Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program

OHRC – Ontario Human Rights Commission

PAR – Participatory Action Research

PFC – Planning for Canada

UAE – United Arab Emirates

WELARC – Winnipeg English Language Assessment and Referral Centre

WSOS – Western Settlement Outcomes Survey

INTRODUCTION

Canada has an international reputation as an immigrant-welcoming nation with an extensive immigration program. Over the last several decades, however, immigration policy shifted under the influence of neoliberalism to emphasize economic immigrants and their successful labour market integration (Bragg and Wong, 2016; Chuong, 2015; Guo, 2015). This dissertation critically assesses the inclusive Canada narrative through qualitative sociological inquiry. I conducted semi-structured interviews with 60 immigrant professionals and settlement service providers in Winnipeg, Manitoba and Edmonton, Alberta. This project centers the experiences of immigrant professionals living in these two research sites to learn about immigrants' labour market experiences and the role of immigrant-serving organizations.

For the purposes of this study, I situate my dissertation research as a critique of neoliberal ideology which sets up a categorical binary distinguishing between the "right" immigrants, with acceptable professional credentials and experience, and the "wrong" immigrants who are "failing" to integrate into the labour market. Further, I align my research within the broader context of critical race theory, intersectionality and transnational feminism to emphasize how immigrants, particularly people of colour, face exclusion based on statuses such as race, sex, class and gender (Crenshaw, 1989; Mohanty, 1988; Thobani, 2015). Moreover, the experiences of immigrants are not monolithic, and vary considerably based on their incredibly diverse cultural, geographical and historical journeys. In other words, while I utilize the term "immigrant/newcomer professional" to refer to participants of this study, I am explicitly aware of how people's lives are shaped by race, sex, class, sexuality, gender, country of origin, ethnicity and other statuses. To acknowledge the risk of oversimplification, this study recognizes that

while experiences are diverse, there are overarching practices of exclusion based on these intersecting statuses. This systematic exclusion is based on settler-colonial white supremacy, and challenges the fundamental understanding of Canada as an immigrant-friendly nation (Razack, 2002; Razack, Smith and Thobani, 2010; Thobani, 2015). In other words, I recognize the importance of Canada as a white settler society established by Europeans on non-European soil at the expense, dispossession and nearly successful genocide of Indigenous Peoples (Razack, 2002, 1). Finally, this recognition includes the acknowledgment that white supremacy continues to operate in Canadian society resulting in systemic racial hierarchies that limit the opportunities of immigrant professionals who are people of colour and compounded by other potential sites of marginalization.

Canada has the reputation of being a welcoming destination for all newcomers, particularly for immigrant professionals who offer a solution to skilled-labour shortages. I argue this is a false narrative that creates a misperception of the reality of experience for immigrants once they arrive in the country. This fictitious portrayal perpetuates the assumptions that newcomer professionals will be able to continue their careers upon arrival to the country and that their skills are valued. Although many immigrant professionals are succeeding and doing quite well in Canada, many face significant labour market barriers such as discrimination and the devaluation of credentials and experience (Guo, 2015; Li, 2008; Reitz, Curtis and Elrick, 2014). Moreover, scholars have pointed out that a greater focus on economic outcomes as the primary measure of successful integration is problematic insofar as it reinforces the notion that immigrant families and refugees are not beneficial to Canadian society (Abu-Laban, 1998; Bragg and Wong, 2016). This study focuses on immigrant professionals due to the increasingly dominant

discourse that highly educated professionals are the ideal candidates for entry to the country. Moreover, it is important to determine how their stories play out once they arrive, if they integrate back into career-related employment, or if they face limited opportunity because their credentials and experiences are devalued. I focus on the labour market experiences of immigrant professionals because continued professional employment is a primary goal of this population, and furthermore, without financial stability it is very difficult to fully participate in Canadian society. I selected Winnipeg, Manitoba and Edmonton, Alberta as the two research sites for this study. These cities were selected partly for convenience as I lived in Edmonton during much of my doctoral program, but I am also originally from Winnipeg where I conducted my previous graduate research on the role of immigrant-serving organizations on the school-to-work transitions of newcomer youth (Thomas, 2009). It is crucial, however, to emphasize that mid-sized prairie cities have rising rates of immigrant settlement, but more research is needed to assess how newcomers interact with the immigrant-serving organizations available in mid-sized cities. This analysis is set against a backdrop that strongly acknowledges that the emphasis on "skilled" newcomers is inherently problematic and devalues family-class and refugee newcomers within the broader discussions and discourse of multiculturalism in Canada. This issue is beyond the scope of this current study, but nevertheless is highly important.

In this dissertation, I examine the experiences of "skilled" economic immigrants, why they choose to come to Canada, what their lived experiences are after arrival, the role of settlement services, and how immigrants and service providers interact to navigate a deeply inequitable labour market. I conceptualize successful adaptation in Canada as a "two-way street" whereby Canadian-born people adjust alongside immigrants to ensure a more welcoming and

inclusive society (Winnemore and Biles, 2006). Additionally, it is critical to provide support to immigrants who may experience difficulties, to assist in building social and professional networks, and to explicate some of the nuances of the Canadian labour market and workplace culture. This is where immigrant-serving organizations (ISOs) play an important role in assisting newcomers integrate into the labour market (in addition to all the other supports offered by ISOs such as housing, language training and child-care). Declining labour market outcomes for immigrants is not necessarily an individualistic problem. Rather, I argue that settlement services and newcomers can work together with other stakeholders (employers, regulatory bodies, educational institutions and governments) to address broader systemic barriers to meaningful employment. To manage the scope of my project, I focused on immigrant professionals and settlement services, but acknowledge that additional research is necessary to fully incorporate all stakeholders.

I organized this dissertation into a publishable paper-based format rather than a traditional book manuscript. In other words, chapters are separate, stand-alone documents that assess different, but related, research questions and themes of this overall project. This introductory chapter provides a broad overview of the context, a review of the relevant literature, key research questions, methodology, significance and summaries of the chapters. Each substantive chapter contains similar sections describing the literature, theoretical and methodological approaches. In other words, there are some redundancies in the chapters that would not occur in a traditional book manuscript format. It may be useful to skip to the substantive chapter that best fits your interests and research needs.

All four papers are interrelated but capture different aspects of immigrant professionals' interactions with the settlement system and how their labour market experiences influence these relationships and processes. The concluding chapter provides linkages between the four papers of this study as well as the implications for policy, strengths, limitations and future research. Extensive appendices, including a methodological reflection piece, contain the research instruments and recruitment tools used in my study as well as further information about the settlement organizations in Edmonton and Winnipeg.

The remaining sections of this introductory chapter start with a basic summary of the theoretical orientations guiding my research. I go on to review the context of immigration in Canada, including the challenges experienced by immigrant professionals, recent policy changes such as the Express Entry System, jurisdictional challenges, and other recent settlement administrative changes. This literature review also extensively examines the research conducted on immigrant-serving organizations including a discussion of the tension between pragmatic service provision focused on individualistic interventions, and broader advocacy and anti-oppression work that addresses issues of racism, discriminatory hiring practices and a critique of immigration policy itself. I then move on to outline my methodological approach, including my research philosophy, recruitment, fieldwork process, analytical strategies and reflections. The final section of this introductory chapter provides a summary of each paper, and highlights the sociological significance and contributions of this project.

Theoretical Orientations Employed in Substantive Chapters

Conceptualizing Resources: Beyond Human Capital

As a conceptual framework, human capital theory emphasizes the value and importance of education and training for economic development (Becker, 1975). A human capital theory applied to labour market performance links individual investment in education and skills training as the primary explanatory factor for variations in employment outcomes (Becker, 1962, 1975 1994). Individuals with higher levels of education should have higher occupational statuses and incomes than those with fewer credentials. From this perspective, ensuring equal access to educational opportunities should then reduce economic inequality. Human capital theory assumes that individuals freely compete for the best jobs, and those who obtain the highest credentials end up in positions associated with their skills (Becker, 1962, 1975 1994). Much of the research literature examining the employment outcomes of immigrants utilizes human capital perspectives to explain variations (Chiswick and Miller, 2003; Friedberg, 2000; Reitz, 2001). Inequality, however, requires explanations that move beyond the human capital framework. In other words, although differential employment outcomes partially result from variations in training, schooling, and other knowledge, additional variables, such as discrimination and racism, play major roles in determining access to meaningful opportunities.

Although Gary S. Becker (1957) extensively explored the economics of discrimination, these applications of economic theory do not sufficiently supplement human capital theory's explanation of systemic racism. Becker suggested that there are costs for discrimination, a price that people are willing to pay to conduct business with people similar to themselves (England and Lewin, 1989). This discriminatory approach results in inefficiencies because firms do not select people based on merit, but rather, choices are based on comfort and preference. This

critique posits that the market with inevitably push out discriminatory firms because these higher costs facilitate the success of more inclusive firms. So, put simply, discrimination harms everyone, particularly firms with greater racial inequality. Becker may have intended to portray racism from a perspective that illustrated how discrimination harmed everyone. It is problematic, however, when focus is placed on the costs of discrimination for the dominant groups (i.e. how it "harms" white people) rather than focusing on the social, material, psychological and intergenerational harm that people of colour experience because of discrimination, prejudice and racism (Franklin, Boyd-Franklin and Kelly, 2006). To reemphasize an important point, neoclassical economic perspectives suggest that market forces will eliminate discrimination because employers who discriminate will lose out on market shares or go out of business (England and Lewin, 1989). In contrast, a sociological perspective insists that market forces alone will not eliminate discrimination and identifies how labour markets are segmented with discriminatory hiring and compensation practices pushing vulnerable people to the periphery (England and Lewin, 1989). It is questionable if a "wait and see if the market will eliminate racism" approach is ethical or effective, and it is critical to identify other avenues for the elimination of racism in the labour market that move beyond human capital and economic interpretations.

Understandings of immigrant professionals' under- and unemployment involve increasingly critical examinations of the role of human capital and individual skills deficits (Allan, 2016; Guo, 2015; Thomas, 2015). In other words, it is important to go beyond human capital and individualistic approaches when conceptualizing the experiences of immigrant professionals in the labour market because of systemic barriers such as discrimination and the

devaluation of immigrants' skills and experiences (Bauder, 2003; Guo, 2009; Buzdugan and Halli, 2009). Research identifies a significant disjuncture between how human capital is conceptualized at a policy level compared to how these resources play out for individual immigrants, and particularly those who are people of colour (Branker, 2016). Other studies suggest that obtaining further post-secondary training in the host country provides avenues for career-related employment for professional immigrants (Gebhardt, 2016). Despite the utility of understanding how skills and training provide resources for immigrants during their employment search and integration processes, it is important to broaden the picture to capture other interrelated factors. Put simply, human capital approaches are insufficient for explaining the variable labour market trajectories of professional immigrants (Blain, Fortin and Alvarez, 2016).

The range of resources available to immigrants as they search for employment requires further explanation. Pierre Bourdieu (1986) provided a theoretical framework for understanding the possible limitations on the power of newcomers to influence their social environment. Bourdieu (1986) expanded upon human capital theory to distinguish between material, human, social, and cultural forms of capital. Social capital, defined as the "actual or potential resources which are linked to the possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance" allows individuals to draw upon their personal connections to attain employment (Bourdieu, 1986, 51). This is understandable, as many people obtain jobs through family or other personal connections, and for immigrants, their recent arrival potentially results in a much more limited social network (Breton, 2000, 12-13). Cultural capital, on the other hand, relates to the resources available to individuals because of their upbringing in a particular socioeconomic class (Bourdieu, 1986, 48). Cultural capital is the sum of the early

socialization process whereby parents and extended family (or cultural groups in this context) provide an outline for understanding and interacting with other individuals and the broader cultural environment. In the same way that social capital provides a network for individuals to utilize, cultural capital allows individuals to navigate and interpret the broader social world with a level of "competence" and confidence (Bourdieu, 1986, 48-49).

There is value in examining how newcomers may lack a social network to help them obtain employment, but the utilization of cultural capital in the same way is potentially problematic. Newcomers do not lack cultural capital, but they may have difficulty "translating" their inter-cultural knowledge into Canadian society, and Canadian-born employers may not readily accept the cultural knowledge and practices of new immigrants. I align my study with other research showing that newcomers do not have a deficit of cultural capital, but rather, Canadian society and employers undervalue their inter-cultural knowledge in the same way that they devalue foreign credentials and experience (Yosso, 2005). This lack of worth placed upon inter-cultural knowledge may contribute to the development of a segmented labour market in which immigrants, especially people of colour, are disadvantaged.

Challenging Neoliberalism

Neoliberal ideology and policies have had a major impact on immigrant-serving organizations, immigrants and the Canadian labour market they are working within. Neoliberalism offers an ideological rationale for both social program development and the construction of ideal citizens by the government and mainstream society, including the expectation of limited state involvement in the economy and civil society. Neoliberal governance is highly adaptable despite varying socio-political contexts (Duggan, 2003; Hardt and Negri,

2000; Larner, 2000; Ong, 2006). Neoliberal rationality is the "new relationship between governments and knowledge through which governing activities are recast as non-political and non-ideological problems that need technical solutions" (Ong, 2006, 3). Neoliberalism is not simply an economic rationality, but rather, a complex system of relations between the state, the economy and society. Furthermore, neoliberalism is a "technology of government" that promotes the self-governance and self-regulation of individuals in society for the most optimal of outcomes (Jessop, 2002; Ong, 2006, 3-4). Moreover, international economic conditions pressures state governments like Canada to limit, or entirely abandon, the welfare state to promote efficiency and competitiveness (Larner, 2000). Significantly, neoliberalism is also not a static or uniform policy or ideological approach that encompasses a specific position on the political spectrum. It is essential, therefore, to understand neoliberalism in a way that emphasizes "its historically contingent and internally contradictory aspects, rather than its coherence" (Larner, 2000, 15). This approach allows for analyses that deconstruct the "messy actualities of new forms of governance; the contradictions, complexities and inconsistencies that inevitably characterize neo-liberal political projects" (Larner 2000, 16). This interpretation of neoliberal ideologies and technologies of governance as complex, variable and contradictory influence the participants of this research in multiple ways.

Neoliberalism impacts the employment outcomes of newcomers and plays a role in the provision of settlement and employment related services. Neoliberalism promotes the self-organization of community activity to respond to any shortfalls of the market (Duggan, 2003; Jessop, 2002). Within neoliberalism, a strict separation between civil society and the state is necessary to best facilitate the free choice of citizens (Duggan, 2003; Jessop, 2002, 5). In other

words, state intervention is “an intrusion” that prohibits the freedom of individuals, and therefore, the community is responsible for supporting people who are unable to find employment due to market inadequacies. Rather than acknowledging systemic problems facing newcomers when they are trying to obtain employment, a neoliberal government would likely “download” accountability to the community or individuals themselves. Such policies shift focus to “personal responsibility of the family and civil society” and divert social service costs from state agencies to individuals and their households (Duggan, 2003, 14). From a neoliberal perspective, newcomer unemployment is seen to be due to their individual deficiencies.

Neoliberal pressures also reduce the availability, autonomy and efficacy of settlement services. Neoliberal forms of governance that emerged in Canada throughout the 1980s and 1990s restructured the relationship between the state and the voluntary sector, with settlement service providers working increasingly as unequal partners with the state (Creese, 2011). The rationale for funding restructuring was to make the non-profit sector more focused and accountable, but these changes were made with minimal warning or consultation. Additionally, funding became increasingly precarious with piecemeal, or partial, funding models for projects or services. Stable core agency funding had offered immigrant-serving organizations flexibility in meeting the needs of immigrant communities. The move to short-term funding models occurred alongside more rigidly defined mandates that limited the independence of the settlement sector to shuffle around funds for different types of programs. These manifestations of neoliberalism lead to a loss of “autonomy, distortion of agency mandates, dangers of increased bureaucratization and commercialization, difficulty in responding to community needs, inability to act as an advocate, resulting in a potential loss of legitimacy” (Creese, 2011, 193).

From a philosophical perspective, this study investigates how neoliberal ideologies influence settlement providers to not only ensure that individual clients are productive, independent and responsible, but also how immigrant-serving organizations are expected to efficiently reach outcomes aligned with government mandates (Neudorf, 2016). For example, outcomes-based reporting includes the proportion of immigrant clients that obtain employment rather than solely the number workshops held by the organization. While it makes sense for funders to ask for evidence of outcomes, it is difficult to measure the efficacy of the wide range of support provided by immigrant-serving organizations. Neoliberalism's influence, although varied and fluid depending on context, similarly impacts non-governmental organizations which must adhere to the norms set by the federal government (Creese, 2011; Mukhtar, Dean, Wilson, Ghassemi and Wilson, 2016). Research in larger cities such as Vancouver and the Greater Toronto Area indicated that dependence on federal funding imposed strict conditions on immigrant-serving organizations, including what types of services can be offered, who can access services, and with strict allocation guidelines (Creese, 2011; Mukhtar, Dean, Wilson, Ghassemi and Wilson, 2016).

In sum, this project engages with neoliberalism as it exists in several areas of Canadian society. It starts from the perspectives of individual immigrants who experience pressures to conform to self-regulatory responsibilities. Next, it examines the impact on settlement organizations that exist within a strict but fluid governance structure that above all else emphasizes fiscal responsibility and continuously doing more despite less – and less stable – government funding. Further, my research situates the neoliberal project as it exists within two

mid-sized Canadian cities to determine if and how similar funding pressures and ideological expectations shape and limit the role of the immigrant settlement sector while simultaneously imposing expectations for individual self-governance, independence and idealized citizens.

Anti-Oppression Research

A commitment to anti-racist work drives my research program, with strong influence from critical race theory, intersectionality and transnational feminist orientations. These interrelated perspectives illustrate the various ways in which Canadian society prevents immigrants' access to the labour market rather than incorporating diversity and inclusivity in a meaningful way. Exclusion is systemic in nature and based on the intersections of disadvantage and how individuals may have multiple vulnerabilities.

Critical Race Theory

Critical race theory (CRT) facilitates an explicitly anti-racist approach focused on the role of racism and prejudice within socio-economic statuses, historical conditions, individual or group interactions, feelings, and in unconscious feelings or perceptions (Alyward, 1999; Delgado and Stefancic, 2001, 2-3; Hall, 1981, 1993, Yosso, 2005). CRT acknowledges the more "subtle" or "inferential" nature of racism that persists beyond the civil rights movement of the 1960s (Delgado and Stefancic, 2001, 3; Hall, 1981, 1993; Solomos and Back, 2000). In other words, racial discrimination is not as overt as in previous eras of anti-oppression movements, but CRT provides a way to continue to challenge forms of oppression that may not be visible without more detailed analysis.

Within an academic setting, critical race theory facilitates anti-racist scholarly activities to develop a "clearly articulated vision of a post-racist world and strategies to move forward" towards that ideal (Hall, 1993; Lee and Lutz, 2005, 4). Researchers must, therefore, take on advocacy roles to inform policy that promotes a truly inclusive society that celebrates difference in a meaningful way (Hall, 1993). A more equitable labour market requires the critical assessment of how power operates between immigrants, employers, settlement services and governments. CRT shows how racism is not a static phenomenon and how prejudice and discrimination shift to meet the demands of power relations by situating immigrants of colour as "others" through a socially constructed racialization process (Lee and Lutz, 2005, 4-5; Miles, 1989; Solomos and Back, 2000). Racialization is a social process, and my intention is not to reify the social construct of racial difference, but to challenge racial inequality by focusing upon the unequal experiences of racialized immigrant groups (Galabuzi, 2008; Murji and Solomos, 2005). CRT theory assists in exposing this devaluation of immigrants' contributions, particularly people of colour, in the Canadian socio-economic landscape.

Critical race theory provides a lens that assesses the experiences of newcomers and service providers while acknowledging racism and offering avenues for meaningful social change via education, activism and awareness (Delgado and Stefancic, 2001, 3). CRT moves us beyond understanding unequal power relations to directly suggest modes of resistance and change. CRT facilitates my goal of promoting change and activism directly by my research activities, by attempting to develop practical solutions to lessen inequality, expose and reduce racism, and support organizations and governments in developing or continuing similar anti-racist activities. The primary goal is the creation of a workforce that is inclusive of all

newcomers. This is necessary because the current labour market facilitates the marginalization and exclusion of immigrants from the best jobs. Neoliberal ideology plays a major role in potentially restricting service providers from developing critical anti-racist programming.

Canadian critical race feminist scholars emphasize the importance of moving beyond "conceptualizing oppression in terms of unitary categories of gender, race, or class" to engage in more intersectional analyses (Bannerji, 1993). Within the Canadian context, however, critical race theory requires sensitivity to the ongoing process of colonization (Lawrence and Dua, 2005). Critical race theory, therefore, acknowledges how the narratives of immigrants of colour must recognize that the "realities of racism we now confront in Canada must be linked to the white settler colonial project in which we find ourselves" (Lawrence and Dua, 2005; Razack, Smith and Thobani, 2010, 6; Thobani, 2015). Although the impact of settler colonialism is beyond the scope of my dissertation, it is essential to situate this project within this context.

Transnational Feminism and Intersectionality

An intersectional feminist approach complements a CRT perspective by analyzing multiple statuses that may limit opportunities for immigrant professionals to continue their careers upon arrival to Canada. In other words, in addition to the impact of race, other statuses such as class, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, physical ability and mental ability play a significant role. Intersecting oppressions must be considered to understand the challenges facing immigrant professionals during their employment searches, and their subsequent inclusion (or lack thereof) in Canadian workplaces. The research of women of colour, including those from the global south, has had a significant impact on my politics and academic scholarship and

continues to guide my research because of the significance of intersectionality and transnational feminism (Bannerji, 2000; Case, 2012; Collins, 2000; Crenshaw, 1989; hooks, 1982; Lorde, 1981; Mohanty, 1988, 2003, Razack, Smith and Thobani, 2010). Although these approaches have their important distinctions, I will refer to this broad analytical framework as transnational feminist intersectionality. This approach insists that it is problematic to treat race, gender, physical ability, sexual orientation and age as "mutually exclusive categories of experience and analysis" (Crenshaw, 1989, 139). Feminist intersectionality ensures that I do not overlook one category of oppression when examining others (Crenshaw, 1989, 154; hooks, 1982, 7). In other words, all factors must be included in the analysis to account for multiple sites of inequality because discrimination does not affect people equally (Crenshaw, 1989, 150-151; hooks, 1982, 12).

Moreover, the work of Chandra Talpade Mohanty (1988, 2003) emphasizes the heterogeneity of women in the global south. This is significant because immigrants participating in my study have diverse racial and national identities that may result in very different lived experiences. While it is important to identify the potential impact of racism on the lives of immigrants who are people of colour, I must remain sensitive to the fact that I should not homogenize those experiences in my analysis (Mohanty, 1988, 2003) Mohanty also illustrates how solidarity building is not only possible, but necessary, in order to confront oppressive structures. As a result of the important influence of anti-racism, intersectional and transnational feminism on my scholarship and activism, my analysis assesses these multiple sites of oppression while acknowledging the heterogeneity amongst participants.

Theoretical Summary: Moving Beyond Individual Deficits

To summarize, neoliberalism is a flexible, but dominant, global political economic ideology that places pressure upon immigrants to fend for themselves or allows them to be framed as personally irresponsible or having professional deficits. Within a neoliberal regime, explanations for the challenges experienced by newcomers as they search for employment often rely upon an individual deficit-based approach, rather than identifying systemic racial inequality in Canadian society. In fact, building on the well-known typology of the "deserving" and "undeserving" poor, it is also possible to challenge an increasingly common distinction between "good" and "bad" or "right" and "wrong" immigrants (Abu-Laban, 1998; Gans, 1994; Ku, 2011; Krueger, Mulder and Korenic, 2004). This distinction characterizes immigrants who "integrate" into a white settler Canadian mainstream as the ideal, while leading to exclusion of others perceived as "too different" or having customs perceived as contradictory to "Canadian values" (Abu-Laban, 1998; McLaren and Dyck, 2004; Walton-Roberts and Pratt, 2005). For example, in late August 2012, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) released a statement outlining how improvements to the Federal Skilled Workers Program placed greater emphasis on selection criteria leading to better labour market outcomes (CIC, 2011). With the implementation of the Express Entry System in January 2015, this policy approach continued to emphasize improvements to selection criteria as the best intervention to reduce exclusion (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, 2016). This governmental discourse illustrates how difficulties experienced by immigrants in the labour market are perceived to be the result of policies that fail to select the "right" kinds of immigrants that will succeed economically (CIC, 2011). Therefore, the "good" immigrants deserve support from settlement services, whereas "bad" immigrants are a drain on the Canadian economy. These policy orientations also illustrate the flexibility and pervasive nature of neoliberal ideology as it operates in various ways that

move beyond individuals to limit settlement organizations as well. The Canadian government has restructured the welfare state, creating rigid mandates that guide the immigrant settlement sector to focus on improving individual deficits (to create "responsible" citizens). Settlement workers are limited in what they can do for immigrants within this framework of strict mandates and limited funding pools.

Generally, human capital explanations of labour market inequality make sense from a neoliberal mindset. But they fail to expose the systemic patterns of social and economic exclusion experienced by newcomers. Human capital deficits alone cannot explain a segmented labour market (Krahn, Hughes and Lowe, 2015, 152) which is divided along the various boundaries of intersecting oppressions, and restricts access to better jobs and working conditions. A plethora of research indicates that recent cohorts of immigrants, who are increasingly people of colour, experience poorer employment outcomes (Bauder, 2003; Breton, 2000; Chuong, 2015; Guo, 2013a, 2015; Li, 2000a, 2000b, 2001). Critical race theory suggests that these outcomes are, in part, a result of subtle racism within this segmented labour market, since discrimination often masks itself in "justifiable" concerns and language. Moreover, an anti-racist and explicitly intersectional feminist paradigm highlights the complexities of various statuses that may result in difficulties overcoming barriers within the labour market. Additionally, a transnational feminist lens acknowledges significant heterogeneity while identifying broad themes of exclusion without homogenizing the experiences of immigrants from the global south. In sum, these theories ground my analyses of immigrant settlement experiences, the labour market(s) they enter, immigrant-serving organizations, and the broader landscape of neoliberal governance.

Previous Immigrant-related Research

Canadian Immigration History and Policy

Immigration history in Canada has been a turbulent narrative whereby historically racist preferences determined what categories of people received permission to enter and settle in the country. Canada has a long history of immigration and colonization involving the forced displacement of Indigenous nations resulting in the 1867 founding of Canada as a nation comprised of two dominant (French and English) settler societies (Bannerji, 2000; Li, 2003a). Despite the dominance of the two charter groups and their preference for immigrants of the same background, the development of the Canadian nation was only made possible due to the labour of marginalized groups such as Indigenous Peoples, Chinese, Black, Irish and Ukrainian immigrants (Bannerji, 2000; Li, 2003a; Porter, 1965).

By 1960, human rights and immigration policy began to shift towards an inclusivity narrative. For example, the introduction of the Canadian Bill of Rights was the first national legislation that incorporated the protection of human rights and individual freedom into federal law (Armony, 2016; Dewing, 2009). It is important to note that Canada also developed the point system in 1967, which officially eliminated discriminatory Eurocentric immigrant selection criteria (Armony, 2016; Bai, 1992; Walsh, 2008). Similarly, Canada signed the United Nations Convention Related to the Status of Refugees in 1969 and passed the Immigration Act of 1976 which recognized refugees as immigrants (Bai, 1992; Dewing, 2009). By 1982, the Constitution of Canada was amended to incorporate the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (replacing the previous Bill of Rights) to ensure broader human rights law that applied to both the provincial and federal legal systems (Dewing, 2009). Multiculturalism as a framework for the equity of Canadian cultures began in the 1971, but was passed into law through the Canadian

Multiculturalism Act in 1988 (Bai, 1992; Dewing, 2009; Kunz and Sykes, 2007). The development and implementation of these various legal frameworks illustrated how institutions and Canadian society have an obligation to incorporate diversity within their structures. In other words, legislation now mandates that institutions provide equitable access, representation and participation for all Canadians.

Building on this historical context, immigration practices since the 1980s have largely been driven by economic needs of the Canadian labour market (Abu-Laban, 1998; Abu-Laban and Gabriel, 2002; Hiebert, 2016). Due to the introduction of the points system for the selection of immigrants, or in other words, the removal of overtly racist immigration entry criteria, immigrants arriving in Canada since the 1980s are increasingly people of colour from the global south, with a decline in immigration from "traditional source countries" such as the United Kingdom and various other nations in Western Europe (Armony, 2016; Bonikowska, Hou, and Picot, 2011; Driedger and Halli, 1999). Viewed through a transnational feminist lens, it is important to remember that "skilled immigrants" today represent people who originate from nearly 200 different countries, and that their experiences may vary significantly. Currently, Canada admits approximately 250,000 permanent residents each year and, in 2011, 21 percent of Canadians were foreign-born (Hiebert, 2016). Immigration, therefore, has played a central role within the narrative of Canadian history.

Current immigration policy attempts to attract the "best and brightest" internationally-educated professionals (Blain, Fortin and Alvarez, 2016; Li, 2003b). Canadian-born individuals tend to perceive immigration as having an economic, rather than humanitarian purpose, apart from programs such as those designed to recently admit significant numbers of Syrian refugees

(Hiebert, 2016). The Progressive Conservative Federal Government that held office between 2006 until 2015 reinforced this narrative. For example, the Honourable Jason Kenney, Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism at the time, stated:

> … [O]ur action plan for faster immigration was paying off. Today I am pleased to inform the committee that we continue to make important progress. … While many other countries have cut back immigration levels as a short-term response to the global economic downturn, we are actually maintaining very ambitious levels in response to our country's medium- to long-term economic needs and indeed our demographic challenges (Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, 2009, para. 2).

In the same session, Minister Kenney reinforced the notions of the "right" and the "wrong" types of immigrants insofar as he suggested that "Canada must 'open the front door' to regular immigration … while 'closing the back door' to 'false' refugee claims" (Hiebert, 2016, 8-9). In other words, immigrants who contribute economically as skilled workers are welcomed, whereas those in other categories of entry are perceived to be a drain on the Canadian economy. While it is beyond the scope of this study to examine the immigration policy shifts that have occurred over the last several decades, it is important to note that these changes align with a neoliberal emphasis on promoting the economy first and expecting individual responsibility (Abu-Laban and Gabriel, 2002; Chuong, 2015). Since 2008, Canadian immigration policy overwhelmingly shifted to focus on neoliberal goals of attracting economic immigrants and ensuring their labour market integration (Bragg and Wong, 2016; Desiderio and Hooper, 2016). Given the emphasis on selecting immigrants with high levels of human capital, it is difficult to explain the deteriorating labour market outcomes experienced by such immigrants since the 1990s (Beine, Boadway and Coulombe, 2016; Li, 2000b; Reitz, 2007). Rather than focusing on broader issues of systemic discrimination, the Canadian government continues to emphasize immigrants' individual responsibility for labour market success.

In January 2015, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) launched the Express Entry electronic system for managing economic immigration applications (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, 2016). This system was not in place when I conducted my fieldwork, but this change highlights the continued individualized focus for integration challenges. Although the Express Entry system is not defined as a new program by CIC, it does reinforce neoliberal discourse insofar as "Express Entry will create an inventory of high-quality candidates who employers in Canada will be able to consider when they cannot find Canadians or permanent residents to fill job vacancies" (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, 2016). Put simply, there is reinforced concentration on economic migration as the ideal type of immigration to Canadian society. The Express Entry system is not a novel concept, of course, since a selection pool of qualified applicants has also been previously utilized by provincial nominee programs in its immigrant selection process.

Provincial Nominee Programs are an important component of the Canadian immigration policy framework. The Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program (MPNP) allows the province to identify "qualified skilled workers, with characteristics indicating a strong potential of becoming economically established in Manitoba" to be assessed as candidates for permanent residency (Carter, Morrish and Amoyaw, 2008; Manitoba Labour and Immigration, 2016). Candidates submit an expression of interest and are placed within a pool and ranked in five areas: language proficiency, age, work experience, education and adaptability (Manitoba Labour and Immigration, 2016). Manitoba received 16,222 permanent residents in 2014, or 6.2 percent of Canada's total immigration for that year (Manitoba Labour and Immigration, 2014). Most of the immigrants that arrived in Manitoba settled in Winnipeg in 2014, and both Winnipeg and

Edmonton were in the top ten receiving census metropolitan areas with over 13,000 and 15,000 permanent residents respectively (Manitoba Labour and Immigration, 2014).

At the time of fieldwork for this study, the Alberta Immigrant Nominee Program (AINP) was not accepting new applications, but resumed intake in January 2016 (Government of Alberta, 2016). The AINP has three streams designed to meet the needs of the Alberta economy. The first is the strategic recruitment of skilled trades workers, engineers and international graduate students obtaining credentials from Alberta post-secondary institutions. The second employer-driven category involved applicants with permanent full-time employment offers in the skilled worker, international graduates of Canadian post-secondary institutions, and semi-skilled worker categories (there are some additional requirements for each sub-stream). The final stream of the AINP allows self-employed farmers with adequate financial resources and farm management experience to purchase or establish a farm in Alberta. In sum, provincial nomination allows for provinces to determine what types of workers they require to meet regional labour market needs.

With the election of a Liberal majority government in October 2015, there have been changes to the Express Entry selection system including a reduction to the points required. More adjustments may occur in the future (CIC, 2015a; CIC News, 2015). Unfortunately, there has been little consideration around how to address the challenges faced by immigrants who have already arrived in the country prior to implementation of the Express Entry system. If policy adjustments do not result in better labour market outcomes, it is crucial to acknowledge that integration challenges may be the result of discrimination and racism and other systemic factors.

Finally, these policy shifts are founded on the assumption that newcomers are struggling in the labour market due to individual skills deficiency with little acknowledgement of systemic discrimination such as the devaluation of international credentials and experience and/or employer preferences for Canadian-born and English speaking individuals (Bauder, 2003; Buzdugan and Halli, 2009; Guo, 2015; Reitz, 2007). Despite a widespread belief that Canada is a relatively welcoming society, these systemic and discriminatory barriers receive little focus from policy makers or broader society.

Employment Challenges Faced by Immigrant Professionals

Immigrants experience a period of adjustment after arrival in Canada that can last from a couple of years to a generation (Ager and Strang, 2008, 175-176; Bauder, 2003, 699). This is especially true for racialized newcomers of colour who may experience racial discrimination in the labour market. Despite increasingly higher levels of education amongst immigrants, these human capital advantages do not translate into benefits in the labour market in the way they do for Canadian-born workers (Bauder, 2003; Buzdugan, 2009; Guo, 2015). In other words, educational attainment fails to predict the labour market successes of immigrants in Canada. Recent cohorts of newcomers experience lower labour market outcomes than previous groups of immigrants (Bonikowska, Hou, and Picot, 2011; Reitz, 2007). These trends are an important for moving beyond human capital explanations for the employment experiences and outcomes of recent newcomers to Canada.

A primary challenge newcomers experience upon arrival is obtaining meaningful employment related to their previous education and experience. Not only is it difficult to restart their careers, but many immigrants are unable to access any type of full-time employment. Dean

and Wilson (2009, 185-186) examined the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada (LSIC) and determined that between two and four years after arrival in Canada, fifty-four percent of immigrants were unemployed. Of those who have obtained employment, sixty percent were overqualified for the positions they were in. Three key barriers were the lack of credential recognition, delayed assessment by provincial regulators, and a lack of Canadian employment experience.

Immigrants experience systematic exclusion from employment, and especially from the primary labour market, due to a lack of foreign credential recognition (Bauder, 2003, 699; Buzdugan and Halli, 2009). Unfortunately, accreditation procedures favour Canadian educated professionals (Bauder, 2003, 703; Li, 2001, 23). Although immigrants might have previous work experience, there is a preference for "Canadian work experience" that prevents recent immigrants from obtaining employment (OHRC, 2013; Slade, 2011, 139-140). In other words, foreign experience and education are not valued in the same ways as those obtained in Canada. Many immigrant professionals experience downward mobility upon arriving in the country due to the devaluation of their credentials (Bauder, 2003, 737; Gibb, Hamdon, and Jamal, 2008, 6-7). Taken together, these preferences create significant barriers that demarcate a racially segmented labour market justified through neoliberal discourses of individual responsibility and self-improvement. The demand for Canadian experience is unnecessary for newcomers who arrive in Canada with a wealth of skills, education, and experience. Moreover, the request for Canadian experience is increasingly, and justifiably, critiqued as a human rights infraction (OHRC, 2013). This preferential treatment of Canadian-born workers and the demand for Canadian experience or credentials illustrates how systemic racism limits some newcomers from obtaining meaningful

employment. Furthermore, these requirements illustrate how racism is less overt and masked in justifiable language.

Racism or discrimination exacerbates the other challenges that immigrants may face (Breton, 2000, 17). A non-Canadian accent may act as a selection criterion that excludes immigrants from obtaining employment (Gibb, Hamdon, and Jamal, 2008, 6). Additionally, a lack of Canadian experience or education creates an unattainable benchmark for immigrant applicants and, therefore, supports implicitly discriminatory preferences for Canadian-born and Canadian-educated individuals. Certain groups are more likely to experience racism; Black immigrants experience high levels of discrimination and racism, and suffer significant downward mobility upon arrival in the country (Danso, 2002, 7). Although Canada may reject explicit racism, there is persistent and widespread "subtle racism" against racialized people of colour (Danso, 2002, 10; Hall, 1981). In fact, recent "reforms" to the immigration system, such as the Express Entry system mentioned previously, imply that previous cohorts of immigrants had less successful outcomes because Canadian policies were selecting the "wrong kinds of immigrants" (CIC, 2012; Simmons, 1999, 22). This policy approach signifies a neoliberal rationale insofar as immigrants themselves are problematic due to inadequate immigration selection policy, rather than focusing upon employer preferences for Canadian-born and educated employees. Immigrant-serving organizations can play the role of crucial advocates for immigrant communities as they may be able to promote anti-racist policy reforms.

Despite the focus on larger cities such as Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver, research networks such as the Prairie Metropolis Centre facilitated significant immigration research on the

prairie provinces. For example, scholars examined topics such as attraction and retention of immigrants to second- and third-tier cities (Carter, Morrish and Amoyaw 2008; Derwing and Krahn, 2008; Krahn, Derwing and Abu-Laban, 2005; Pandey and Townsend, 2011). Other prairie research focused on language ability and learning (Deng, Holtby and Howden-Weaver, 2000; Derwing, Munro, Thomson and Rossiter 2009; Foote, 2010), experiences with education (Guo, Lund and Arthur, 2009), quality of life (Lu, del Canto, Muhajarine, Kitchen, Newbold, Randall and Wilson 2016) and refugee experiences (Krahn, Derwing, Mulder and Wilkinson 2000; Magro, 2009). The physiological and psychological health of immigrants, including service barriers and access, represented another area where significant research was conducted within the prairie context (Maximova and Krahn, 2010). Other scholars focused on how neoliberal ideologies impacted the family within the migration and settlement context (Yoon 2016). Although there was research focused on immigrant employment in mid-sized cities, much of the literature focused on specific ethno-racial groups (Guo, 2010, 2013; Shan 2012). It is important, therefore, to conduct research that focuses on immigrant experiences with settlement services, as well as how immigrant-serving organizations work together with clients to navigate the local labour market.

Immigrant-serving Organizations

Immigrant-serving organizations (ISOs) strive to provide culturally appropriate resources for immigrants, along with formal programs for language and employment training, social and cultural orientation, and access to other support services (Creese, 2011; Gibb, Hamdon, and Jamal, 2008, 4; Slade, 2011). The needs of immigrants may be very different depending upon the stage of the migration process. Difficulties experienced during the pre-migration period, for example, influence reactions during later stages of adjustment (Caidi and Allard, 2005, 304;

Drachman, 1992, 68-69; George, 2002, 474). The needs of immigrants during the first months or years of their arrival in Canada might differ from the needs of those who have been living in the country for longer periods. For this study, I focus on the immediate needs of newcomers such as obtaining employment during their initial arrival, but also recognize the need for specialized support to assist in career advancement in later stages (George, 2002, 470).

Most services are designed to respond to immediate needs (e.g. housing, survival employment, etc.), and organizations can have a wide range of programs that assist in the initial stages of settlement, and help newcomers maintain their distinct cultural practices and traditions (Ager and Strang, 2008, 175-176; Cordero-Guzman, 2005, 904). However, the primary role of the service provider is to assist newcomers throughout their immigration and settlement process. This may include general or legal advice, translation and interpretation services, assistance in applying for visas, obtaining work permits, and assisting newcomers in finding shelter, child-care and employment (Cordero-Guzman, 2005, 901; George, 2002, 475-476). The provision of these services also builds social support for newcomers, connecting them to valuable networks within their new community. This is essential because social inclusion is a key determinant of success in the community and civic life (Bai, 1992, 24; Creese, 2011, 193; Teelucksingh and Galabuzi, 2007, 83-84). Although the focus of this study is on employment-related services, it is crucial to remember that services such as language development, cultural sensitivity, education, food and nutritional support and child-care are all related to successful employment outcomes (Cordero-Guzman, 2005, 903). Clearly, a holistic approach to assistance is a useful strategy, and I am interested if this philosophy influences the provision of immigrant services in Winnipeg and Edmonton.

I examine the role of the immigrant-service sector and how newcomers and service providers navigate labour market barriers in greater detail throughout the remainder of this dissertation. Here I briefly review the existing specialized employment and settlement services sector. Although much has been written about the experiences of newcomers with social services, most of these studies either focus upon physical and mental health issues or language training (Higginbottom, Hadziabdic, Yohani and Paton, 2014; Kalich, Heinemann and Ghahari, 2016; Thomson, Chaze, George and Guruge, 2015). Moreover, the focus of many of these studies is on the larger destination cities of Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver, due to the larger proportions of immigrants that arrive in those locations (Creese, 2011; Ku, 2011). Fewer studies focus on the interaction between service providers and newcomers, but these studies also often focus upon access to health services and/or language training (Chadwick and Collins, 2015), or on the role of municipalities in newcomer integration (Guo and Guo, 2016) and settlement providers in rural communities (Ashton, Pettigrew and Galatsanou, 2016). One quantitative report funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, however, focused specifically on the outcomes and perceptions of settlement services in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia (Esses, Hamilton, Wilkinson & Zong, 2013).

In terms of impact, the 2013 Western Settlement Outcomes Survey (WSOS) illustrated that only 30 percent of immigrant participants utilized settlement services in Alberta.[1] For immigrant who used settlement services, over 75 percent were using immigrant-serving agencies (as opposed to libraries, mainstream organizations or schools) and 35 percent found the services to be "extremely helpful" compared to 5 percent who reported services were "not at all helpful"

[1] The WSOS likely underreports the real usage of settlement services due to the way the question was phrased. It is possible that respondents used services but reported otherwise because of confusion around the definition of settlement services (Esses et al. 2013, 15).

(Esses et al., 2013, 24). Primary barriers to accessing settlement organizations were a lack of information about services, language difficulties and financial difficulties. For newcomers who did not access settlement services at all, over half reported that they did not need assistance, 34 percent reported they did not realize services were available and 24 percent were confused about where to go for help. Half of the respondents in Alberta reported that employment services were the most important and required. In terms of employment, 60 percent of participants were employed full-time (10 percent unemployed) but found it "moderately difficult" to find positions that utilized their skills and qualifications (Esses et al., 2013, 34). Switching focus to Manitoba, 41 percent of respondents utilized settlement services. Compared to Alberta, there were no major differences in the utilization of settlement services, but only 50 percent of respondents reported full-time employment (10 percent unemployed) and hourly wages were lower than in Alberta (Esses, et al., 2013, 86-87).

Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), is the main federal department responsible for providing resources for programming. Not all newcomers require extensive support upon arrival to Canada. Settlement services, however, are important because they often provide language and employment training for those who do require extra assistance. This promotes the inclusion of newcomers and can lead to the acquisition of citizenship and full participation in Canadian society (Deschamps, Murray, Morris and Cummings, 2001, 2). For the federal government, this is the optimal outcome for integration, and it would be crucial to acknowledge that newcomers may have differing expectations for their so-called "integration" into Canadian society. I suggest throughout this dissertation that the neoliberal orientation of government

ensures that funding goes to programs that promote individual responsibility for immigrants and fiscal accountability for service provision.

The focus of funding from the federal government involves three areas: language instruction, settlement and adaptation programs and the host program. The government also recommends gearing language training towards finding employment, and a streamlined process of foreign credential or experience recognition (Deschamps et al., 2001, 10-13; Reitz and Banerjee, 2006, 6). Clearly, the federal government plays the role of administrator, and they have specific goals of promoting what they believe will best "integrate" immigrants and ensure they are fully participating in society. Provincial implementation of services is ideal because services might not necessarily be applicable over vast geographical areas or cultural groups (Rich, 1979, 83). Significantly, the federal government resumed direct management of federally-funded settlement services in Manitoba in 2013 (CIC, 2012b). This has implications for my research insofar as when I conducted my fieldwork, these changes had just been implemented in Manitoba and occasionally came up in discussions with service providers.

Although not all immigrants require support, it is important that services exist to help those that do. In Manitoba, all provincial nominees go through the Entry Program and many utilize the services through the city's "one stop shop" for newcomers, Manitoba Start. These specialized agencies provide individual and workshop based training for immigrant professionals who are looking for employment (Thomas, 2009, 2015; Manitoba Start, 2015, 2016; Altered Minds Inc., 2015). There are other specialized services that address the needs of professionally educated newcomers, youth, refugees, women and culturally-specialized organizations.

Immigrant-serving organizations are well positioned to advocate for a more inclusive labour market and help newcomers to cope with racism, ableism, sexism, and gender inequality. Unfortunately, organizations are constrained by funding requirements and often are only able to focus on assisting individuals rather than attacking systemic problems (Breton, 2000; Creese, 2011; Ku, 2011; Thomas, 2015). Service providers point out that it is not only the limited and precarious nature of funding, but also the conditions imposed upon funding such as the types of programming and eligibility requirements that limit the autonomy of organizations (Mukhtar, Dean, Wilson, Ghassemi and Wilson, 2016).

Methodology

This study used a focused ethnographic approach to examine the experiences of newcomer professionals and how they worked together with service providers to navigate their goals of professional integration into the labour market. A focused ethnography involves use of pre-developed questions rather than engagement in a long-term study with an open-ended purpose (Wall, 2015). This study also takes a critical approach by including multi-marginalized perspectives to examine how power interacts and operates with a goal of emancipatory social change (Creswell, 1994; Wall, 2015). This focused, critical ethnographic foundation, with the development of preliminary research questions, centered the experiences and interactions of immigrant professionals and the immigrant-serving organizations that exist to provide them with support.

Research Questions

In general, this dissertation examines the interactions between immigrant professionals and settlement services and how the process of searching for employment is guided by available

services. I also draw attention to the question of whether or not immigrants face challenges entering meaningful jobs in the labour market despite potential advantages such as greater human capital, intercultural knowledge and access to settlement services. My first research question focuses upon if and how settlement services assist newcomers to find meaningful employment, and what services they provide. A second question asks about philosophies and strategies that inform the way service providers approach their role of assisting newcomers during their employment search. A third research question focuses specifically on the experiences of newcomers when searching for employment, and their use of services provided by immigrant-serving agencies. My fourth question asks if service providers' perspectives match up with the concerns and needs of the communities they work in. The final research question shaping this study examines the employment search and service use activities of immigrant professionals from a comparative perspective, asking if there are any important differences between Winnipeg and Edmonton.

Research Philosophy

My methodological approach included a reflexive orientation that connected theoretical considerations to the real-life processes and relationships between immigrants, service providers, and the labour market (Burawoy, 1998; Duneier, 1999). From this perspective, it is important to focus upon the meanings expressed by participants rather than prescribed interpretations, and to work with multiple actors involved in the social phenomenon under investigation (Duneier, 1999, 345; Creswell, 2008, 175). I interviewed both immigrants and service providers because this approach provided multiple viewpoints for assessing the segmented and racialized nature of labour market inequality, as well as for identifying the potential influences of neoliberalism on the everyday lives of people.

Central to my approach was the desire to remain open to potential modifications to my research design throughout the different phases of the project. As a white anti-racist feminist, I wanted to ensure that my lack of lived experience with both racial discrimination and the immigration journey did not influence my research questions or findings. My research philosophy allowed me to focus on the "meaning that the participants hold about the problem or issue" rather than on my initial assumptions or interpretations of the existing literature (Creswell, 2008, 175). For example, in the early stages of my study I expected that overt racial discrimination would be a prominent issue with the people of colour I interviewed. As fieldwork progressed, however, I quickly realized that some participants of colour did not perceive discrimination as a significant problem.

My positionality influenced the research and research process in several ways. First, as a white person, although I do not have the lived experience of racial discrimination, it was important for me to acknowledge that although prior research demonstrates that people of colour experience racism, this may not be true for all participants in this research (Peña Muñoz, 2016). Put simply, the best approach is to explicitly avoid assumptions as much as possible and I am highly sensitive to this goal. Despite systemic evidence of racism, which certainly exists and played a role with many of the people of colour I interviewed, it was also critical that I did not assume they were impacted in the same way or degree by racial and ethnic inequality.[2] Linking back to intersectionality and transnational feminism, this research approach prevented the homogenization of participants with varied life origins and histories as well. In other words, although many people of colour systemically experience racism, participants do not necessarily

[2] Rather than conflating the concept with race, ethnicity relates to the fluid features of groups that contribute to their "subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or of customs or both" (Weber, 1968, 389 in Dean and Platt, 2016).

have uniform experiences and it is important not to universalize or erase diversity. In sum, the most important consideration based on my research philosophy is to ensure that I deferred to the lived experiences of participants, which did not always align clearly with the research literature or my own preconceived assumptions.

Second, throughout the fieldwork, my perspectives on my positionality as a white anti-racist scholar changed considerably. I came to realize that I am not necessarily best suited to conduct research such as this, due to my identity as a white Canadian-born individual. I became more concerned as I presented my preliminary findings in venues where I was potentially "taking up space" that would be more appropriately filled by someone who went through the immigration process, and especially, someone who had the lived experience as a person of colour (See Appendix A). While I am careful not to center my lived experience within this context, it was necessary to re-evaluate my role as a white person committed to dismantling oppression. As feminist scholars have questioned, "is it possible – not in theory, but in the actual conditions of the real world today – to write about the oppressed without becoming one of the oppressors?" (Johnson-Bailey, 2001; Patai, 1991, 139).

I tentatively conclude that while this is a challenging space to navigate as a white anti-racist scholar, it is critically important for white people to support and share the voices of immigrants of colour. The burden of exposing, educating people about, and eliminating racism is not a project that must be conducted solely by people of colour. In fact, for white people not to participate in this emancipatory process would only serve to strengthen the colonial white-supremacist hetero-patriarchy that potentially marginalizes immigrants, Indigenous peoples, and

people of colour. I fully describe this personal academic journey and the development of my advocacy orientations in Appendix A.

Participant Recruitment

To identify possible participants for this study, I utilized snowball and purposeful sampling strategies appropriate for qualitative research (Creswell and Clark, 2007, 110). This was necessary because, in addition to selecting individuals from as many organizations in each city as possible, I needed to interview immigrants from different ethnic/racial communities to ensure that my sample reflected the ethno-racial compositions of Winnipeg and Edmonton. For example, the largest immigrant source country in both Manitoba and Alberta is the Philippines (Manitoba Labour and Immigration, 2014; Government of Alberta, 2011). It was important, therefore, to speak to individuals who self-identify as Filipinx when possible.[3]

Selecting participants working in newcomer-serving organizations required me to familiarize myself with the different agencies in each city before sending out recruitment information. Appendix C lists the services and organizations currently available to immigrants in Winnipeg and Edmonton. Given the relatively small number of service providers, I planned to interview at least one person from each agency until I reached a saturation point. In this context, saturation is the process whereby interviews provided significantly less variation in themes or issues (Creswell and Clark, 2007, 26).

[3] Increasingly, activists are revising language to become more comprehensive. So for example, rather than referring to Filipino/Filipina, the use of Filipinx provides an inclusive term that recognizes genderqueer, transgender and non-binary people by moving beyond binary categorizations of gender (Nievera-Lozano 2016).

Contacting service providers for interviews was a straightforward process, I sent introductory letters to executive directors and followed up with a phone call about a week later. Recruiting immigrant respondents for interviews was more challenging. For this reason, I built my own social capital by first interviewing service providers. I also connected with ethno-cultural organizations in each city. Through these contacts, I met individuals interested in participating in my study, and they also shared information with their friends and family members. Contacts in settlement services allowed me to post recruitment flyers, and some mentioned my research to newcomers who came to the agency. I also posted newspaper advertisements in the *Edmonton Journal* and the *Winnipeg Free Press* about my search for research participants. These strategies evolved during the process of my fieldwork, such as the decision to post a recruitment ad on Kijiji. This was a successful strategy because much like newspaper advertisements, it also reached participants who were not directly recruited through their associations with immigrant-serving organizations. I also learned that many immigrants search the voluntary section of Kijiji to find volunteer opportunities to fill their spare time, but also to acquire Canadian experience to overcome perceived deficits on their résumés.

Study Participants

It was very important that I maintained the anonymity of study participants, although the small community of immigrant settlement organizations in Edmonton and Winnipeg does increase the likelihood of identification for this group. Although immigrant participants were recruited from a broader pool, the risk of identification still exists. I removed any individual information that I perceived as leading to a risk of identification such as place of occupation and employment role. I also clearly indicated this risk to all participants, and adhered to the most rigorous research ethics requirements, as outlined by the University of Alberta Ethics Board and

the Canadian Tri-Council standards for the ethical conduct for research involving human subjects (Government of Canada, 2014). Participants of my study included 22 service providers and 38 immigrant professionals for a total of 60 individuals.

Table 1: Immigrant Demographics (N=38)

Category	
Mean Age (years) (SD)	36 (6.4)
Gender Male % (n) Female % (n)	 61 (23) 39 (15)
People of Colour % (n)	84 (32)
Mean length of time in Canada (years) (SD) Length of time in Canada (categories) < 1 year % (n) 1-4 years % (n) 5 years % (n)	5 (3.3) 42 (16) 42 (16) 16 (6)
Highest Completed Degree: PhD % (n) Master's % (n) Bachelor's % (n) College/Trades % (n)	 21 (8) 42 (16) 29 (11) 8 (3)
National Origin of Education: "Western" country % (n) "Non-western" country % (n)	 24 (9) 76 (29)
Currently employed % (n)	53 (20)
Of those currently employed: Continued Career % (n) Transitional Employment % (n) Survival Employment % (n)[4]	 40 (8) 20 (4) 40 (8)

Note: percentages may not equal 100 percent due to rounding

The service providers I interviewed represented 15 different immigrant settlement organizations, including immigrant support services within post-secondary institutions. Participants were employed in different levels in the hierarchy of organizations, including

[4] I conceptualize employment as a continuum between the continuation of career-related (or otherwise subjectively meaningful) employment on one side, with transitional employment (similar to previous career but not equivalent) somewhere in between and survival employment (unrelated, low-paid and often precarious work) on the other side. I explain these categories more in Paper 2.

executive directors, middle management, and front-line staff working as employment or settlement counsellors. Some of the agencies were the largest immigrant-serving organizations in the city, while others were small and served a more specific group of immigrants (e.g. women, professionals, particular ethnic or racial groups). See Appendix B for a summary description of each of the 60 individual participants.

Throughout the recruitment process, I tried to include a diverse range of perspectives via theoretical sampling. In both Winnipeg and Edmonton, the response from immigrant communities was overwhelming, and I had to decline participation for dozens of people. Recruitment began slowly, but as information about my research spread I was unable to include all the volunteers in the research. I initially based my selection criteria on broad characteristics such as being a skilled immigrant between the ages of 18 and 45. As recruitment continued, I made the decision to select younger people (under 25) and more women to balance out the sex distribution.

Data Collection

The University of Alberta Research Ethics Board approved this study, and interviews occurred between February and December 2013. During this timeframe, I was invited to several workshops and job fairs held at organizations in both cities. I received tours of all the organizations where I conducted interviews with service providers.[5] These activities allowed a limited degree of participant observation of the spaces where immigrant professionals and

[5] All interviews with immigrant participants occurred off-site from settlement organizations, generally at coffee shops, libraries and in the public spaces of several universities. Although some service providers shared information about this research with their clients, recruitment was independent of settlement workers.

service providers met and worked together. I also reviewed public documents such as organizational websites, annual reports and some organizations shared additional statistical reporting information from internal documents. I took detailed field notes during interviews and while present in the organizations. I transcribed interviews verbatim as quickly as possible after they occurred and used Nvivo 10 for analysis. Both data collection and analysis were daunting endeavours due to the multiple sites of research and the rich, detailed and extensive data compiled.

Ethnographies are descriptive and shaped both implicitly or explicitly by the motives, morality and characteristics of researchers (Shaffir, 1999). Moreover, there is no singular strategy for conducting ethnographic work. It is an intuitive process often learned as much through mentorship as it can be guided by the methodological literature (Shaffir, 1999). Data collection can include participant observation, interviews, unobtrusive measures and institutional records analysis amongst other techniques. A focused ethnographic approach limited my ability to conduct extensive fieldwork, but attending tours, workshops, and job fairs and waiting around in settlement organizations offered opportunities for participant observation. The combination of this limited observation along with interviews allowed me to come to understand research sites beyond the formal interview setting (Duneier, 1999). In sum, I gathered data in multiple ways, but semi-structured interviews were the primary strategic tool for data collection with the other elements of my data acting in a supplemental role.[6]

[6] In designing this project to include participants with varied life experiences (immigrants and service providers), there was an opportunity to utilize these viewpoints alongside participant observation, organizational reporting statistics and other public documents to avoid the ethnographic fallacy. In other words, I did not take participants' descriptions at face value and had the opportunity to be critical and ensure a careful balance between the agency of participants and systemic issues (Burawoy, 1998; Duneier, 1999).

To cover as many distinct themes as possible, I used semi-structured interview schedules, but remained sensitive to the experiences and needs of study participants. In other words, while I had prepared preliminary questions, I deviated from the interview schedule as needed to provide participants with the freedom to speak about their personal concerns and lived experiences. I started interviews with one broad question (See Appendix D) and allowed participants to speak with minimal interruptions or probing. When participants were finished with the top of mind responses they felt were important to express to me, and as we built rapport, I asked more direct questions about emerging dominant themes. I would leave time at the end of interview to ask more directed questions about specific topics. Interviews were audio-taped and transcribed verbatim except in the case of participants who were uncomfortable being recorded but who allowed me to take detailed notes about their experiences and responses to my questions.

Data Analysis

Analysis was a multi-stage process beginning with the field notes I compiled and ending with iterations of coding for general themes and sub-themes. To facilitate this process, I transcribed approximately two-thirds of the interviews verbatim as quickly as possible after they occurred. The remaining interviews were transcribed by a research assistant with experience in qualitative research. After receiving the transcripts and checking them for any obvious errors, I reviewed the text and often listened to recordings to reacquaint myself with the main themes that occurred in the interviews. Analysis involved reviewing transcripts as quickly as possible following their completion while referencing audio-recordings, field notes, and other data sources to develop preliminary themes. This highlighted broader connections that linked individual lived experiences to larger patterns within the labour market or settlement sector as well as to service workers' philosophies of service provision and their critiques and strategies for

working within the system to meet the needs of their clients (Creswell and Clark, 2007; Wall, 2015).

My coding philosophy was responsive to the data collection process and involved the iterative review of incoming data and allowed for adjustments to the interviewing process (Boeije, 2002; Glaser, 1965, 1992). Moreover, although I went into fieldwork and analysis remaining open to the meaning within the data, I also took a critical and purposeful approach that acknowledged how, as a researcher, I inevitably influence the data collected, particularly in a critical focused ethnographic approach that seeks emancipatory potential (Boeije, 2002; Creswell, 1994; Wall, 2015). I started this coding process in my field notes intuitively by noting what themes came up in interviews. Formal systematic analysis involved working through NVivo to highlight, group and assess the dominant themes and sub-themes that arose (Creswell and Clark, 2007). After determining the core message(s) from each participant, I collapsed or divided themes based on comparisons across all (or sub-sets) of participants, looking for similarities and contradictions (Boeiji, 2002). I also examined the percentages and frequencies of various themes that are reported in my substantive chapters. Interpreting the themes after compilation was a daunting task due to the complexity, richness and magnitude of findings. One of the common limitations of qualitative research is that it can be challenging to move past simply descriptive analyses. I focus on "a conceptualization of relationships" to move from simply describing what is going on to determine why and how these relationships and processes are impacting peoples' lives (Becker, 1993, 255). In sum, my data collection and analysis processes are not linear, but cyclical and constantly evolving in ways that required significant time, flexibility and creativity (Becker, 1993).

Summary of Substantive Papers

Four papers comprise the substantive portion of my dissertation. The papers are presented in the order that made the most sense analytically, although their structure evolved considerably during the writing process as I determined that certain chapters were too ambitious and required a more narrowed focus. The wealth and depth of data collected during this project provided many avenues for other papers that will take this study beyond my dissertation to build my ongoing research program.

The first paper outlines the role of immigrant-serving organizations within the fluid but persistent philosophy of neoliberalism and how this ideology informs and limits service providers in their work. The second paper examines the experiences of immigrants during their settlement process and employment search and highlights the phenomenon of immigrants wanting to return home and regretting their decisions to migrate to Canada. The third paper brings these two participant groups together to determine if service providers and immigrants perceive labour market challenges similarly, or if they have different understandings of the barriers immigrant professionals experience as they attempt to restart their careers in Canada. The fourth and final paper examines gaps in services from the perspectives of immigrants and service providers while also comparing Alberta and Manitoba to determine if there are significant differences between the two provinces. The first paper, "Teaching Somebody to Fish" has been published in *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, a peer-reviewed journal, and I am initiating the publication process with the other three papers.

Paper #1 – Teaching Somebody to Fish

The first paper examines what philosophies inform the strategies used by settlement service providers when they are assisting newcomer professionals to find employment. From a theoretical perspective, the tensions between neoliberal responsibility and critical anti-racist empowerment or advocacy roles create a challenging environment for the work that immigrant-serving organizations conduct with clients. The paper utilizes in-depth semi-structured interviews with 22 settlement service providers ranging from executive directors, to middle-management and front-line settlement practitioners. These interviews were split between the two research sites of Winnipeg, Manitoba and Edmonton, Alberta. Responses often both reinforced and rejected neoliberal ideologies due to the nuanced philosophical approaches of service providers. In other words, although the influence of neoliberal ideologies is apparent insofar as services overwhelmingly focus on individualistic professional development and personal accountability (i.e. responsibilization), participants indicated that they understood a need to go beyond their funding mandates to do the "deep settlement" work that involved advocacy and explicitly anti-racist orientations. Moreover, while many agencies are under- and precariously-funded, some of the bigger settlement agencies in the two cities can diversify their funding sources which provided some autonomy regarding program development. A primary contribution of this paper relates to an expansion of the literature on immigrant-serving organizations to include the strategies, philosophies and perspectives of ISOs in mid-sized Canadian cities while situating the complexities of these findings within the theoretical literature on neoliberal ideologies.

Paper #2 – Should I Stay or Go Home?

The second paper shifted the focus from settlement services to the lived experiences of immigrant professionals in mid-sized Canadian cities. Recent changes to economic immigration policy focus on adjusting entrance criteria to ensure that immigrants have the appropriate skills to obtain employment upon arrival. I conducted interviews with 38 newcomer professionals split between Winnipeg, Manitoba and Edmonton, Alberta to determine why they decided to come to Canada, what their experiences were during their search for career-related employment, and what their plans were for the future. Shaped by critical race theory, intersectionality and transnational feminism, this analysis identified how multiple statuses impacted the barriers that immigrant professionals faced. Moreover, the dominant themes illustrated how the false narrative of Canada as a welcoming society set immigrant professionals up for disappointment as they realized their credentials and experience would be undervalued or unrecognized. While some immigrants employed creative strategies to re-enter their careers or accepted transitional employment that was not equivalent to their experience, a substantial portion of participants indicated that they wished or planned to leave Canada because of their disappointed expectations. These findings indicated a need to create a streamlined and systematic approach for assessing international credentials, disseminate better (or more honest) information to immigrants prior to their decision to move to Canada, and develop effective policy solutions to address the discriminatory barriers related to Canadian experience and education. A primary contribution of this paper relates to how the notion of the traditional immigrant (in contrast to the transnational, ever mobile subject) still applies within the Canadian framework. In other words, many immigrants to Canada intend on staying in Canada permanently, but their disappointed expectations conflict with this goal.

Paper #3 – Perceptions of Labour Market Challenges

This paper brings together the 22 interviews with settlement workers and 38 interviews with immigrant professionals to ask if there were complementary or competing understandings of labour market challenges between the two groups. In other words, did service providers perceive challenges faced by newcomer professionals the same way as immigrants themselves? This paper draws primarily from Pierre Bourdieu's understandings of the different forms of capital to move beyond solely a human capital paradigm, and critical race theory to assess the similarities and differences between the perspectives of these two groups. Although there were overlapping understandings of labour market barriers between immigrants and service providers, there were also diverging views related to whether or not immigrants needed to adjust their expectations, work on language skills, and learn about workplace culture and norms. Moreover, service providers paid less attention to systemic concerns, while immigrants expressed frustration related to unrecognized credentials, discriminatory attitudes and situations, and the fact that they lacked the professional networks so critical to reintegrating into their professions. A primary contribution of this paper is in how it applies a cultural wealth understanding to the labour market. Drawn from Tara J. Yosso's (2005) critique of cultural capital in education and how marginalized communities' skills, strategies and experiences go unrecognized, the same framework is applicable in the employment experiences of immigrant professionals.

Paper #4 – Working Together or Not

The final paper in this dissertation assesses if settlement workers and immigrants are working together to overcome labour market exclusion. In other words, are the services provided helpful, how they could be improved, and are there any gaps in services. This paper draws from a critique of neoliberal ideologies linked together with critical race theory to provide a better

understanding of the systemic forces involved and if immigrant communities played a role in program development. This paper also outlines what services are available and the similarities and differences between service provision in Edmonton and Winnipeg. Alberta and Manitoba have significantly different political and economic conditions. Alberta's economy is driven by the oil and gas industry which is vulnerable during boom and bust cycles, while Manitoba has a slow, and sometimes stagnant, economic cycle that is less susceptible to extreme fluctuations. Moreover, both provinces have relatively well established right-leaning political histories, but at the time of this study Manitoba had a left-centrist New Democratic Party government while Alberta had a Progressive Conservative government in power. Moreover, until 2013, immigrant settlement services were administered provincially in Manitoba while settlement in Alberta was under Federal jurisdiction. These provincial idiosyncrasies and differing economic and political conditions did not necessarily lead to as many differences between the settlement sectors as I expected. Moreover, this paper identifies important policy implications regarding what services immigrant professionals found helpful (and not so helpful) and if immigrant communities were involved in the process of program development. A primary contribution of this paper lies in its conceptualization of what "working together" effectively means for these two groups based on participant experiences and the literature outlining effective anti-racist policy interventions.

Significance of My Research

My dissertation research on newcomer settlement is a unique and important project in the following ways: it focuses upon two mid-sized western Canadian cities; it is based on a multidimensional and theoretically driven research design; and it broadens the topics previously covered in both substantive and theoretical literature. As mentioned earlier, much of the literature surrounding newcomer settlement and service provision centres on the three major

cities of Canada. Scholars have not conducted broad and focused research on the settlement services in prairie provinces and provincial governments increasingly invite newcomers to settle in cities like Edmonton and Winnipeg. Therefore, it is essential to examine the settlement organizations and integration processes in smaller Canadian cities. This allows for a better understanding of the needs of the community, and can provide context-specific information to guide policy development. Additionally, a comparative approach can provide insights that might not emerge from single-location studies. There are also few studies examining the impact of Provincial Nominee Programs; my project can contribute to a better understanding of the tensions and dynamics between provincial and federal governments over immigration policy and services.

A second contribution of this project is its multifaceted research design, and the integration of sociological theory that conceptualizes this approach. The several complementary theoretical perspectives used in this study assess how different actors may work together, but also provided the space and framework to align my research as anti-racist in nature. My research contributes to the theoretical literature by using critical race theory to examine the experiences of newcomer professionals in Canada, and also by framing how neoliberalism influences individuals (clients and service workers) along with its systemic impacts.

I use the term "multifaceted research design" to indicate the inclusion of service providers acting as representatives of organizations, and newcomers themselves in their capacity as clients or potential users of services. Newcomers and service providers sometimes had quite different interpretations of immigrant needs, labour market conditions and barriers. This may be

valuable information for the development of future services and anti-racist policy. Much of the previous research only focuses upon settlement agencies or newcomer groups as isolated components. There is a general acknowledgement that these are cooperative groups, but earlier work often limited the focus on one or the other. There are significant power differences between governments, settlement agencies, communities, and newcomers themselves. It is crucial to ensure that agencies and governmental bodies include their clients in the process of designing policies and services. Furthermore, governments also hold power over the settlement sector and limit the capacity for immigrant-serving organizations to maintain autonomy over program development.

Another substantive contribution of my work is a broadening of the literature on the experiences of newcomer professionals with the labour market, on newcomer-focused social services and immigration research in mid-sized Canadian cities. Much previous research has focused on physical and psychological health services, and these are significant issues, but there is a need to expand the existing research to examine issues of employment, housing, discrimination, child-care, and other essential components of the support that newcomers require. I focused specifically upon employment to scale down the scope of my project, but participants also expressed concerns related to these other interconnected areas. Moreover, unequal access to the employment market is often exacerbated by a lack of adequate housing or child-care. I emphasize that employment is a major priority because without adequate job opportunities, newcomers do not have the financial security to improve upon other problems they might be experiencing.

Lastly, this research extends the theoretical literature in multiple ways, but most significantly by extending the model of community cultural wealth to the cultural capital of newcomer professionals. Yosso's (2005) community cultural wealth model previously focused on primarily educational settings, but within the labour market, similar devaluations of capital occur when varied experiences are judged against a white-settler colonial norm. (Espino, 2014; Gosine and Islam, 2014; O'Shea, 2016; Murakami, Jean-Marie, Santamaría and Lopez, 2016) In the way that educational institutions do not recognize the value within marginalized communities, immigrant professionals (and service providers) identified how employers do not value the contributions of immigrants and their communities. Immigrants bring multi-lingual, cross-cultural understandings and potentially new ideas and worldviews to the workplace that should be valued from a community cultural wealth model rather than deficit based thinking. Additionally, intersectional feminist research approaches previously focused on the association between under/unemployment and immigrant health, and usually in the big three destination cities in Canada (Premji and Shakya, 2017). This work broadens the lens to incorporate research with immigrant professionals in smaller cities like Winnipeg and Edmonton.

Paper 1: "Teaching Somebody to Fish": Implications for Immigrant-Serving Organizations and Employment in Edmonton and Winnipeg

Abstract
Provincial governments increasingly develop strategies that attract immigrants to settle in the prairie provinces. Although considerable research examines the role of settlement services in larger cities such as Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver, there is less information regarding mid-sized cities. Increasingly, newcomers are moving to Manitoba and Alberta due to real or perceived economic opportunities. Unfortunately, some immigrants experience difficulties during their settlement process, and their varied needs create challenges for immigrant-serving organizations as they develop programs. This study explores how philosophies of empowerment influence service providers and their programs for working with professional newcomers searching for meaningful employment. Semi-structured interviews with 22 service providers in Edmonton and Winnipeg illustrate how tensions between competing notions of empowerment and neoliberal ideologies interact to guide how service providers assist immigrants. Although empowerment is a goal of service provision, limited funding and resources may constrain the advocacy role of organizations.

Résumé
Les gouvernements provinciaux développent de plus en plus des stratégies qui attirent les immigrants à s'installer dans les provinces des prairies. Bien que d'importantes recherches examinent le rôle des services d'établissement dans métropoles comme Toronto, Montréal et Vancouver, il y a moins d'informations concernant les villes moyennes. De plus en plus, les nouveaux arrivants déménagent pour le Manitoba et l'Alberta en raison des opportunités économiques réelles et perçues. Malheureusement, certains immigrants rencontrent des difficultés au cours de leur processus d'intégration, et leurs besoins divers constituent un véritable défi pour les organismes d'aide aux immigrants dans l'élaboration de leurs programmes. Cette étude vise à explorer comment les philosophies d'autonomisation influencent les pourvoyeurs de service ainsi que leurs programmes dans leur travail avec les nouveaux arrivants qualifiés pour la recherche d'emplois significatifs. Les entrevues réalisées auprès de 22 pourvoyeurs de services semi-structurés à Edmonton et à Winnipeg illustrent les rivalités entre les notions d'autonomisation et les idéologies néolibérales qui interagissent pour orienter les pourvoyeurs de services afin qu'ils assistent mieux les immigrants. Bien que l'autonomisation soit l'objectif de ces prestations des services, les financements et ressources limités pourraient restreindre le rôle de plaidoyer des organismes.

INTRODUCTION

This study challenges the notion that the declining employment outcomes of immigrant professionals are individualistic problems, and rather, I argue that immigrant-serving organizations, newcomers, and governments must work together to address broader systemic barriers to meaningful employment. One approach to promote systemic change in the labour market could involve an advocacy role within service provision that empowers and promotes the political inclusion of clients and their communities. Advocacy in service provision is important because there are significant obstacles for many immigrants as they search for jobs related to their educational credentials or previous careers. Employment services are the primary focus of this research because insufficient financial stability compromises full participation and inclusion in Canadian society (Breton, 2000; Danso, 2002). I analyze interviews with representatives of immigrant-serving agencies in Edmonton, Alberta, and Winnipeg, Manitoba to determine how they are or are not contributing to the process of immigrants finding satisfactory employment. I conceptualize effective advocacy as a collaborative process where agencies and immigrants work together to navigate a labour market characterized by prevalent ethno-racial inequality.

The turbulent history of Canadian immigration policy involved overtly racist preferences for immigrants of white racialized origins (Driedger and Halli, 1999; Isajiw, 1999; Simich, Beiser, Stewart and Mwakarimba, 2005). In 1967, immigration reform shifted selection criteria to a points-based system with greater focus on human capital rather than country of origin or racial background (George, 2002; Li, 2000a). With the passage of the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* in 1988, Canada embarked upon the road of official multiculturalism to become a nation perceived as celebrating diversity (Knowles, 2000; Li, 2000a; Winnemore and Biles, 2006).

Immigration policy also shifted to focus on attracting "highly skilled" professionals, and many now arrive with advanced educational credentials and occupational experience (Li, 2000b, 2001; Reitz, 2007). Despite these positive changes to immigration policies, many newcomers face challenges obtaining stable employment that would facilitate their full inclusion in Canadian society (Bauder, 2003; Bonikowska, Hou and Picot, 2011). It is common for people to obtain survival jobs while they attempt to continue their careers (Bauder, 2003; Buzdugan and Halli, 2009; Creese and Wiebe, 2009). These survival employment trajectories typically involve low-skilled and low-paid positions that do not provide the financial stability necessary for ensuring that immigrants have the resources to adjust to their new communities and "get ahead" economically. These observations illustrate the inherent contradictions between the ideal of a primarily welcoming Canadian society and the barriers experienced by newcomers.

There are complex factors behind the obstacles many newcomers face in the labour market. Employers and professional regulatory associations perceive credentials from "foreign" nations as having less value than those obtained in Canada (Bauder, 2003; Buzdugan and Halli, 2009; Lauer, Wilkinson, Chung Yan, Sin and Tat Tsang, 2012). There is also a demand for "Canadian experience" from immigrants despite their high qualifications (Bauder, 2003; Danso, 2002; Neuwirth, 1999). Research indicates that many newcomers consider leaving the country because of a lack of access to employment opportunities (Dean and Wilson, 2009). These findings are significant on two levels. First, the lack of opportunity for immigrants is a form of exclusion requiring action to promote equity in the labour market. Second, the devaluing of highly skilled immigrants represents enormous wasted potential for the Canadian economy (Caidi and Allard, 2005; Reitz, 2001). Multiple actors must work together to ensure an equitable

labour market, but as immigrants increasingly settle in the prairie provinces, it is crucial for the government to support a progressive settlement system to assist them if they face challenges finding work.

Newcomer-serving agencies are an important resource for immigrants searching for careers in Canada. There is limited research examining settlement agencies, and most existing studies focus upon the three largest Canadian cities (Creese, 2011; George and Chaze, 2009; Ku, 2011; Richmond and Shields, 2005). Manitoba and Alberta plan to attract immigrants to meet labour market demands, and it is important to examine if there are adequate resources in place to support them once they arrive (Government of Alberta, 2005; Manitoba Immigration and Multiculturalism, 2012). Although differences exist between them, this study focuses upon non-profit, government-funded service providers, ethno-cultural organizations, and community-based groups. This broad focus captures the idea that services should remain flexible to meet the diverse needs of clients and the community (George, 2002). Research conducted by the Canadian Immigrant Settlement Sector Alliance (CISSA-ACSEI) indicated that settlement agencies supported "individual immigrants" and recognized a need to expand their focus from individuals to families and communities (Burstein, 2010). I emphasize employment because it is a major factor necessary for the meaningful inclusion of newcomers in Canadian society. Organizations must work together with their clients, governments and employers to ensure that immigrants have access to employment opportunities at the beginning of the settlement process. As participants in my study suggest, services designed to assist newcomers find or re-start careers can reduce the impact of obstacles such as limited social capital, unfamiliarity with the Canadian workplace, losing hope, and the lack of credential recognition. This range of services, however,

places emphasis on newcomer adaptation with a limited mandate for advocacy that may help promote systemic change. I utilize concepts of advocacy and empowerment for immigrants, in contrast to neoliberalism's emphasis on the self-governance of individuals and self-sufficient communities.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: TENSIONS BETWEEN EMPOWERMENT AND NEOLIBERALISM

Currently, human capital explanations and policy interventions are common models for examining differential employment outcomes for newcomers versus Canadian-born individuals. These approaches are problematic because they do not address the multiple forms of capital that are involved, such as social and cultural resources (George and Chaze, 2009). Moreover, individualistic frameworks do not address systemic barriers that exclude immigrants from obtaining meaningful employment opportunities. This individualistic focus is due to the dominance of neoliberal ideologies in Canadian society that inform and guide both policy and service provision (Creese, 2011). Although immigrants face numerous systemic barriers to employment, social support is a major benefit provided by the settlement system (Gibb, Hamdon and Jamal, 2008; Simich et al., 2005). In addition to necessary services, it is crucial for immigrant-serving organizations to collaborate with newcomers and communities in an advocacy role that moves beyond focusing upon the "deficits" of individuals. In contrast, empowerment as a goal of service provision with newcomer clients is a helpful concept.

Empowerment in Service Provision

Employment services typically involve essential services such as education, training, computer literacy, workshops, vocational training, job placement, internships, mentorship and bridging programs (Benner, LoPresti, Matsuoka, Pastor and Rosner, 2005). Organizations also provide services that facilitate employment such as housing, day-care, and legal supports. Research suggests that psychosocial empowerment through interventions to improve the employment status of immigrants will result in more positive outcomes (Garcia-Ramirez, Martinez, Balcazar, Suarez-Balcazar, Albar, Dominguez and Santolaya, 2005; George, 2002). These strategies focus upon the improvement of individuals as an effective solution to immigrant underemployment. The problem with this approach is that the barriers immigrants experience during the employment search are not always individualistic challenges. Rather, there are widespread systemic issues related to a lack of credential recognition and discrimination (Galabuzi, 2008; Li, 2001). Therefore, immigrant-serving organizations should also work to change the systemic barriers faced by newcomers in the labour market, rather than stopping at the provision of necessary services.

Overcoming systemic barriers in the labour market involves developing a collective consciousness leading to broader civic participation amongst groups experiencing marginalization (Benner et al., 2005). Moreover, empowerment is traditionally viewed as an "emancipation process in which the disadvantaged are empowered to exercise their rights, obtain access to resources, and participate actively in the process of shaping society and making decisions" (Luttrell, Quirz, Scrutton and Bird, 2009, 2). I see these activities as a form of empowerment that works to counter neoliberalism because although civic engagement alone will not ameliorate systemic barriers, it is an important step towards ensuring all voices are included

in the political arena. Therefore, in addition to providing training to individual newcomers, organizations should work together with immigrants and communities to develop social movements calling for broader labour market changes. This framework emphasizes an advocacy role to empower immigrants and allies to promote broader change to reduce barriers they experience rather than focus upon "improving" the individual.

Following this approach, I conceptualize "positive" notions of empowerment as linked to political collective action to reduce employment barriers experienced by immigrants, in addition to "a transition from a state of powerlessness to a state of more control over one's life, fate and environment" (Sadan, 2004, 13). It is essential to support individuals in their employment search, but advocacy and political engagement strategies are necessary to address broader systemic barriers that prevent meaningful employment. These positive aspects of empowerment are in contrast to neoliberal self-organization of communities, where social services avoid systemic problems to focus upon individual responsibility and accountability. The contrast between the individual-level and "positive" empowerment through advocacy is important because of how participants in this study characterize their work.

Empowerment or Neoliberalism?

Empowerment language may mask the influence of neoliberal ideology that demands the self-organization of communities and places responsibility on individuals and families to address market inadequacies. For this study, I conceptualize neoliberalism in service provision as individualistic training with an emphasis on personal accountability. This perspective expects that newcomers should be able to overcome barriers in the labour market if they improve their

credentials, obtain Canadian experience, and quite simply, work harder. This viewpoint does not address systemic barriers that exclude immigrants from obtaining meaningful employment opportunities. An individualistic focus is due to the dominance of neoliberal ideologies in Canadian society that inform and guide both policy development and service provision (Creese, 2011). Neoliberal governance is highly adaptable, but has core goals despite varying socio-political contexts (Duggan, 2003; Hardt and Negri, 2000; Ong, 2006). Importantly, neoliberal rationality is the "new relationship between governments and knowledge through which governing activities are recast as non-political and non-ideological problems that need technical solutions" (Ong, 2006, 3). These strategies prioritize individualized program strategies over broader political advocacy. Neoliberal ideology is dominant in Canada, and has an impact on the experiences of immigrants during their employment search (Creese, 2011; Ku, 2011). From a neoliberal perspective, when newcomers fail in the labour market it is either because the immigration system is selecting the "wrong sorts" of immigrants, or they have not been working "hard enough" to integrate into the Canadian workforce.

Neoliberalism affects the employment outcomes of newcomers and plays a role in the provision of settlement and employment related services. Within neoliberalism, a strict separation between civil society and the state is necessary to best facilitate the free choice of citizens (Duggan, 2003; Jessop, 2002). In other words, state intervention is an intrusion that prohibits the freedom of individuals, and therefore, the community is responsible for supporting people who are unable to find employment. Rather than acknowledging systemic problems facing newcomers when they are trying to obtain employment, a neoliberal government "downloads" accountability to the community and individuals themselves. These policies shift focus to the "personal responsibility of the family and civil society" and divert social service

costs from state agencies to individuals and their households (Duggan, 2003, 14). Proponents of this perspective see unemployment as the result of newcomers' individual deficiencies, and neoliberal pressures reduce the availability, autonomy and efficacy of settlement services. Importantly, neoliberal ideology constrains service providers to intervene at the individual level, thereby reducing broader anti-racist and anti-oppression advocacy work.

I utilize these concepts because I observed a tension between empowerment and neoliberal positions in my interviews with service providers. Empowerment themes took on both "positive" forms while also being coopted by neoliberal influences. On the one hand, some representatives of agencies were actively engaged in advocacy and positive empowerment in the capacity where they were assisting newcomers to obtain Canadian citizenship, and to become actively involved in civic and political life. Overshadowing these positive activities are a focus on improving perceived individual deficits with educational upgrading, résumé preparations, and workshops related to teaching Canadian cultural norms (rather than workshops to facilitate more welcoming workplaces, although these activities exist as well, but are marginal in comparison). While some adjustment is necessary for newcomers attempting to enter the Canadian labour force for the first time, there should be an equal focus on adaptation by local employers and communities. Neoliberal empowerment in the latter sense involved a perception expressed by service providers that their clients were empowered because of an improvement in their professional skills. The results will outline how the distinction between advocacy leading to positive empowerment and neoliberal "empowerment" was not always clear due to nuanced responses from participants.

METHODOLOGY

This study examines the role of settlement organizations in assisting skilled-immigrant professionals find meaningful career-related employment. I conceptualize employment on a continuum between survival, transitional, and meaningful opportunities. Survival employment includes jobs that are completely unrelated to individuals' credentials and experience such as service, unskilled labour, and retail sectors (McCoy and Masuch, 2007). Transitional employment relates to someone's previous career and credentials, but is usually at an entry level, or is not quite equivalent to the job status they left behind in their country of origin. An example provided by one of the respondents was that an engineer could work in a firm as a draftsperson. Although an engineering degree is not required to work in this role, this position provided the Canadian experience required by internationally trained engineers for accreditation through the Alberta and Manitoba Professional Engineers and Geoscientists Associations (APEGA and APEGM). Transitional employment has the potential, therefore, to be "meaningful" employment. Some service provider participants expressed a perception that this was often sufficient for clients, as they would be making a decent wage, and were working in a position related to their previous careers. Meaningful employment relates to both individuals' subjective satisfaction with their current job, and whether this current position matches previous experience and credentials (O'Brien, 2003). I argue that immigrant-serving organizations attempt to facilitate meaningful employment outcomes, but work within the constraints of neoliberal ideology that places the burden upon individuals. Unfortunately, this means that newcomers with high levels of education and previously well-established careers may have to settle for employment well below their skill level and expertise.

With this background in mind, three related research questions guide my analysis. The first determines if immigrant-serving agencies are utilizing positive or individualistic notions of empowerment with their professional newcomer clients. The second examines how the services provided may relate to building confidence and empowerment and what activities providers perceive as most necessary. My final question asks what philosophies and strategies inform the way service providers approach helping clients. In other words, do service workers focus on positive empowerment, or on the neoliberal themes of addressing individual "deficiencies" and relying upon the community and individuals to be self-sufficient "ideal" immigrants (Abu-Laban, 1998; Li, 2003b).

To answer these questions, I conducted 22 in-depth semi-structured interviews with front-line employment counsellors, program managers, and executive directors of immigrant-serving organizations in the cities of Edmonton, Alberta and Winnipeg, Manitoba. Snowball, theoretical and opportunity sampling procedures ensured participants represented the wide range of agencies and services provided. The agencies participating in the study included the largest newcomer-serving organizations, as well as smaller ethno-specific community groups. Although I primarily focused my theoretical sampling to select employment services, most of the organizations have a broader range of services provided on-site, and see employment as only one component in the settlement process. I developed a theme list to guide interviews, and this article outlines two major topics of "empowerment" work and "neoliberal" pressures. The University of Alberta Research Ethics Board approved this study, and interviews occurred between February and December 2013.

I utilized NVivo 10 for the coding and subsequent analysis of the results. Participants often discussed issues of empowerment, confidence building and their clients' independence. Occasionally, when the discussion warranted, I probed about issues such as advocacy for clients, listening to clients, community consultation, and political inclusion. If no discussion of empowerment occurred spontaneously, I asked specific questions about whether or not the service provider focused on empowerment, advocacy, and/or building confidence in their work. Hope also arose as a common response, and relates both to empowerment, and to notions of neoliberal self-governance. My research philosophy allows me to focus on the "meaning that the participants hold about the problem or issue" rather than on my initial assumptions or interpretations of the existing literature (Creswell, 2008, 175). For example, in the early stages of my study I anticipated a greater dominance of neoliberalism to emerge during interviews, but as fieldwork continued this assumption required a shift to acknowledge that this was not the case. Therefore, results contained nuanced themes related to what I consider a continuum, with the empowerment of newcomers on one side, and the pressures of neoliberal ideology on the other. In other words, rather than being two distinct categories, empowerment discourse often worked together with neoliberalism in unexpected ways.

RESULTS

Overall, I received nuanced responses from participants representing newcomer-serving organizations in Edmonton and Winnipeg. Many service workers interpreted empowerment in various ways, but recurring themes included developing confidence and independence for clients. Some respondents perceived a community development component to their programming. I argue that there is tension between empowerment "in a good sense" and the

downloading of responsibility onto communities and individuals to solve or overcome market inadequacies. In fact, despite awareness amongst agencies to teach employers about the skills and abilities of immigrants, there remains too great a focus upon solving the so-called deficits of individuals. Commonly raised issues include the fact that immigrants might not be familiar or comfortable in the Canadian workplace because they may not understand the norms involved. Participants suggested that it may be easy to find a job, but keeping a job may be challenging due to a lack of understanding Canadian workplace culture.

Building Confidence and Moving Beyond Job Retention

Local economic conditions are important, as the tar sands and broader oil and gas industry drive boom and bust cycles of the Alberta economy, while in Manitoba, economic growth has been slow with long periods of stagnation (Mansell and Schlenker, 2006; Mansell and Percy, 1990). Due to a "hot" Alberta economy, newcomers to the province may be able to obtain employment relatively quickly as compared to other provinces. At the time of this study, the national unemployment rate for Canadian-born workers aged 25-54 was 5.3 percent compared to a rate of 7.7 percent for landed immigrants. The Alberta unemployment rate for Canadian-born individuals was 3.5 percent and 5.0 percent for landed immigrants (Statistics Canada, 2014). In Manitoba, the unemployment rate was 4.1 percent for Canadian-born workers and 5.4 percent for landed immigrants (Statistics Canada, 2014). Although these rates were similar between the two provinces, one interesting side note was that Alberta participants commonly mentioned economic boom cycles as a major factor for employment outcomes, but Manitoba service providers did not see similar economic trends as significant. Nonetheless, there is a need for skilled labour in the prairie provinces, and many people discussed how this provided more opportunities for their clients.

Local employers benefit greatly from highly skilled immigrant labour and some of these companies move people into management roles. This influences the type of employment preparation provided by newcomer-serving agencies:

> [W]e would be doing leadership language, speaking with more confidence, not cultural stuff or English – basic English, it would be professional language and exuding confidence, so those guys have figured things out and they're trying to develop leadership capacity with their newcomer hires not retention. They've moved past retention and now they're wanting to move those – the stronger, harder working newcomers into more of a management role **[Edm.Service.Worker.2]**.
>
> **JT – So, as more newcomers and more diverse folks get into companies and kind of get up into management then they'll be the ones doing the hiring right?**
> Absolutely, yeah, absolutely. And it does take a while right, once they get there then everything will change. But um, yeah of course, you know it's – there's so many factors, cultural factors that somebody to kind of move from an entry level to management you've got to have a good knowledge of the Canadian workplace culture and how things get done in Canada and all that **[Wpg.Service.Worker.3]**.

While some of these examples involved retail companies moving cashiers into management roles, other discussions indicate that immigrants are able to find employment related to their previous skills and experience. Interestingly, the first quote emphasized that the stronger and harder working newcomers were moving into management roles, and although this is not surprising, it suggests that individuals will succeed if they just work hard enough. There is also an implication that immigrants first must learn basic English and be comfortable with Canadian culture before they will advance. Moreover, the second statement echoes this theme (after probing), that there are many "cultural factors" and knowledge for newcomers to learn before they will be proficient managers within the Canadian context. Participants frequently relayed neoliberal themes in their comments without critical reflection. This illustrates the neoliberal

perception of the labour market as a meritocratic space whereby those who work hard receive sufficient reward for their endeavors.

In Edmonton, many participants indicated that the "hot" labour market was providing benefits for newcomers in terms of their employment searches, but reflected upon the challenges they experienced once they entered their new workplace. A mentorship program (which matches skilled immigrant professionals with employers in their fields) works to address these issues:

> [I]t's about mentorship and relationship building, developing confidence, understanding some of the, again, the particularities of a Canadian workplace. That's what that relationship is, building social capital. So that's essentially what that's about. If you get a job, bonus, um, and it's our hope as well but we don't actually get funded to do that. We get funded to help them, in sort of preparing them for the workplace. So, and the idea again, and I really like this concept because it is that sort of, you know, teaching somebody to fish right? At the end of the day, you know, yeah it can be very easy to connect them to employment, but will they be able to retain it **[Edm.Service.Worker.9]**?

The "teaching somebody to fish" metaphor is important because it illustrates a common neoliberal theme of many of my discussions with service providers. Implicit within this response is that newcomers might not necessarily be independent, and therefore, there is an assumption that they must build their capacity to be self-governing. This same passage emphasizes another dominant topic as agency workers outlined examples of how immigrants who found employment may experience difficulties "integrating" into the workplace. Although the shared norms of the Canadian workplace may be unfamiliar to some people when they start a job, it is important to focus both upon the adjustment of newcomers to Canada, and to our increasingly diverse workplaces (Miller and Rowney, 1999). Interestingly, participants also provided nuanced

perspectives by moving from an emphasis upon the individual to discuss how programs challenged stereotypes and discrimination amongst employers.

Although responses related to empowerment often reflected the influence of neoliberal expectations of immigrants to adapt to Canadian society, there were contradictions that illustrated how some organizations work to change the perceptions of employers as well. Some of interviewees described the need for adjustment on the employers' end, but sometimes only when I asked if employers needed to create workplaces that are more inclusive. In one interview, the participant expressed a need for building independence with the "teaching somebody to fish" metaphor, but later reflected upon how employers needed to change as well:

> I always look at it as a two-way street, and everybody has to meet somewhere halfway. For immigrants it can't be all just helping them out, they've got to move in that direction, and the same with employers. Employers shouldn't have to take them and meet them all the way to the other side, they should come half-way. And so, all of our events, and all of our initiatives we're really trying to hit two populations, the immigrant that's trying to find work here, but also the employer who may not realize how difficult it is, you know, the immigrant journey. And, you know, you get the classic sometimes, mentors will come in and say 'I don't understand why immigrants can't find work' you know? So, even though we're in a really good situation in Edmonton and Alberta right now, there's still a lot of people looking for work. Immigrants especially, because of peoples' attitudes towards immigrants, or accents, or optics, or – and so, when a lot of those people with those attitudes come in and realize, after, you know, some time with their mentee they realize that it's not quite so easy. So, those kinds of epiphanies are really important, and discoveries – for the Canadian as much as it is for the immigrant **[Edm.Service.Worker.9]**.

Interestingly, this service provider indicated how the local context played a role, as some employers simply did not believe that immigrants had difficulties finding employment, because how could this be possible in a labour market context characterized by persistent shortages of all

types of labour? While participants emphasized the importance of building independence and teaching newcomers the norms of the Canadian workplace, they also expressed how their program worked to teach employers about the "immigrant journey". These two themes occurred in the same interview, but not all service providers mentioned similar responses. In the Winnipeg context, the discourse of educating employers was extremely important for one of the larger agencies in the city:

> We also have to work towards getting employers engaged, so we bring them here as much as we can because a lot of them don't have a clear idea of what a newcomer brings to the table. So, we bring them here, we sometimes take them to classes to get the attendees to introduce themselves, and they're just blown away at how they communicate. It's like they're probably thinking when they come in that they won't even know how to speak, but they're just blown away by the quality, and then they hear 'I have a master's' or 'I have a PhD, I have 15 years of experience' … wow. It's just like an eye opener for some **[Wpg.Service.Worker.2]**.

Although some agencies acknowledged that employers also shared responsibility for adaptation, the responsibility generally focused upon clients' adjustment to the Canadian workplace. Returning to another theme I heard from numerous interviewees, newcomers searching for work can face challenges based on appearance, accents and other discriminatory attitudes. Racial discrimination in Canada remains a significant issue contributing to the disempowerment of immigrants.

Discrimination and Confidence

Some of the strongest examples of empowerment revolved around providing support and working with clients to help them cope with discrimination. Racism remains an issue for newcomers to Canada who are racialized as people of colour. While prejudicial perceptions of

certain types of immigrants create barriers for their entry into the labour force, discrimination also affects emotional health and well-being. The result may be disempowerment that potentially leads to marginalization. One agency worker described this difficult experience:

> [P]art of this is that people who experience discrimination often don't acknowledge it themselves, often new immigrants to Canada will be so happy to be here, in this place that is supposed to be a wonderful place that they won't see the discrimination as discrimination. … So, that is a barrier to people succeeding because it – you just internalize it, it becomes an internalized issue and you blame yourself and that's when stress increases and all those kinds of health issues, ability to perform on the job is affected. So if those people get support in any way, family members, friends, agencies to help them recognize what they're dealing with, then you can work on strategies to deal with it **[Edm.Service.Worker.5]**.

In other words, discrimination can be a real barrier for empowerment. Internalized oppression—for example, if immigrants incorrectly believe that their skills are inferior to Canadian-acquired credentials and experience—may prevent people from thinking there are alternative explanations for the barriers faced in the labour market (Luttrell et al., 2009). Discrimination is not always overt, and may be difficult to identify, as another service provider reflected upon how important it is for newcomers to be aware of their rights:

> I try to help to tell them about the reality no matter what the benchmark level that they have – the reality of their life, you're looking for a job and you have this job, so what happens when you're working, you know? So I would tell them, the simplest explanation about their basic rights, you know? Sometimes the exploitation is not seen, you know, it's not about physical – the physical work or everything, it may not be about the wage. But, you know, there are different ways **[Wpg.Service.Worker.1]**.

This previous participant highlighted the important role that service providers play to help familiarize newcomers with their rights within the Canadian workplace. Not all immigrants may

need rights education, and they may not be at risk of exploitation, but it is essential for service providers to be prepared to act in this advocacy role.

Many participants acknowledged that discrimination creates obstacles to meaningful employment, and that this affects the confidence of newcomer professionals. Interestingly, most participants also said that the situation was "improving" and was "much better than it used to be" and referred to the reality of demographic shifts in the composition of the labour force. For example, one participant reflected on these changes:

> It's more about the skills and what they can bring to the table, so now, having said that of course there's still employers that, you know, don't really understand about diversity and current immigration trends. The workforce that we have, that's really what we have, so down the road there's not going to be an opportunity to pick and choose. You've got to deal with what you have. And uh, so yeah, that's – there's still certainly discrimination, all across, in all industries, in all companies, small firms, small to large **[Wpg.Service.Worker.4]**.

It is unfortunate that a strategy for systemic change is to rely upon the changing demographic reality that employers will no longer have the choice to continue with discriminatory hiring practices. Although service providers acknowledged discrimination, it was often easier for them to articulate that newcomers needed to learn about Canadian workplace culture if they lacked "Canadian experience." Some participants reflected on the injustice of employers requiring Canadian experience, but many did not challenge this problematic request, and shared the related idea that newcomers need to adapt to the Canadian workplace. I wonder about how many misunderstandings in the workplace exist due to immigrants "not understanding," or if other factors, such as less than welcoming environments, play a role.

Community Self-Governance versus Collaborative Advocacy

One continuing tension involves working with communities in developing solidarity or collective consciousness, and depending too heavily upon the community for assisting newcomers rather than calling upon the government and settlement agencies. Agencies in both cities do frequently meet with community leaders to determine their needs. Although sometimes an underlying theme indicates that agencies work to ensure communities support themselves:

> [O]ur spot in the spectrum, so if you look at [another agency] or the ethnic communities themselves, they're just trying to ensure that there's a lack of isolation, that people come out of their houses and things like that. We do a bit of that, but we would be generally the next step, and so we're working with community leaders to build capacity in the community, to support the next family that comes in **[Edm.Service.Worker.2]**.

Clearly, this approach prefers that communities are self-sustaining, instead of focusing upon broader emancipatory themes for communities that may be experiencing marginalization. This is certainly not to say that immigrant-serving organizations are downloading responsibility onto community leaders, but it is important that these shifts in philosophy do not take that route in the future. Building community capacity would ideally involve promoting empowerment insofar as an organization supports and works collaboratively to nurture the community's identity and political voice (Benner et al., 2005). This is because the fragmentation, isolation, or marginalization of immigrant communities also contributes to the challenges newcomers face during their employment search. In other words, if a community lacks political agency and organization, they are less able to lobby for improvements. Although this strategy itself closely resembles techniques for more effective self-governance, it is important that political arenas include immigrant voices. This is where organizations can play a vital advocacy role, and community organizing is one of the most important roles that a settlement agency can take on

(Benner et al., 2005; Creese, 2011). What is crucial, however, is that these community-building approaches incorporate meaningful advocacy, rather than focusing upon solely building capacities for self-management. Unfortunately, although there may be a will amongst practitioners to do more than focus on individual improvements, a lack of economic resources makes it challenging. Some agency workers expressed a sense of frustration at their inability to do "deep settlement" work that involved working with the whole community:

> [O]ne would be economic reality, just being too hard to make a go of it that's really sustainable, and then social cohesion at the sort of basic family level, as well as making meaningful contact. I'd say that's the thing I bump up against personally most, the frustration that we can't, or that we have not yet found a way to support a more integrative whole community, just first steps **[Edm.Service.Worker.4]**.

This statement illustrates the important point that even if an organization recognizes a need for advocacy, they may not have the capacity to take on such a role. In another interview, an executive director expressed to me how their agency often took on a major role as an advocate, because it might be difficult for smaller organizations to confront broader social issues. Simply put, there is a perception that if smaller organizations spoke out to the media against a certain policy direction, they may receive backlash for doing so. Several agencies described the care they take when speaking to the media due to a fear of losing additional funding dollars. This raises an important point about how non-profit organizations are constrained by the contracts they sign to obtain funding from primarily governmental bodies (Creese, 2011; Thomas, 2009). Autonomy may be limited to the mandates outlined in their funding contracts, and this may prohibit the development of programs that could promote ideals of community empowerment.

Hope Makes the Difference

Hope was a common theme in the responses from service providers. When the discussion moved towards a focus upon hope, issues of empowerment, confidence, and the importance of meaningful employment often followed:

> I also see the sustainability of peoples' livelihoods. So to assist people to find something that's really sustainable and satisfying and nurturing, and where the peoples' talents and hopes, the things that they really want to do with their lives, that there's a hope of meeting those, rather than getting stuck driving a taxi and just making it from month to month. This isn't a bad thing, but so many people are just putting all their hopes in their kids, and that's not a bad thing, but you know, people shouldn't just have to live for their children. Their children aren't necessarily having an easy time of it either **[Edm.Service.Worker.4]**.

Sometimes newcomers take survival jobs to support their families with the aspirations that their children will be able to succeed in Canada. Despite their lack of hope for themselves, which some agency workers attempt to ameliorate, there is a hopeful optimism for their children. One front-line employment worker described hope as a central component of the work they did at the agency:

> You know, so there's a lot of empowerment and encouragement that goes on because they're usually homesick too. So, they need hope. They need hope, and then if you get somebody like a settlement counselor, an employment practitioner, who specializes in immigrant needs, and is able to service them, bring them to the point of, you know, hope and carry on. You usually don't have to do too much more after that **[Edm.Service.Worker.8]**.

> Absolutely, that's very important, and actually what we're doing right now is we're actually in the works of developing a self-help workshop. So we're working on that as we speak, we had a few meetings last month. We're going to be bringing in a workshop to empower clients and to keep them motivated through the job search. So how to deal with depression, how to deal with anxiety, resources available, where to go, uh, videos – motivational videos, just

> to keep them engaged in the process because of course we see a lot of people are going through this and it's quite a challenge **[Wpg.Service.Worker.4]**.

Respondents often described building self-confidence, hope, and empowerment as interrelated. At the conceptual level, hope is an aspect of self-confidence necessary to increase individuals' "power from within", as well as their personal self-dignity and self-awareness (Luttrell et al., 2009). Increased hope and confidence allows people to consider that there are more options, and that they deserve better. This is crucial for immigrants because some start to lose hope and see their inability to obtain meaningful employment as resulting from personal or professional deficiencies rather than systemic barriers. Confidence allows people to be more aware of their choices, rights, and increases their aspirations and ability to overcome these challenges (Luttrell et al., 2009). The second quotation describes how empowerment and hope function within "self-help" workshops, indicating that a lack of hope is due to individual factors. Importantly, the immediate strategies to assist newcomers cope with challenges requires a focus on supporting individuals who may be in crisis. It is understandable that agencies take this approach, but alternatively, it is quite telling that a common omission from the majority of my interviews was any mention of potential policy changes that may counteract systemic barriers against newcomers in the labour market. Especially because I probed directly about changes to governmental policy that may help improve systemic conditions.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Empowerment, conceived of through the responses of service provider participants, is not solely an emancipatory exercise focused on meaningful systemic change to include newcomers in the labour market. Nor is there evidence of the overarching dominance of neoliberal self-

governance amongst the service providers. I found both theoretical concepts necessary to interpret and understand the responses of participants. Responses often engaged with positive notions of empowerment, such as programming that promoted political engagement of newcomers, changes in employer attitudes, and helping Canadian-born people understand the difficulties of the immigrant journey. These same participants, however, emphasized individual improvement, responsibility and independence as directly related to empowerment.

My first research question focused on discovering if immigrant-serving agencies utilized positive or individualistic notions of empowerment with their clients. Participants often referred to empowerment through an individualistic lens of building confidence, hope and improving personal capabilities. These notions of empowerment align more closely with neoliberal expectations of newcomers to take responsibility for their employment situation, and do not address the impact of systemic barriers outside of individuals' control. I also reflect upon the "teaching somebody to fish" metaphor as a statement that represents a position widely held amongst participants. In line with neoliberal ideology, individuals had to take responsibility for their employment search and practitioners assist them rather than focusing upon advocacy. Responses were not uniform, however, with some participants clearly acknowledging the need for systemic change such as improving civic participation, engaging better with employers, deep community settlement work and rights education. Unfortunately, there were few policy suggestions aside from improving issues such as credential recognition. Funding constraints and limited skills are restrictive factors, as advocacy requires considerable expertise and staff time (Creese, 2011; Ku, 2011; Richmond and Shields, 2005). Moreover, some of participants reflected upon reduced funding for advocacy type programs (such as anti-racist educational

campaigns). Although there is clearly a will to address systemic barriers, there may not always be sufficient resources or mandate to develop programs to do so.

My second research question examined how services provided may relate to building confidence and empowerment. Services overwhelmingly work on improving individual "deficits" such as résumé preparations, workshops, and Canadian workplace training. Although there was wide acknowledgement that systemic barriers existed, responses often coincided with participants who were uncritical of employer requests for Canadian experience or who emphasized how newcomers required preparations to retain jobs in the Canadian workplace. This overlapped with the emphasis placed upon newcomers conforming to so-called Canadian norms rather than promoting social change to develop workplaces that accommodate and include professionals from diverse backgrounds. In contrast, some larger organizations had employer liaisons who worked to highlight the skills and education of newcomers to local employers with the intention of educating employers and changing perceptions about foreign-trained professionals. These agencies were also the ones that had management that identified they had a role as advocates for immigrants in their interactions with the media, governments and employers.

My final question asked about what philosophies and strategies informed service provision to newcomer clients. To reiterate, frequent strategies involved a focus upon individual factors rather than broader approaches to address systemic barriers to employment. Importantly, from a philosophical perspective, although neoliberal influences permeated my discussions with service providers, there was also an acknowledgment of a need to address employer attitudes,

credential recognition, discrimination, and other systemic challenges. Although participants utilized empowerment as a philosophical strategy, neoliberal expectations overemphasized personal responsibility and accountability. Results, therefore, are complicated because both concepts operated simultaneously in sometimes troubling and unexpected ways.

Applying single theoretical concepts such as neoliberalism or empowerment on their own may erase the nuances in qualitative data. I observed contradictory philosophies at play in my research, and conclusions are not necessarily straightforward. Empowerment, political advocacy and community building are important factors to service provider participants, but programs may not reflect these goals. The ways that service providers envision community building often focuses upon self-sufficiency rather than emancipatory strategies to eliminate barriers to meaningful inclusion. Moreover, agency workers may be aware of a need for "deep settlement" work to increase political engagement and reduce marginalization, but these organizations often lack the capacity to take on these roles. It is important to acknowledge that immigrant communities would not experience marginalization if Canada achieved the ideal of becoming a truly welcoming nation, with the reality being that many experience significant discrimination.

Service providers work in several ways to empower their clients. Some front-line workers simply encourage and "listen" to their clients while assisting them in their job search and preparation processes. Some executive directors actively take on advocacy roles when they feel like their agency can exercise autonomy, whereas other organizations felt relieved to speak to me (as opposed to the media) because they could "speak freely" without the concern for potentially losing additional funding. Most, if not all of the agencies, utilize some form of community

consultation (whether through surveys, program evaluation, focus groups or meetings with community leaders) to determine the needs of the community.

The philosophies and strategies that inform service provision involve multiple and sometimes contradictory concepts. Both positive notions of empowerment and neoliberal ideological approaches influence service providers to differing degrees. Empowerment discourse is also a way to legitimate programs that might only be ensuring that newcomers conform to the norms of Canadian society. In other words, rather than building a collective consciousness and public awareness that may lead to greater political engagement, many "empowerment" activities focus upon individual improvement. For example, the central goal of employment programs in both cities is the preparation of immigrants for the Canadian workplace, rather than ensuring the workplace or employers become more inclusive. More funding and programs should ensure the necessary adjustments from Canadian-born employers and workplaces. Future research could expand upon this current study to determine how to bring back broader advocacy and anti-racist programming into the immigrant services sector. Advocacy and research may eventually help create workplaces that are more inclusive for our increasingly diverse workforce. This is essential in order to ensure employers adequately respect and utilize the valuable skills and experiences of newcomers. Without the elimination of these labour market barriers, it is unlikely that Canada will live up to the hopes of newcomers as they try to continue their careers after arrival to the country.

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Paper 2: Should I Stay or Should I Go Home? Newcomer Employment Experiences in Mid-Sized Canadian Cities

Abstract: Despite changes to immigration policy to address declining labour market outcomes, many highly educated immigrants still face challenges when searching for career-related employment. Semi-structured interviews with 38 newcomer professionals in Edmonton, Alberta and Winnipeg, Manitoba illustrate significant obstacles including a lack of credential recognition, racial discrimination and a requirement for Canadian experience. Drawing from intersectional feminism and critical race theory, this study assesses the perspectives of newcomers during their employment search and the common desire for return-migration. Findings illustrate how the pre-arrival expectations of immigrants are incongruent with the realities of persistent labour market barriers. Newcomers consider if they should stay in Canada due to the lack of meaningful economic opportunities.

Keywords: immigration, labour market integration, labour market segmentation, critical race theory, intersectionality, transnational feminism

INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, Canadian immigration policy has increasingly focused upon "economic self-sufficiency" rather than promoting cultural diversity and multiculturalism (Abu-Laban, 1998, para. 6; Chuong, 2015, 4). Current immigrant selection policy strives for optimal labour market outcomes, attempting to select the "right sorts" of immigrants to ensure their success in the labour market, and assuming that poor labour market outcomes are due to individual deficits. But research shows that even carefully selected newcomers face labour market exclusion because of persistent racial discrimination and other systemic challenges. This can lead to unmet expectations for internationally trained professionals which, in turn, may influence desires for return migration.

Canadian research on internationally trained professionals has not examined the links between newcomers' pre-arrival expectations, their experiences of labour market challenges, and their subsequent possible desire to leave their new country. I address this research gap by first synthesizing three separate literatures on these topics. Based on qualitative research I conducted in two mid-sized Canadian cities, I then highlight the reasons why 38 newcomer professionals chose to migrate to Canada, and their widely held wish, or intention, to leave the country due to disappointed expectations. I utilize critical race theory and intersectional/transnational feminism as a conceptual framework to link newcomer experiences to broader societal discrimination and labour market exclusion, thus highlighting systems of oppression and exclusion that persist throughout Canadian society.

Previous Research

Why Canada?

In general, migration decisions are shaped by economic, social, political, and demographic factors. Research examining why immigrants come to Canada identifies several factors that play a key role. Many people choose Canada because they have a pre-existing network of friends or family, although this relationship is weaker for highly educated immigrants (DeVoretz and Werner, 2002, 43-44; McDonald, 2003). In contrast, other immigrants make the specific decision to move to a country where they do not have family (Somerville, 2011). Overall, the specific factors that motivate international professionals to relocate are varied and cannot be generalized (Mahroum, 2000, 24). Thus, it is helpful to empirically ground these complex decisions within the lived experiences of individual immigrants and their families.

Pre- and Post-Arrival Expectations

Analysis conducted on the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada (LSIC) indicated that three-quarters of immigrants who arrived between 2000-2001 "were satisfied or very satisfied with their life in Canada" and that the vast majority would make the same decision if they had the opportunity to do it again (Shields, Türegün and Lowe, 2014, 12; Houle and Schellenberg, 2010, 6). Interestingly, these percentages were lower amongst skilled workers in their 30s and 40s, the demographic group under investigation here. Other research reveals more of a gap between pre-arrival expectations and life satisfaction post-migration, suggesting more research is necessary (Jedwab, 2012). Additional LSIC findings indicated that although most immigrants perceived improved material well-being since arriving in Canada, those in the skilled worker category reported the least favourable outcomes (Houle and Schellenberg, 2010, 28). One-third reported they were worse off in material terms than prior to migration. Experiencing

challenges related to employment, housing or social inclusion reduced satisfaction and made it more difficult to meet the pre-arrival expectations of immigrant professionals (Guo, 2013a; Houle and Schellenberg, 2010).

Return Migration

Return migration (as discussed in this study) describes immigrants who arrive in Canada and subsequently decide to return to their country of origin, in contrast with secondary migration where immigrants arrive in Canada and move to a different destination (Bovenkerk, 1974, 4-5), either in or outside Canada. Canadian researchers have examined the experiences of return migration for specific source countries such as Mainland China (Ho and Ley, 2014; Ho, 2013), Ghana (Wong, 2013), India and Senegal (Sinatti, 2015). Other research has highlighted the beneficial aspects of return migration for source countries, receiving countries, and immigrants themselves (Sinatti, 2015). Studies of return migration for Indian engineers and professionals focused on how human capital and socioeconomic status impacted patterns of return migration (Qin, 2015).

It is important to recognize the differences between cyclical and permanent migration. In other words, mobility is often more dynamic than simply moving from a country of origin to one intended settlement destination (Gropas and Triandafyllidou, 2014). Much of the international literature on return migration identifies social exclusion and racism as significant factors that contribute to immigrants' wishes to return home. Immigrant experiences are also not uniform. The "distinctness of immigrants relative to the native-born population" has a large impact on whether immigrants feel solidarity with their new host society (Portes and Sensenbrenner, 1993,

1329). If returning to their country of origin remains a viable option, the likelihood of immigrants feeling solidarity decreases. For example, within the United States, discrimination, social exclusion and loss of status (including "patriarchal privilege") offers some insight into why male Mexican immigrants may wish to return to their country of origin (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Messner, 1999, 351).

Social exclusion or discrimination are not the only reasons immigrants return home. For example, some immigrants may plan to return to their country of origin after obtaining enough financial resources through their labour as seasonal migrants (Kivisto, 2001). In fact, some scholars reject theoretical frameworks that distinguish between the country of origin and country of settlement by illustrating how immigrants "build social fields that link together their country of origin and their country of settlement" (Schiller, Basch and Blanc-Szanton, 1993, 1; Kivisto, 2001). While important insights are garnered from this literature on transnational and return migration, much of it focuses on significantly different populations than the immigrant professionals who are the focus of this study. Also, much of the research focuses on the United States and on immigrant populations with different lived experiences and motivations for their migration journey (Kivisto, 2001; Portes, Guarnizo and Landolt, 1999).

Even so, this literature aims to disrupt the notion of the immigrant as someone experiencing permanent change, adjusting to some, and abandoning other, cultural patterns of life to adjust to a new host country (Basch, Schiller and Szanton-Blanc, 2005). My study, however, does not focus on transnational subjects insofar as the term represents a "growing number of persons who live dual lives: speaking two languages, having homes in two countries,

and making a living through continuous regular contact across national borders (Portes, Guarnizo and Landolt, 1999, 217). As mentioned, some immigrants may arrive in a host country with the intention for return migration, but the participants in this study reported that their decision to move to Canada was not a temporary plan; they intended to make Canada a permanent home. My study also goes beyond much existing immigration research by using feminist and critical race theory as frameworks to explain how disappointed expectations created a wish for return migration while feeling stuck and regretting their choice to move to Canada.

CRITICAL RACE THEORY AND INTERSECTIONALITY

Critical Race Theory

Critical race theory (CRT) is a broad theoretical and social movement of activists and scholars promoting meaningful change in the overt and subtle racism present in all spheres of social activity (Alyward, 1999; Case, 2012; Delgado and Stefancic, 2001, 2-3). This anti-racist approach involves examining patterns of prejudice within socio-economic hierarchies, historical conditions, individual or group interactions, and feelings or perceptions. This comprehensive framework provides a better understanding of how race and ethnicity play a major role in personal interactions as well as in the larger structural environment. Critical race theory provides an interpretative model that acknowledges the more "subtle" nature of racial inequality that persists beyond the overt discrimination addressed by the civil rights movement of the 1960s (Case, 2012; Delgado and Stefancic, 2001, 3; Solomos and Back, 2000). CRT allows for a more nuanced examination of how governments, employers, communities and even immigrant settlement agencies may reinforce racial inequality in subtle ways. The most significant contribution of CRT is that this perspective actively promotes change through activism and

awareness (Delgado and Stefancic, 2001, 3). Awareness of unequal power relations is only part of the equation. Without directly offering modes of resistance or change, social research is not as valuable as it could, or should, be.

Intersectional and Transnational Feminism(s)

The second theoretical perspective underpinning my analysis is shaped by intersectional and transnational feminisms (Case, 2012; Collins, 2000; Crenshaw, 1989; hooks, 1982; Mohanty, 1988, 2003). Although these approaches have important distinctions, for the purposes of this paper I describe my analytical framework as transnational feminist intersectionality. This approach insists that it is problematic to treat race, gender, physical ability, sexual orientation and age as "mutually exclusive categories of experience and analysis" (Crenshaw, 1989, 139). Feminist intersectionality ensures that I do not overlook one category of oppression when examining others (Crenshaw, 1989, 154; hooks, 1982, 7). All factors must be included in the analysis to account for multiple sites of inequality. Discrimination does not affect people within a racial or gender category equally; rather, there is an interaction of hierarchies based on statuses such as sex, race, class, sexuality, gender and disability (Crenshaw, 1989, 150-151; hooks, 1982, 12).

Following Chandra Mohanty (1988, 2003), I emphasize the heterogeneity of immigrants from the developing world, since the immigrants I spoke to were from diverse racial and national backgrounds with very different lived experiences. Even so, as Mohanty argues, solidarity building is critical to confront and change systemic oppression. Like the CRT perspective,

transnational feminist intersectionality provides avenues for meaningful solidarity building across varied statuses and experiences.

METHODOLOGY

This paper addresses three interrelated research questions:

1. Why do newcomer professionals come to Canada?
2. What are their experiences searching for employment and is it what they expected?
3. What are newcomer professionals' plans for the future?

I conducted 38 in-depth semi-structured interviews with immigrant professionals in the cities of Edmonton, Alberta and Winnipeg, Manitoba. I focus on these cities because the prairie provinces are increasingly popular settlement destinations, but few studies have examined immigration to mid-sized Canadian cities (Ferrer, Picot and Riddell, 2014). Snowball, theoretical and opportunity sampling procedures ensured participants represented a broad age range, varied occupations, balanced gender distribution, and wide-ranging national origins. The University of Alberta Research Ethics Board approved this study, and I conducted interviews between February and December 2013. I asked for pseudonyms or nicknames that I would use to protect individuals' privacy, but some participants insisted that I use their real names. I also omit the names of immigrant-serving organizations and places of employment to protect confidentiality.

Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim as quickly as possible after they had taken place. Immediately after interviews, I reflected on these discussions and wrote detailed field notes. Preliminary analyses occurred during transcription when possible, and subsequent interviews were often refined due to insights from previous interviews. I utilized NVivo 10 for data coding and analysis. Interviews began with a broad introductory statement that asked

participants to tell me about themselves, their previous occupations, educational credentials, and why they decided to come to Canada. Analysis was an iterative process whereby I reviewed transcripts, field notes and other supplemental materials to identify common themes and contradictions contained in the findings.

Participants' Characteristics

Countries of origin varied considerably but common nations included India, the Philippines, China, Iran and Egypt. Over three-quarters of participants obtained education and experience in their country of origin (perceived by them as the "developing" world). Interestingly, participants who obtained credentials and experience in the United Kingdom, Japan, and the United States also faced challenges with credential recognition, but not necessarily to the same degree as those with education from "developing" nations. Eighty-four percent (n=32) of participants self-identified as people of colour and the average age was 36 years. Slightly more men (60 percent, n=23) than women participated in this study and just over fifty percent were employed at the time of the interviews. The average length of time spent in Canada was 2.5 years, but forty-two percent (n=16) had only been in the country for under one year.

Obtaining meaningful employment during early settlement is crucial because it ensures better inclusion into Canadian society (Danso, 2002, 12). I conceptualize employment on a continuum between survival, transitional, and meaningful opportunities. *Survival employment* includes jobs that are completely unrelated to individuals' credentials and experience such as unskilled labour, and employment retail and lower level service sectors (McCoy and Masuch, 2007; Meraj, 2015; Thomas, 2015). *Transitional employment* relates to someone's previous

career and credentials, but is usually at an entry level, or is not quite equivalent to the job status they left behind in their country of origin. *Meaningful employment* includes jobs that are roughly equivalent to previous positions held on their country of origin, but also acknowledge that this category must acknowledge how immigrants feel about their occupation and that job satisfaction is an important component. Taking into consideration that a significant proportion of immigrant participants had only been in the country for under a year (three participants arrived only three months prior to the interviews), it is understandable that many were still in the early stages of seeking employment. In fact, almost fifty percent were currently employed. Of those employed, forty percent (n=8) were working in survival jobs, twenty percent (n=4) were working in transitional jobs, and forty percent (n=8) held jobs that were roughly equivalent to their previous careers. The very high level of unemployment, and the large numbers employed in transitional and survival positions, illustrates how labour market segmentation prevents immigrants from obtaining higher paying and more suitable careers (Krahn, Hughes and Lowe, 2015).

RESULTS

Why Canada?

> [T]his September is gonna make me a year in Canada, I came here as a landed immigrant. I chose Canada because friends have come here before and they told me, ya know, it's a good place to be, lots of opportunities. And the friends, they are really making it. They are working in their field and they are working in their areas of specialization, and I thought okay, this could be something for me, because I had dreams that Canada can accommodate.
>
> **– Smash 38 M, PhD Public Administration, Edmonton**

I asked participants to talk about their migration journey, previous employment and educational experiences, focusing on "why Canada?" Immigrant professionals chose Canada for multiple reasons (Table 1). Most frequent were responses about opportunities for themselves or their children, including the opportunity to obtain further educational credentials and better

schooling for their children. Participants also mentioned family reunification, a relatively open immigration program, economic and political stability, and better prospects for themselves or their children to achieve their dreams.

Table 2: Why Did You Come to Canada?

Theme	Examples
Better prospects for self and/or children	"Canada provides a better future, more stable and safe for children." "I think uh, I came in Canada first of all because I wanted to give my children a better chance to do what they are dreaming to do, because I have three children. 16, 14 and 10, and they're having big dreams." "If you asked me why did I come to Canada, like, it is basically, you know, maybe for the first fair answer, for a prosperous life."
Family reunification	"I met my wife and she told me that her siblings are here in Winnipeg and she wants to come here." "I came here to live with my wife. Yeah, she's been here for seven years before me. So that's why I'm here actually."
Political and economic stability	"The current situation in the country we came from, both economic and political, is not stable at all. People are extremely poor … the human rights are neglected, uh, people are put into prison just for expressing their opinion."
Better immigration program	"The only two countries, English speaking countries that have welcome for immigrants is Australia and Canada. And to compare those two countries, it's easier to get to Canada. It's not easy at all, but in comparison, it's easier." "Major point, the main reason why I chose Winnipeg, even over Toronto or Vancouver – or a bigger town – is because immigration in Manitoba, compared to even other provinces, is relatively very easy."

Although the challenges and barriers newcomers face play a significant role in their wish to stay or leave the country, one important insight involved whether or not their pre-migration expectations matched their settlement experiences.

Is Canada What You Expected?

> [B]efore I came I researched a lot. I researched everything from schools to everything, so by now – initially I would have thought I would be in school, maybe doing my master's. I would be employed, maybe in a part time job or something to help me with my livelihood. So, I'm… disappointed in that, I don't have either now.
>
> **– Emad 29 M, MA Degree, Winnipeg**

In parallel interviews I conducted with service providers, many often stated that a major turning point for immigrant professionals occurs when they "adjust their expectations" and make plans that are more realistic (Thomas, 2015). Although it is possible that some newcomers arrive in Canada with unrealistic expectations, it also seems unlikely that most newcomers' hopes for employment opportunities related to their previous careers would be exaggerated. Immigrants expect to have "fulfilling and productive lives" in Canada (Danso, 2002, 6). Participants stated that they "just want to contribute" to Canada and felt that they have not been given a chance to prove themselves. Despite some awareness of what to expect in Canada, many were surprised with the magnitude of the barriers they faced for entry into their professions:

> [R]egarding Canada, everything is like what I was expecting. So the companies, uh, culture – work culture and those things, exactly what I expected. But I was not expecting to have this trouble to find a job. So, without certification you don't exist.
>
> **– Alfred 45 M, MSc Degree, Winnipeg**

Alfred, a safety auditor from Argentina with a master's degree in environmental sciences, expected that he would be able to continue his career upon arrival to Canada. Although he obtained an internship opportunity in collaboration with a Winnipeg settlement services provider, he felt that the internship did not provide him with adequate training or a referral to assist him in integrating into his profession in Canada. After the three-month program, he worked in a call

centre, a bakery and another call centre before he obtained a position as a safety technician (a position that he felt was meaningful employment). Alfred was eventually able to find work related to his previous profession, but his pathway to that position was not ideal despite interacting with multiple settlement and employment agencies. Moreover, although Alfred said he speaks more comfortably in Spanish, he is also a white male and does not necessarily experience the same difficulties as the people of colour who participated in my study, a topic discussed further below.

Professions often require regulatory certification, and participants going through the examination procedures were frustrated because it was extremely expensive, time-consuming and the retraining process was often redundant. L.B. is a thirty-three-year-old nurse who migrated from Nigeria to Ireland where she obtained a four-year BSc in Nursing and a one-year MSc in Public Health. Due to poorer economic conditions in Ireland, L.B. and her husband decided to move to Canada. Currently employed as a health care aide, she stated the problems quite clearly:

> **L.B. –** I think the financial aspect of it would be the main thing, because um, like the courses I've had to do and save for, and I've gone over $7000 dollars just trying to get my registration and the fact that I can't work as a nurse now, so I'm earning minimum wage.
>
> **JT – Do you really think that the hospitals here are very different than where you worked before?**
>
> **L.B –** We use the same IV pumps. We use the same syringes, needles, medications, intravenous medication. Everything is the same. So …that's the point I made earlier, about having to go through whatever process I'm going through as a nurse, as a student nurse like years ago, I'm having to retrain as a student nurse again. I think it's a waste of time and money, you know?
>
> **JT – Yeah, yeah. Did you know, like, before you came to the country, did you know that you'd have to wait?**

> **L.B. –** Yeah, I knew I would have to wait, I was okay with it. But having met a lot of other professionals, like some doctors driving taxis and working as a security guard or whatever. You know, they've waited like two or three years and they still can't get registration in their profession, so I think the whole system has to be revamped and things have to be done to, um, make the process of, you know, registering and everything a bit more easier.

Although L.B. clearly knew it would be a lengthy process before she would be able to work as a nurse, she did not anticipate that retraining would be so expensive and redundant. Doctors, engineers and other professionals I interviewed shared similar experiences, stating that if they had known how difficult this process was, they would not have migrated to Canada.

Smash is an important participant because, although he participated in my study as a newcomer, he was also an employment counsellor in an immigrant-serving organization. He highlighted the importance of providing accurate information and credential assessment before people decide to migrate:

> Canadian government and provincial government say we want to recruit a category of professionals, internationally trained. In some cases, they assess your diplomas out of Canada and they tell you 'you're qualified, we need you in Canada.' And you come to Canada with that same diploma, I have seen it, I have heard it, and you send it to [International Qualifications Assessment Service] (IQAS) and they tell you it is not recognized. For the assessment they give you is a different one. So, there is that disparity between the moment when you are applying to move to relocate to Canada, and when you're really in Canada. It's why you find some people are so frustrated. They are told one thing at the point of entry, and inside they are told another one.

Foreign credentials are not all treated equally. Many participants found that their education was assessed differently depending upon what organization or institution they were interacting with. For example, the Universities of Alberta, Manitoba and Winnipeg were usually much better at recognizing foreign credentials, since universities have a well-established system for interpreting foreign educational credentials due to the prevalence of (and increased priority to attract)

international students (Choudaha and Chang, 2012). Unfortunately, other governmental systems for credential assessment such as International Qualifications Assessment Service (IQAS) provided through the Government of Alberta may not recognize some credentials. Many previous studies have pointed to credential recognition as a primary issue facing immigrant professionals (Buzdugan and Halli, 2009; Bauder, 2003; Guo and Shan, 2013; Owusu and Sweetman, 2015). It remained a problem for all study participants, including those who were educated in the United States and Europe.

To summarize, a large majority of participants stated that Canada did not meet their expectations (74 percent, n=28), and fifty percent (n=19) also said their unmet expectations resulted in major feelings of disappointment. There were some participants (18 percent, n=7) who were happy about their experiences in Canada and did not express any disappointment. These individuals, for the most part, had been able to continue their careers in Canada. Disappointment and mismatched expectations, the more common finding, are clearly linked to the challenges that newcomers are experiencing in the labour market.

Canadian Experience, Undervalued Skills and Intersectionality

> I don't have Canadian experience, so maybe my résumé was first to the garbage. I know the realities. I have many frustrations about that. I just want the chance to contribute.
>
> **– Wing 38 F, BSc Engineering, Edmonton**

Immigrants seeking to find employment opportunities related to their previous careers are likely to face complex challenges related to their unrecognized credentials, lack of Canadian experience, and devalued international experience. They may also face challenges related to race, sex, real or perceived lack of English language skills, gender, sexual orientation and disability. Wing, a Chinese female with a speech impairment, exemplifies how there are complex

intersectional relationships between personal characteristics and the structural environment (Collins, 2000; Crenshaw, 1989; hooks, 1982). Despite these challenges, Wing obtained a transitional job in an engineering firm, but she was not working as a registered engineer despite her qualifications and experience. Moreover, her job was precarious and she was laid off as economic conditions worsened in Alberta.

Although sexual orientation should not affect employment opportunities, for one of the study participants it made the work environment uncomfortable at times while she was navigating the experience of "being a foreigner":

> [T]hey just look at me as a foreigner, I'm not young anymore, so… I prefer don't tell a lot about my personal life in the job environment. Like about my family… people ask … I tell, but I always talk about my partner. I've never had any situation that I had to tell that it's a woman. Because partner, people think is a partner. In the end I talk not.
>
> **– Em 32 F, MA Sociology, Edmonton**

The impact of multiple statuses is evident in Em's response about her experience working in a restaurant kitchen. Not only does her immigrant status reduce her sense of "fitting in", but she also simultaneously contends with being a woman, a member of a sexual and linguistic minority and the impact of her age. Although Em identified as white, her experience as a linguistic minority certainly impacted her ability to find professional employment. Em's experience cannot be fully understood without assessing the impact of each of these statuses from an intersectional perspective.

Returning to Wing's experience, although she enthusiastically shared her story, she was uncomfortable with audio recording due to her vocal impairment. She stated that she knew it influenced her opportunities in the job market, because potential employers might judge her

communication abilities negatively, not only due to her accent, but also as a result of her speech impairment. Omda, a thirty-eight-year-old lawyer originally from Egypt, shared with me that he had a prosthetic leg, and as a result, he was unable to work in various sectors such as construction and other physically demanding jobs. Upon arrival in Canada he had to retrain into the legal profession, but his range of survival employment positions were limited due to his physical disability.

Moreover, Wing and Omda may also experience challenges due to being people of colour. For Wing, as a disabled woman of colour, an intersectional analysis outlines how these different statuses combine to influence her life experiences and opportunities. Although Omda is male, he also experiences challenges at the intersections of his experiences as a disabled person of colour. Any singular status alone only captures a partial component of personal and political identities.

The majority (84 percent) of my study participants self-identified as people of colour. Although many participants expressed that Canada was "better than they expected" or "much better than Europe or the United Kingdom," many also experienced challenges due to their race or ethnicity. Although critical race theory illustrates the subtle nature of racism, some participants experienced blatant discrimination. Originally from the Philippines, Pnay left a successful career in human resources with international companies in the United Arab Emirates. After significant educational "upgrading", she obtained a position as a human resource associate and worked for several years in a very uncomfortable environment. Despite her multilingual talents, her employer bullied her and demanded that she go through "accent reduction" training

despite what I personally perceived as an excellent ability to communicate in English. Clearly, due to her "foreigner" status, her abilities were not valued by her employer who preferred "native-born" employees without accents. Pnay eventually resigned her job due to this discriminatory and toxic work environment. She retrained into a more precarious field and plans to move back to the Philippines when her children complete university.

Most experiences of racial discrimination were not as overt or abusive as Pnay's. Giju lived in England for twelve years where he earned a doctorate and worked for the Ministry of Health. He lamented that although Canada was much better than England, he felt that discrimination in Canada was much less obvious than it was in the United Kingdom (UK):

> [In the UK] they tell you up front. But that's nice, you know where you stand. But in Canada, having all these… I think getting a McDonalds job is difficult, so, you know the joke I tell me friends "what's in the UK, it was much better, you know your ground they tell you to your face". But here, no one – everyone's trying to be more politically correct, you know they don't want to say things, they… um, I feel that's really wrong.

Our discussion lingered on the fact that in England, people were upfront about how being a foreigner prevented Giju from accessing a permanent career. Not only was there a clear and obvious segmented labour market, but the preference for non-immigrants was also overt (Bauder, 2003, 699-700). Although the barriers in the labour market in Canada are similarly structured, preventing immigrants from obtaining the best "core" job opportunities, racism is subtler in Canada (Breton, 2000, 17-18). This plays out in complex ways. To provide another example, Robin originally arrived in Canada to attend university. His trajectory was very successful, but despite his positive experiences, as a Punjabi male he faced significant discrimination:

> **Robin –** If your last name has Singh in it, forget it. I'll share something personal with you. I used to have a turban and a full-grown beard before this. I recently cut my hair, it was a personal decision … I did that. But back then, I had a full-grown turban and beard. So, this lady looks at me, and she just (throws up his hands) – I could've been born in

> Canada, she has no way of knowing it, except looks. So, she says, first question to me, "how long have you been in Canada". I'm like, how can you just assume I wasn't born here, by the way I'm looking.
>
> **JT – Now this is a personal question, you don't need to answer, but why did you decide to shave?**
>
> **Robin –** Honestly, I always wanted to do it … Then six months back, something like this happened and I said okay, I just had it. Something like this happened at my workplace, and someone's said 'okay I don't need to show ID to you because you're not born here,' and I just had it at that point. I was disgusted.

An assumption about foreignness in Robin's case illustrates how perceptions of race reinforce the structure of racial inequality (Bannerji, 2000). Even so, Robin wanted to stay in Canada and was happy with his employment situation. He shared with me that after four years of education and spending a significant amount of money on tuition, if he went back to India he felt like he would have to start all over again. Not all participants, however, were so certain of their future in Canada, and many who were starting to lose hope wished to leave the country.

Leaving Canada?

> I lost almost everything. Whatever job, we saved in our life at all, when you convert our money into Canadian dollars, it is nothing, and it goes just like that. So, it's like a trap I felt, I can't go back to India because I have so much debts now, and uh, at the same time I don't want to continue here. So it is – if I go back, another thing, people will view it as a failure in your life. **– M.J. 38 F, PhD Psychology, Edmonton**
>
> You know if I knew this all the things when I was in my back home, I would not be here. Yeah. Here, I don't have any other family members here, all of my family members are in my country, my home country, I lost all of them. And here, I have to go for the survival job. **– Ama 41 M, MA, Edmonton**

Although I did not actively ask participants if they wanted to leave Canada, it spontaneously came up in many of the interviews I conducted. As this became a more prominent theme, I started to probe during interviews to ask about interviewees' future plans.

Over half of the newcomer professionals I interviewed (n = 20) expressed deep regret for their choice to migrate to Canada and discussed how they were planning or wished to leave the country. Another ten percent (n = 5) were unsure about their intentions to stay. Motivations for originally migrating and expectations for employment in Canada were closely linked to regret and plans or desires to leave.

Some participants initially wanted to leave the country, but then after some time they were able to better integrate into their community. Sherriff, a thirty-seven-year-old teacher and aspiring civil servant from Senegal, stayed because he moved to Canada to be with his wife. The early days of settlement were challenging for him, and he wanted to leave:

> [W]hen I came here, it was a little bit hard for me. I wanted to go back, I really wanted to go back, because I got depression that I will have to start everything, everything again.
>
> **– Sherriff 37 M, MEd, Edmonton**

Having been in Canada for three years, Sherriff is now more comfortable, although he realizes that he will likely not find full-time employment as a teacher. He enjoys working part-time in an after-school program and is well-settled with his wife and her family in Edmonton. Another teacher named Al came to Canada from Cameroon to provide better opportunities for his children. Although Al had worked for the government to train and supervise teachers in Cameroon, he had to take a nighttime warehouse position in Canada. Due to the physical and emotional strain, he quit that job and although he now plans to obtain a PhD (an aspiration he could not follow in his country of origin), he has mixed feelings about staying in the country:

> [F]eeling like, why am I coming here, and working in such situation if it's only this that I have come here to do in Canada, then I'm going back because my work is waiting for me, I can go back soon. That is not a good idea, because I didn't come here to go back, but I came here because I wanted to get (pauses)… to get into the system.

Many research participants arrived in Canada with spouses and some with children as well. For those who wanted to leave the country, the situation was often complicated by disagreement within the family about future plans:

> After my son gets graduated or once he became independent, then I can plan for it. My husband won't come back, he may live here. But I have the dream that I want to go back to India. **– M.J**.

> I can do anything, you know, but for my husband, you know, I want him to be happy because I don't want him to go back to Saudi Arabia, he still has his contract … [My children], they're telling me daddy told us if we run out of money he would go back to Saudi Arabia, we want to stay here. **– Aya 35 F, BA English, Edmonton**

> When I came here first I was really shocked. When I was landed in, I thought that the Canada would recognize my education, my experience, but when I landed in Toronto I met some of my friends, and they advised me to go for work as a labourer or in the restaurant. At that moment I decided to go back, but, my son did not want to go back. For my son, I have to, I have to sacrifice, you know in my back home I had a very good job, I had my very good reputation, all my friends, all my family members were there, even they are not supporting me to go here. And finally, I have to sacrifice. **– Ama**

Intersectional feminism provides interesting insights into familial disagreement regarding staying in Canada. None of my male participants felt pressured by their female partners to stay in the country, although in Aya's case she hoped to convince her husband to stay. Some of my female participants, however, felt trapped despite their wishes to leave. The previously quoted M.J. stated that she was still in the country because her husband did not want to leave. She decided to wait until their children were finished post-secondary education before she hoped to return to her country of origin. Similarly, many participants – both men and women – felt pressure from their children to stay in the country. Ama tried unsuccessfully to convince his son to go back to Nepal, and feels he has to sacrifice for his son. This echoes the motives for why many immigrants with children decided to come to Canada in the first place. Evidence from other studies also shows that many immigrants sacrifice for their children. If they cannot continue their careers and feel

valued to their full potential, perhaps they hope that at least their children will have that opportunity (Taylor and Krahn, 2013).

To restate an important point, not all participants wished to leave the country. In fact, they often referred to their international experience as a reason why they wished to stay in Canada despite having such a difficult time finding career-related employment. Smash stated this explicitly:

> So I find it to be really… when I tell people this, when I tell people I want to live the rest of my life in Canada, Canadians are like, what are you talking about? You know? But I tell them, you don't know where I am coming from, I have seen other things, I have been to other places, and its far better over here than I know in like, say in Europe.

Even though many study participants stated that Canada is much better than other countries, if Canada truly wishes to be an "immigrant friendly" nation, it should facilitate immigrants' re-entry into the labour market by fully recognizing international credentials and experience.

DISCUSSION: "THEY COME WITH SMILES, LEAVE WITH TEARS"

> Canada is full of immigrants who are highly educated and trained, those are a treasure for Canada, and Canada should benefit from their skills. Twenty percent of them going back in the first year is not good. They leave, they come with smiles to Canada, they leave with tears. This is not fair, Canada, Government of Alberta, please do your best to help us. Thank you very much. **– Mahmoud 36 M, BSc Engineering, Edmonton**

Immigrant-receiving nations such as Canada are competing for highly educated and skilled newcomers. The proportion of immigrant professionals facing labour market barriers after arrival in Canada is, at best, a waste of enormous potential for the Canadian economy (Caidi and Allard, 2005; McKenna, 2012, 3-4; Reitz, Curtis and Elrick, 2014). At worst, these patterns of devaluation and deskilling represent widespread employer preferences for Canadian born

employees that must be recognized as a human rights violation (Caidi and Allard, 2005; OHRC, 2013). In addition to credential and experience recognition, participants linked their experiences to complex processes that intersect with race, sex, class, gender, sexuality, language and physical ability.

Why Canada: Newcomer participants expressed various motives for coming to Canada related to personal goals of obtaining a better lifestyle or societal pressures such as political instability. As highly skilled professionals, most left behind well-paid, high-status and stable careers. They had the financial and social means to make a choice to leave their country of origin to pursue a better life in Canada. These motivations link back to my earlier discussion of transnationalism, illustrating that within the Canadian context and for this study population the "traditional" concept of immigration as a permanent phenomenon remains significant.

Expectations and Disappointment: Unfortunately, many newcomers experience significant downward social and professional mobility after arrival in Canada (Basran and Zong, 1998; Guo, 2015; Meraj, 2015; Zong, 2004). This downward mobility was also true for the participants in this study, many of whom were unemployed or under-employed in jobs unrelated to their previous careers. There was a significant mismatch between my study participants' pre-migration expectations and current feelings about their new home country. Although many immigrant-serving practitioners state that immigrants need to "revise their expectations" or have more "realistic" goals (Thomas, 2015), I question the assumption that newcomer professionals should expect downward social mobility, rejection of their credentials and labour market exclusion as realistic outcomes of the migration journey. These discriminatory experiences

should not be part of "realistic" expectations because it is understandable for immigrants come to Canada with the expectation that they will be able to continue their careers. Moreover, the segmentation of highly skilled immigrants into precarious work, or into roles that exploit their skills in lower status "transitional" jobs, illustrates a preference for subjects that conform to white-Canadian norms and culture (Bauder, 2003, 699-700; Guo, 2015). This preference is made explicit when employers reject applicants based on a lack of Canadian experience.

Canadian Experience and Intersectionality: Increasingly, policy makers recognize the requirement for "Canadian experience" as code for discriminatory preferences whereby employers reject newcomer applicants in favour of white-settler Canadian-born candidates (Bauder, 2003, 699-700; Guo, 2015; OHRC, 2013). Moreover, the skills of immigrant professionals are perceived as insufficient, requiring multiple stages of upgrading or the acquisition of new credentials from Canadian institutions (Guo, 2015). Critical race theory identifies how deeply embedded and persisting discrimination informs employers of the "skills deficits" of those racialized as people of colour (Alyward, 1999; Case, 2012; Delgado and Stefancic, 2001: 2-3; Guo, 2015). In fact, many newcomers volunteer to obtain Canadian experience or obtain redundant Canadian education to remedy their presumed "skills deficit." The challenge remains in dealing with the intersectional nature of oppression and exclusion from the labour market (Crenshaw, 1989, 154; hooks, 1982, 7). Put simply, immigrants face barriers to inclusion based on race, gender, sex, disability, class, language and sexual orientation. While not all participants faced these complex barriers, and not all expressed disappointment about coming to Canada, a significant proportion shared their unmet expectations and many wished or planned to leave the country.

Leaving Canada: Canada actively promotes a reputation of being an immigrant-welcoming and multicultural society (Chuong, 2015; CIC, 2015a). Although many study participants expressed happiness or, at least, ambivalence with their decision to migrate to Canada, a significant proportion expressed regret and a desire for return migration. This wish to leave the country is based upon a mismatch between pre- and post-arrival expectations related to exclusion from career-related employment opportunities. Immigrant professionals experience significant downward social mobility when they are forced to search for jobs unrelated to their profession or accept transitional positions well below their skill level (Meraj, 2015). To return to the quote from Mahmoud, it is not fair that newcomer professionals "come to Canada with smiles and leave with tears". Even if we put aside the social justice issue, the economic loss for both Canadian society and immigrants from the underutilization of their skills and potential is too great to ignore (Li, 2003, 4-7; Reitz, Curtis and Elrick, 2014). This extends the return migration literature within the Canadian context to focus on a broader population of immigrants, mid-sized cities and the impact of pre- and post-arrival expectations.

CONCLUSION

Reflecting upon common themes from the thirty-eight participants, it is important to acknowledge dissimilarity, as disappointment with employment outcomes was not unanimous. Moreover, participants sometimes expressed ambivalence with different aspects of their lives such as happiness to be in a safe, economically stable nation alongside frustration that they could not even find a survival job without "Canadian experience". Nonetheless, despite these nuances, many individuals shared their fundamental disillusionment regarding Canada due to a mismatch between pre- and post-arrival expectations regarding employment outcomes. Most participants

were very surprised to experience such rigid and persistent labour market barriers and were unsure how to overcome them. These factors often resulted in participants stating that they wished they had not come to Canada and some planned to leave the country.

Policy Implications

Three policy approaches could possible improve the chances for newcomer professionals to fully participate in Canadian society by obtaining professional employment. First, the assessment of international credentials and employment experiences could be a more equitable and systematic process that begins before people arrive in Canada. It is also important to note that Canadian experience and education is not inherently superior to the experience and education that new immigrants bring to the country.

Second, it is important for potential immigrants to receive better and more authentic information about what to expect professionally, perhaps with information shared from people in their field who have experienced the process (both good and bad). This may result in some immigrants choosing not to come to Canada once they are better informed about the process of credential recognition or accreditation. Future research should examine the true magnitude of the return migration phenomenon to see how many newcomers are leaving the country and how many want to leave but cannot.

Third, effective policy solutions must meaningfully address preferences for Canadian-born employees and/or those with Canadian education by actively funding and developing anti-racist programs and educational campaigns. The onus should not be on individual immigrants to

"work harder" so they are successful in a system that is stacked against them. Future research should address how to best approach this policy need by including the perspectives of employers, regulatory bodies, and immigrants in the process. Other important areas of study include how to support employers to move beyond simply *hiring* immigrants and work effectively to promote meaningful diversity in the workplace. In other words, how can employers improve immigrant retention in positions and ensure there are pathways to further professional training and advancement so diversity is truly represented at all levels of the workplace?

Paper 3: Service Provider and Immigrant Perceptions of Labour Market Challenges

Abstract: Immigrants with professional credentials increasingly settle in mid-sized Canadian cities such as Edmonton, Alberta and Winnipeg, Manitoba. Although they arrive with hopes and expectations to continue their careers, many newcomers must take on survival employment when their credentials and experiences are undervalued or not recognized. While immigrant-serving agencies provide well-developed employment programs and other supports, it is crucial to determine if clients and service providers perceive labour market challenges similarly. Drawing from Pierre Bourdieu's examination of differing forms of capital and critical race theory, this qualitative study investigates whether or not service providers' perspectives of immigrant needs match with the experiences of their newcomer clients. Are there complementary or competing understandings of the Canadian labour market for these two groups? Findings indicate that although common ground exists, there are significant differences between how service providers and immigrants perceive challenges such as having "realistic" expectations and a need to adjust to Canadian workplace culture.

Keywords: employment barriers, immigrant-serving organizations, social capital, cultural capital, critical race theory

INTRODUCTION

This study examines how immigrant professionals and settlement service providers perceive persistent labour market barriers in Canada. Primary labour market barriers for newcomers include the devaluation of internationally obtained credentials, real or perceived linguistic challenges, requirements for Canadian experience or education, adjusting to "Canadian workplace culture", inadequate soft skills (e.g. making small talk or being diplomatic), upgrading and recertification, lack of professional networks, discrimination and prejudice, and a lack of child-care (Guo, 2013a, 166; Sakamoto, Chin and Young, 2010, 145; Slade, 2011). Some challenges are legitimate while others result from discriminatory assumptions. For example, it is understandable that immigrants in regulated professions must go through a recertification process that may or may not require credential upgrading. It is discriminatory, however, to assume that internationally obtained credentials are inherently inferior. Moreover, while intricacies of the Canadian workplace highlight the importance of soft skills such as knowing when to express and when to keep your opinions to yourself (i.e., being diplomatic), it is also an example of how workplaces are "closed" when there is less willingness to incorporate internationally trained professionals, or if they assume that "cultural differences" are work performance issues.

Labour Market Challenges

Barriers preventing immigrant professionals from continuing their careers in Canada have long been recognized (Reitz, 2007; Reitz, Curtis and Elrick, 2014). Research also reveals how elements of these obstacles as discriminatory resulting from persistent racism (Bauder, 2003; Guo, 2013b; Reitz, Curtis and Elrick, 2014). For example, most immigrant professionals arrive

with advanced educational experience and high English language abilities (Guo, 2013a; McCoy and Masuch, 2007). Therefore, human capital "deficits" or linguistic challenges do not solely explain labour market barriers. Previous studies have shown immigrants stating that they experienced discrimination due to a perception that their language skills were inadequate for satisfactory performance in the workplace. Additionally, employers consistently demand Canadian experience from newcomer professionals despite this requirement being recognized as a human rights violation that may be code for "differentiating between Canadian-born workers and immigrants" (Bauder, 2003, 711; McCoy and Masuch, 2007, 193; OHRC, 2013).

Research has also shown many immigrants feeling that they needed Canadian credentials, despite having equivalencies, in order to succeed in the labour market (Bauder, 2003, 710). Despite high levels of education, immigrants do not benefit from human capital in the same way as Canadian-born workers (Bauder, 2003, 700; McCoy and Masuch, 2007, 186; Reitz, 2007). Additionally, many professional associations actively exclude immigrants from higher status occupations by reserving these positions for Canadian-born and educated workers (Bauder, 2003, 699). There are ambiguous requirements for nurses, for example, to have "good character" and "fitness to practice" to receive certification (Bauder, 2003, 702).

Overcoming Challenges: The Role of Immigrant-Serving Organizations

Immigrant-serving organizations (ISOs) are critical brokers that can assist professionals in rebuilding their social and professional networks to gain better access to the "hidden" job market (Breton, 2000; George, 2002; Gibb, 2008). It is important for these organizations to be culturally inclusive and sensitive with collaborative approaches for program development and

the autonomy to take a meaningful advocacy role (Creese, 2011; George, 2002; Thomas, 2015). Service providers, however, often focus on meeting the needs of employers and ensuring immigrants "assimilate rather than integrate" (Petri, 2010, 19). Employment services typically focus on providing one-on-one career counselling, information sessions, Canadian workplace culture orientation, language training and assistance during the job search process (Allan, 2016; Danso, 2002; Thomas, 2015). Settlement agencies, like other non-profit and government-funded services, are limited by increased bureaucratization which can create gaps between community needs and the expectations of government funding mandates (Creese, 2011; Yan, Chau, and Sangha, 2010). This limits a critical advocacy role for settlement service providers who must choose between maintaining funding and critiquing governmental policy. Another important consideration is that research indicates that an organization's capacity to do anti-racist work relies upon the government in power at the time and its interpretation of multiculturalism policies (Yan, Chau and Sangha, 2010). This "institutional shifting" in government creates challenges for maintaining continuity of services and mandates (Yan, Chau and Sangha, 2010). Even so, to a limited degree, some larger organizations (i.e., those with diversified funding sources) can advocate for labour market inclusivity (Thomas, 2015). These two orientations – providing skill upgrading versus critical advocacy – are significant, because they illustrate two differing approaches to addressing labour market challenges.

Previous research on the labour market integration of professionally educated immigrants overwhelmingly focused on the main settlement destinations cities in Canada (Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver) and has not compared the perceptions of challenges of immigrants and service providers. Similarly, existing research on ISOs also focused on the largest Canadian cities and on

the substantive topics of physical or mental health and language training (Fenta, Hyman and Noh, 2004; Hou and Beiser, 2006; Pumariega, Rothe and Pumariega, 2005). Other research on ISOs describes funding, governance processes, the impacts of neoliberal restructuring (Creese, 2011; Sharma, 2016; Sakamoto, Wei and Truong, 2008) or measures outcomes and satisfaction with ISOs from a quantitative perspective (Esses et al., 2013).

This study addresses gaps in the literature by examining multiple perspectives (both service providers and clients) of labour market challenges facing newcomers, doing so from a critical race theoretical perspective and focusing on mid-sized cities in the Canadian Prairies. It provides greater insight into the interactive process whereby immigrants and service providers identify and work together to address labour market barriers, and asks whether the two groups have different perspectives on what should be done about labour market challenges.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

There is tension between two different understandings of labour market barriers. The first focuses on the improvement of skills by retraining or upgrading education, language training, and improving "cultural" competencies. The second orientation challenges this individualistic focus by showing how persistent racism and discrimination devalue the educational and occupational experience of participants that identify as people of colour and those learning English as an additional language. These two perspectives are not mutually exclusive. Although persistent discrimination exists in Canada, some newcomers may require assistance in English (or French) language competency.

An individualistic orientation focuses primarily upon labour market barriers as the result of a deficit of skills. A human capital theory of labour market performance focuses on individual investment in education and other types of skills training as a primary explanatory factor in differential employment outcomes (Becker, 1975; Krahn, Hughes and Lowe, 2015, 135). Although differential employment outcomes partially result from differences in training, formal education, and other knowledge, other variables play major roles in access to meaningful employment opportunities. These other factors include, but are not limited to, a cultural understanding of job seeking, and workplace norms and social resources such as personal and professional networks. From this perspective, newcomers may also not understand how to "fit into" the Canadian workplace and need cultural guidance in order to effectively integrate. Although throughout this paper I challenge assumptions of specific individualistic causes for the barriers immigrants face, some newcomers may nevertheless benefit from service interventions that assist them to learn the nuances of Canadian culture.

Forms of Capital

Pierre Bourdieu (1986) provides a conceptual framework for understanding the possible limitations on the ability of newcomers to influence and be successful in their social environment. Bourdieu (1986) expands upon capital theory to distinguish between material, human, social, and cultural forms of capital. Social capital, defined as the "actual or potential resources which are linked to the possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance," allows individuals to draw upon their personal connections to attain satisfactory employment (Bourdieu, 1986, 51). It also follows that immigrant professionals are likely to require assistance building their social and professional networks. This is crucial, as many people obtain jobs through personal connections. For

immigrants, their recent arrival may result in a more limited social network (Breton, 2000, 12-13). Service providers can act as intermediaries who assist newcomers in building professional contacts.

Cultural capital on the other hand, relates to the resources available to individuals because of their upbringing in a particular socioeconomic class (Bourdieu, 1986, 48). Cultural capital is the sum of an earlier socialization process through which parents and extended family (and cultural groups in this context) provide an outline for understanding and interacting with other individuals and the broader cultural environment. In the same way that social capital provides a network for individuals to utilize, cultural capital allows individuals to navigate and interpret the broader social world with a level of "competence" and confidence (Bourdieu, 1986, 48-49). Similar to the need for building social capital, it is important to acknowledge that some immigrants experience culture shock when they arrive in Canada (Lum, Dowedoff and Englander, 2016). It does not follow, however, that all immigrants experience culture shock to the same degree and it is important not to universalize these diverse experiences and needs.

It is useful to ask whether newcomers may lack a social network to help them obtain employment, but using cultural capital in the same way, as an explanation of labour market difficulties, is potentially problematic. Tara J. Yosso (2005) illustrated how the "cultural wealth" of communities of colour goes unrecognized and undervalued within the educational field, and the same is true with respect to the labour market experiences of immigrant professionals. Newcomers do not lack cultural capital. Instead, they have difficulty in translating their cultural knowledge into something that is valuable in Canadian society, and Canadian-born employers

may not readily accept their cultural knowledge and practices. In other words, newcomers do not have a deficit of cultural capital but, rather, Canadian society and employers undervalue their multicultural knowledge in the same way that they devalue foreign credentials and experience. It is also crucially important to move beyond these individualistic assumptions to a social justice perspective that examines systemic issues such as discrimination and racism.

Critical Race Theory

Such individualistic explanations for labour market obstacles faced by newcomers do not necessarily contradict social justice orientations that characterize the Canadian labour market as marked by persistent racial inequality. In other words, anti-racist perspectives accept that some challenges can be attributed to individualistic factors, but the systemic nature of these challenges indicate that there are broader structural factors such as racial discrimination as well as the devaluation of internationally obtained credentials and experience. Critical race theory focuses on the overt and subtle racism present in all spheres of social activity (Alyward, 1999; Delgado and Stefancic, 2001, 2-3; Hall, 1981). This anti-racist approach involves examining patterns of prejudice within socio-economic hierarchies, historical conditions, individual or group interactions, and in feelings or perceptions. Critical race theory offers an excellent supplemental view of inequality and racism to enhance an analysis based on a social/cultural capital framework. This more comprehensive approach can provide a better understanding of how race plays a major role in personal interactions as well as the larger structural environment

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

With the unequal Canadian labour market as the context, this study asks how service providers perceive the challenges faced by newcomer professionals, and if immigrants view labour market barriers in similar ways. Do the two groups have complementary or opposing understandings of the Canadian labour market? For example, do service providers and immigrants primarily focus on human capital upgrading, or other forms of capital deficits, or is there a broader consensus between these two groups about the discriminatory nature of the barriers contributing to labour market exclusion. I utilize forms of capital and critical race theory, discussed above, to assess the similarities and/or differences between the perspectives of these two groups of participants.

I focused my study upon immigrant professionals due to the increasing governmental insistence in recent years that immigrants arrive in the country with high levels of education, skills (particularly "transferrable skills") and other human capital factors (CIC, 2015a; CIC News, 2015). My research philosophy emphasized the "meaning that the participants hold about the problem or issue" rather than on my own assumptions drawn from the existing literature (Creswell, 2008, 1994). The University of Alberta Research Ethics Board approved this study, and interviews occurred between February and December 2013. Most participants wished to use pseudonyms, although several asked that I use their given names. I utilized NVivo 10 for the coding and analysis of the results.

As mentioned previously, a considerable amount of immigration research centers on the three largest cities in Canada. For this reason, I interviewed 11 service providers and 21

immigrant professionals in Edmonton, Alberta and 11 service providers and 17 immigrants in Winnipeg, Manitoba for a total sample size of 60 individuals. Immigrant-serving practitioners represented eight organizations in Winnipeg and seven organizations in Edmonton. Snowball, theoretical and opportunity sampling ensured that participants represented both a wide range of agencies/services and immigrant professionals (in terms of age, sex, gender, country of origin, length of time in Canada and professional field). Snowball sampling involved participants providing referrals and recommendations to people within their personal social network (Patton, 1990). Edmonton and Winnipeg are excellent sites for research of this nature because fewer studies examine mid-sized Canadian cities, and increasingly these provinces attempt to attract highly skilled immigrants to address labour market shortages (Carter, Morrish and Amoyaw, 2008; Clement, Carter and Vineberg, 2013).

Service providers were knowledgeable informants who explained the mandate and vision of their organizations, and provided information about the local immigrant groups and labour markets. I spoke to executive directors of organizations and managers, but I also interviewed employment counsellors and other "front line" workers. It is important to note that all immigrant-serving organizations typically view employment as only one component of successful settlement and, therefore, agencies provide a wide range of settlement support. Moreover, although my study focuses on immigrant professionals, many of the organizations I examined provide services to all immigrants, although some organizations or programs specifically catered to highly educated professionals.

RESULTS

The remaining sections of this paper compare and contrast the perspectives of immigrant and service provider participants around four dominant themes that arose during interviews. I begin by examining if the two groups' perceptions of labour market barriers are similar and if they suggest solutions that follow similar approaches. Then, focusing on more specific challenges, I examine the problematic links between Canadian experience and credential recognition. The third section builds off previous themes to examine the discriminatory demands for immigrants to "fit in" to workplace culture and expectations with minimal reciprocity. The fourth section expands upon on issues of racism, linguistic discrimination, and the conceptualization of the "right" types of "responsible" immigrants.

Perceptions of Labour Market Challenges

Although the precise wording of questions varied across interviews, I assessed perceived labour market barriers by asking service providers "How are immigrants faring in the labour market?" usually followed up with "What are some of the challenges immigrants experience?"[7]. Similarly, I asked immigrants "What were your experiences looking for work after you arrived in the country?" and "What was your greatest concern after arriving in the country?" Participants often did not need prompting to discuss these topics, but I probed when it was necessary to garner more information or detail. Although not exhaustive, Table 1 provides examples that represent the most common themes and compares the perspectives of immigrants to service providers.

[7] I also asked "What advantages do immigrants/you as an immigrant have when looking for work" as a follow-up question in both interviews with service provider and immigrant participants.

Table 3: Comparative Examples of Dominant Themes

Q: Challenges when searching for employment?	
Immigrant Perspectives	*Service Provider Viewpoints*
THEME: Survival and transitional jobs[8]	
"The fact that I can't work as a nurse, I have to work as a support worker, and I have to pay, you know, all this money to do courses that I did while I was a student nurse, you know, like five years down the line I'm having to repeat these courses because there is no standardized way for assessing degrees that we're bringing from abroad." **(Winnipeg, former nurse working as health care aide)**	"We do have lots of success stories, when clients come in and they look at higher level jobs. It takes longer, the cycle would be longer, for transitional usually we look at 0-3 months for professional would be 3-6 months. Considering the fact that it's not regulated, for regulated it might take a couple of years for doctors and nurses. Usually these are the cycles, so we try to explain that if you're looking for higher level jobs you need to allow yourself 6 months for actual job search. That's why clients cannot really afford it sometimes, that's why they look into survival / transitional employment."
THEME: Professional networking and references	
"Just actually meeting people in my community, that would probably be the greatest challenge because I'd essentially left my previous network of business contacts…" **(Winnipeg, accountant, pre- and post-migration)** "The culture here seems a bit closed, the most important challenge is the need for Canadian references, at interviews they ask for them..." **(Edmonton, former post-doctoral researcher seeking employment)** "There's more open workplaces in the USA, free flowing of ideas and more innovative.	"That's why we say focus on looking for transitional employment, something related to your field but it's not regulated so you can get experience, work, network a little bit more and then slowly work towards your license or registration. ... It's kind of painful to see how they are trying to start a little bit lower, so that understanding sometimes is not there. So that's why we try to talk to our clients a little bit more and just explain that it's important to get into the field, see the company from the inside, network with potential employers, and work a little bit – and work from there."

[8] Survival employment involves taking a position that is completely unrelated to their previous careers, whereas transitional employment is an occupational role that is within the same field of expertise but at a level that is not commensurate with the individual's level of education or experience (McCoy and Masuch, 2007; Meraj, 2015; Thomas, 2015).

Now that we're here there's a need to obtain references and build professional networks as well." **(Winnipeg, former IT professional seeking employment)**	
THEME: Language skills	
"I was working on my language skills a bit more. I've had all of my education in English, but some of the jargon that Canadians use, I wasn't used to, so that's why I wanted to work in an environment where I'm talking to people." **(Winnipeg, former international student working in finance services)**	"When they come in, trying to make sure they have that level of understanding, what the job market is, and how for them to be competitive and successful in it. Of course there are other things such as language, even background, so there are barriers too."
THEME: Canadian experience and education	
"Yeah, and I can contribute to the world, but you know here, in Canada, they need the Canadian experience, they need the Canadian education." **(Edmonton, former international development program manager working as a security guard)**	"So that's what we find, I think I would say probably those two are the biggest. The language and the lack of Canadian experience. Many times, for professional immigrants that want to get back into their professions, of course, dealing with different regulatory bodies such as accounting, and medical field, and you know, of course law and all the industries that are regulated, engineering. So those clients have I guess, a difficult situation, because they usually have to start off working somewhere else, you know, outside their industries because they can't find a job in their field right away. So it's a process."

When asked directly about labour market challenges, immigrants' and service providers' viewpoints were generally similar, but varying perspectives emerged on certain issues. Immigrants and service providers usually identified similar problems faced when entering the labour market while diverging on significant points related to language skills, professional networks, the importance of résumés, having realistic expectations, a need for "soft skills," and adjusting to Canadian workplace expectations. Both groups recognized that many immigrant

professionals were working in survival or "transitional" jobs. Immigrants commonly referred to a need for professional networking opportunities, and service providers stated that taking "lower status" transitional jobs or volunteering were excellent ways to obtain Canadian references. Both groups were critical of employers' insistence on a need for Canadian experience, although immigrants were more critical and expressed frustration about a lack of recognition for their previous employment. Service providers focused on pragmatic solutions such as obtaining survival or transitional employment, educational upgrading, and language training.

Expanding from the more general and introductory discussion of challenges (Table 1), I further analyzed transcripts to better determine important similarities and differences. Table 2 summarizes the proportions of participants in both groups who mentioned which barriers newcomer professionals face when entering the labour market. There are some substantial differences between the two groups where one mentioned an issue as a challenge and the other group did not.

Table 4: Challenges to Employment Opportunities[9]

Challenges to Employment	**Immigrant Participants n=38 (%)**	**Settlement Workers n=22 (%)**
Canadian Experience	34 (89%)	15 (68%)
Credential Recognition	31 (82%)	14 (64%)
Discrimination	25 (66%)	11 (50%)
Real Language Difficulties	14 (37%)	17 (77%)
Perceived Language Difficulties	18 (47%)	5 (23%)
Regulatory Process	13 (34%)	9 (41%)
Professional Networks	27 (71%)	9 (41%)
Résumé, Interview Style	5 (13%)	12 (54%)
Disability	2 (5%)	1 (4%)

[9] Columns will not total 100 percent because respondents could fall into more than one category.

Child-Care	7 (18%)	2 (9%)
Need for Realistic Expectations	0 (0%)*	11 (50%)
Cultural Differences /Soft Skills	2 (5%)	17 (77%)
Pre-arrival Training	2 (5%)	3 (14%)

NOTE: While immigrants did not express their need to temper their expectations, most of them stated Canada was not what they expected (See Paper 2).

While these results are not meant to be generalized to the whole population of immigrant professionals, or all service providers, the similarities and differences provide useful insights into what each group focused on in relation to labour market barriers. While common responses focused on the recognition of international credentials and experience, there were some points where immigrants and service providers clearly diverged. For example, while over eighty percent of service providers mentioned cultural differences, only five percent of immigrants mentioned the need for adjusting to cultural differences or developing soft skills and adjusting to Canadian workplace culture. I specifically asked newcomers if they felt Canadian workplace expectations regarding job tasks were different from where they worked before they arrived, and although there were exceptions, most people expressed that "it's the same thing… everything is basically the same thing really" or "it's more or less the same."

There were also interesting discrepancies related to language ability, with immigrants emphasizing the role of "having an accent" and the perception of linguistic deficit. One participant described how an immediate supervisor requested them to attend "accent reduction" training to remedy a non-existent linguistic problem. In other words, true challenges in speaking English or French are tremendous barriers (Derwing and Waugh, 2012, 5), but newcomer

professionals often already have high proficiency in English. Hence, employers' perceptions of accent may be a large part of the problem.

Interestingly immigrant participants emphasized the lack of professional networks as a major barrier to obtaining employment. Although many service providers did mention this, there was a remarkable difference with over seventy percent of immigrants bringing up networks compared to forty-three percent of service providers. The recognized need for networking emphasizes the importance of social capital for newcomers and this is where service providers could assist with linking new immigrants to professional networks.

A final notable difference is that no immigrants expressed a need to adjust their expectations to "be more realistic," but over half the service provider participants explicitly said it was unrealistic to expect equivalent professional employment. If this is in fact the case, there is a need for better pre-arrival training and education to bring newcomer expectations more in line with the realities for what their lives will be like upon arrival. Recommending better-informed expectations, however, is not equivalent to agreeing that immigrants arrive with unrealistic expectations. I contend that it is realistic to expect the continuation of your career after migrating to a new country, although perhaps with minor adjustments and training.

In response to my enquiry about the greatest challenges facing immigrant professionals, one service provider indicated the answer differed depending on whom you are speaking to:

> My opinion or theirs? Because it can differ right, it does differ … [t]hey think that they don't have the right tools or their tools aren't being effective. Obviously situations like résumés and cover letters and understanding what goes on in a job interview, what's

> expected are usually areas that people are fairly weak in. **– Edmonton Service Provider 6 (Program Manager)**

This quotation illustrates the widespread focus on problems such as poor résumés, cover letters, and workplace culture. Some immigrant participants acknowledged résumés as a challenge, but often in reference to revising the longer form curriculum vitae into the shorter style typically only a few pages in length. Another common theme brought up by service providers related to soft skills or workplace norms. This statement from a service provider refers to an expectation by employers for immigrants' conformity within Canadian workplaces:

> Most of the applicants in our programs feel that their lack of success in finding work immediately in their field relates to their technical abilities and that they're missing something or the employers aren't respecting or understanding their technical expertise and they better get an improved, you know, educational background or what not. However, that's actually the polar opposite of what's going on. Most people's technical abilities are not bad, some of them have to Canadianize their skills – and that's what our program tends to focus on in the engineering program in particular. **– Edmonton Service Provider 6 (Program Manager)**

In other words, there are explicit expectations for immigrants to adjust their soft skills and mannerisms to assimilate their behaviour in line with Canadian workers. The problem is not a technical skills deficit; instead, immigrants must learn how to "fit in" to the Canadian workplace. These statements were very similar across my discussions with multiple service providers who expressed frustration that training for soft skills was a "hard sell" to immigrants or that newcomers would get jobs due to their technical training but job retention was a challenge due to a lack of soft skills or misunderstandings of Canadian workplace culture. This reiterates my argument that immigrants' cultural capital is perceived as incompatible with that of Canadian-born workers, representing not only a devaluation of international credentials and experience but also the lack of respect for meaningful diversity. According to service providers, employers appear to support diverse workplaces, but only if employees are attuned to Canadian norms.

What's in a Résumé? It Better be Canadian Credentials and Experience

> Maybe if I had educational degree from here, it would be better, but I cannot afford it right now. Second thing, is that they are asking for Canadian experience, one option I can do is volunteering. If I go for volunteering who will look after my son – **M.J. (PhD, Professor of Psychology, Edmonton, unemployed searching for work)**

> I would like to say that to increase my probability of success in Canada I applied to the University of Alberta to study Master of Science in construction engineering and management. And I was accepted for Master of Engineering in construction engineering and management. The reason I applied for MSc not for MEng, is to continue my PhD. – **Mahmoud (BSc, Engineer, Edmonton, employed as a security guard)**

Both service provider and immigrant participants believed that primary barriers to meaningful employment were related to employer preferences for Canadian credentials and experience. Reflecting on this, many immigrants were in the process of obtaining Canadian education with the hope that it would create more opportunities for them professionally, but at considerable expense and lost opportunities as they retrain. These were additional degrees sought solely because immigrant professionals did not feel their international credentials were being valued.

Unfortunately, further credentials are often redundant in terms of new skills and knowledge, particularly those used for "upgrading" to become recognized by regulatory bodies. I spoke with many doctors, nurses and engineers who stated that what they were studying just repeated information they had already learned in school, sometimes ten years prior, and that the process was extremely expensive. Several surgeons stated that, if they just had the opportunity to work as volunteers under supervision, they would do so because maintaining their highly developed skills requires constant practice. In other words, while many professionals are working towards recertification, their equally important on-the-job skills are deteriorating (this is especially true for surgeons, but applies to all professional workers to a certain degree).

A high proportion of service providers discussed the need for better résumés and understandings of workplace culture:

> My favourite example – I got a résumé, a résumé from a doctor applying for a front-line settlement position, and it said "I am heterosexual male and I own a car, sincerely so and so" and there was a picture. I was thinking "he'll never get an interview" ... So, I think the cultural pieces are a challenge, like job retention is a big challenge because of that culture. And then, even getting through the interview can be a really big disadvantage because you don't understand what the question is meant to do. **– Edmonton Service Provider 2 (Executive Director)**

> I bought a car specifically to go visit companies and give résumés by hand, I am trying all efforts that it takes me to find a job in Canada, and until now, luck did not smile. It is always those excuses, you don't have Canadian experience, you are overly qualified, you are not yet a certified professional engineer, so your credentials are not recognized. Oh you know, you have a beautiful résumé, you've got great experience, we will keep it and once we win project, we will call you for service. **– Mahmoud**

Mahmoud's experience is a good example because he also voluntarily provided me with his résumé, and it appropriately summarized his skills and ten years of experience as a structural engineer in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Mahmoud worked for a Canadian company while in the UAE, and yet, he was now working full-time as a security guard in Canada. Considering Mahmoud's access to differing forms of capital, he faced significant limitations due to discriminatory perceptions related to the inadequacy of international credentials and the exclusion of immigrant professionals from the accreditation process (Guo, 2013b).

Working through the regulatory process is difficult and expensive, and there are systemic challenges such as a lack of residency spots for internationally-trained doctors:

> I have seen some improvement in some areas, like it used to be impossible; there was not a single residency spot for a single foreign trained medical graduate in all of Alberta right. And that's not that many years ago, then people got a little smarter and there were two spots every year, and quite frankly I'm out of touch now because I'm not doing the education counseling so I don't know how many, but there's a handful of opportunities for people now to get through whereas before the door just slammed shut, so it's still a very rocky road. **– Edmonton Service Provider 4 (Program Manager)**

Regulatory examinations are cost-prohibitive, but when doctors pass the exams and are then unable to find residency positions, it is extremely challenging to re-enter their profession. As previously stated, many medical professionals expressed frustration because their skills deteriorate over time. It is of critical importance, therefore, that the re-entry process be streamlined. In addition to the deterioration of skills, many immigrants have limited opportunities due to the financial expense. Service providers recognize that many professionals simply must take survival employment:

> But a lot of times too, clients have a difficult time taking a survival job, especially when they're skilled professionals, you know? And I mean, the majority of them do because they have no choice. **– Edmonton Service Provider 7 (Program Manager)**

For those immigrants who have no choice but to work in precarious survival positions, they do so to the detriment of their physical and psychological well-being (Subedi and Rosenberg, 2015).

Other scholars have investigated the international penalties imposed upon internationally-trained professionals for decades (Bauder, 2003; Buzdugan and Halli, 2009). Immigrant professionals face a double penalty whereby employers devalue both their education and experience from outside Canada. But there is more to this story. Not all immigrant professionals experience these penalties in the same way. For racialized immigrants of colour, this international credential penalty is significantly more of a barrier than for white immigrants. From a critical race perspective, these penalties illustrate the persistence of racial inequality in the labour market. Many service provider participants identified labour market challenges as, at least partially, due to discrimination and the interaction of various complex barriers:

> They want this Canadian experience, and… I'm starting to question, well, why? Why can't their experiences be valued in their own country, and bring that diversity here, but understand yes, there's going to be some integration training that needs to happen. The

> newcomer also needs to realize their language needs to always be improving, they can't just be satisfied. Oh I got a job now, I'm done now. I think they always need to be learning, especially technical language. I think there's discrimination, - no, I know there's discrimination (laughs) based on accents, language abilities, skin colours, it's… you just, you know there is. So, part of it is working with that, but… that might be more systemic, but I still think there's, we play a role in that. **– Winnipeg Service Provider 8 (Program Coordinator)**

Workplace Culture and Expectations

Although a certain degree of adjustment on the part of immigrants is understandable, it is important to ask why there are not the same expectations for employers or workplaces to adjust, to become more accommodating for racial, linguistic and cultural diversity:

> The major problem is that they don't understand work culture components, but it's the hardest sell to take on – if you had to market something and say 'well take this four months of business communications and Canadian workplace culture' and/or 'take this four months of technical updating of an enhanced capacity', everybody will say they just need, or just want, the technical updating. And that technical updating will get them a job, but chances are it will not keep them a job. **– Edmonton Service Provider 6 (Program Manager)**

There is an implicit assumption that immigrants are "too different" to fit within broader Canadian and, specifically, white-settler society (Guo 2013, 166). Critical race theory observes that unconscious biases reinforce racial inequality, and preferences for white Canadian-born workers devalue and relegate immigrants to the periphery in the labour market. These preferences may not be unconscious but, instead, explicit insofar as employers request Canadian experience and education despite the widespread understanding that this is discriminatory and infringes on human rights (OHRC, 2013; Slade, 2011). Service providers reflected on the fact that many employers simply appear reluctant to hire immigrant professionals. Occasionally, services providers expressed understandings for employers' beliefs and actions:

> Well, we talked about the credentials. Not having the credentials recognized that they need. We're really, as Canadian employers, really leery to – well we're human, in the fact that people want to hire somebody that feels familiar somehow. Like, if you have some kind of an internal reference, or an internal knowledge of what to expect then it is way

> easier to hire for somebody that you have a sense of what to expect with that new hire. Being involved in hiring, I understand, organizations and employers want to hire somebody that can hit the ground running, and if you have somebody whose contextual framework is so different, or from a different place they can't hit the ground running. So it's hard, so people end up hitting the burger stands running instead, you know, flipping burgers or mopping floors. So, is there racism involved? Yes, and it's more complicated than that in a lot of cases I think. **– Edmonton Service Provider 4 (Program Manager)**

The majority of services provided to immigrant professionals involved résumé development and information about Canadian workplace culture. Service providers overwhelmingly referred to a need for immigrants to adjust and integrate into Canadian workplaces or to learn soft skills to complement their technical abilities. These results are complicated, however, because the same service providers indicated a need for employers to adjust their expectations and ensure that workplaces are more welcoming. One potential avenue to improve the process of labour market inclusion could involve the expansion of bridging programs.

Occupational bridging programs can help to ensure that immigrants obtain transitional "entry" jobs that utilize their education and experience while providing workshops that teach Canadian technical language, workplace culture, job search techniques, and résumé and interview skills (McCoy and Masuch, 2007, 194). As previously stated, I asked immigrant professionals if they felt that Canadian workplaces were very different. Most participants stated that the norms and expectations in the workplace were not considerably different. On the one hand, this could show that some immigrant professionals really do not understand the nuances of Canadian workplace culture. On the other hand, it is important to critically assess the assumption that immigrants do not understand Canadian workplace norms. The former assumption affirms assimilative rather than inclusive approaches to immigrant employment, and may also not necessarily be a legitimate expectation. Rather, it is rooted in discriminatory assumptions that

immigrants are "too different" for inclusion in the workplace. In other words, the cultural capital that immigrants bring to the Canadian workplace is perceived as unsatisfactory rather than enriching the work environment via differing international experiences and world views (Yosso, 2005).

As critical race theorist Tara J. Yosso (2005) notes, there is a need to move beyond a cultural capital deficit approach and to utilize the notion of "community cultural wealth" whereby the concept of cultural capital expands to value and incorporate the array of knowledge, skills, and abilities possessed by communities of colour. Just as Yosso illustrated how the cultural capital deficit approach marginalizes children of colour in the educational system, the same critique can be extended to the experiences of immigrant professionals who systematically experience a perception of deficit based on international credentials, accent, language ability, race and other potentially marginalized identities. Working with a critical race lens recognizes this deficit thinking as a form of racism, and the findings of my research affirm and extend this critical approach.

Real and Perceived Language Difficulties

> Everything comes down to language levels. If a client doesn't have the language levels it gets very hard to continue on in their fields. **– Winnipeg Service Provider 4 (Program Manager)**

Many service providers identified language proficiency as a primary challenge for immigrant professionals as they attempt to continue their careers. If immigrants do not have the necessary language ability for a position, then the best course of action is to provide language training. But it is important to acknowledge that many immigrants face an "accent" and "foreignness" penalty. In other words, their status as immigrants imposes the perception of them

as a foreigner whereby employers and broader society assesses their linguistic ability as inferior due to accent rather than ability. This accent penalty is well illustrated by Pnay who worked for over ten years as a Human Resources manager in the United Arab Emirates before migrating with her husband and children to Canada. During her eleven years in Canada, she needed to upgrade her education before she was able to find a job in her profession. She was uncomfortable with allowing me to record our discussion, possibly because of considerable previous bullying for her to "improve her accent" by taking accent reduction training despite her high English language proficiency. She also spoke Tagalog, Arabic, Hindi and Spanish. In Pnay's case, she expressed deep frustration because:

> Who wants to go back to school after working professionally for so long? It questions your capabilities, why am I here if I'll just be treated this way. I supervised 20,000 employees in an international environment, so what makes me different?

While her boss "listened in on calls and was correcting pronunciation" she was losing her self-confidence and self-esteem while being frequently criticized for her accent. Pnay eventually "left the job I loved doing because of these and so many issues." She stated that she felt like she had no one to ask for help. Pnay's experience illustrates a broader issue related to immigrants with high language proficiency being perceived as having insufficient language ability due to accents and racialization as people of colour. Critical race theory assists in highlighting how racial discrimination remains in workplaces via undercurrents of "justifiable" language. In other words, although there are real problems with language difficulties in some cases, it is critical to distinguish between *real* and *perceived* difficulties with language.

Racial Discrimination and the "Responsible" Immigrant

As previously mentioned, there is an overwhelming focus on individual characteristics as the driving cause behind labour market exclusion. There is also a preference for particular types of immigrants with the "personal drive" to succeed:

> Exactly, so that's very important. Clients that are very well educated but don't have any people skills or language levels and they're not willing to start off at a different level or they don't want to change industries. So, it's very hard for those clients, but we have other clients who are willing to start anywhere else. They just want a job to make money, they don't worry they will take any job. Because of course, they want to support their families and pay their bills. But then along the way, you know in the evenings, they kind of continue along with their schooling and all of that and they do make it. So again, that's what I mean by personal drive, we have some clients who have the persistence right? And they want to actually make it. **– Winnipeg Service Provider 4 (Program Manager)**

Moving beyond identifying language ability as a barrier, this service provider goes further to express that immigrants need the personal characteristics that motivate them to continue to "work hard" to get ahead in a labour market. This statement assumes that immigrants will succeed if they just work hard and are "flexible" and "responsible" enough. This perspective imposes expectations onto newcomer professionals to ensure they conform to the expectations and responsibilities of the "right" types of immigrant.

Much of the discourse related to integrating and "preparing" immigrants for their positions in Canadian workplaces is based on two problematic assumptions. The first is that immigrants are unprepared for the workplace because of their international credentials, language deficiencies, and the inability to understand Canadian cultural norms. Put simply, it is assumed that newcomers are unprepared for the Canadian workplace. The second major implicit, and occasionally explicit, assumption is that if immigrants just work hard enough, they will succeed. In other words, immigrants are doing poorly in the labour market due to a lack of effort. This

focus on immigrants' presumed deficiencies overlooks societal responsibility to try to incorporate immigrants from diverse backgrounds. Moreover, these assumptions ignore the pervasive influence of racial discrimination. While service providers do acknowledge the existence of racism, they also express either frustration or fatalism that the situation will not change as quickly as we wish it to change:

> There's always racism, there's always 'isms'. There's ageism, racism, everybody's got some sort of bias. Or they've got something that they have that, you know, even in the workplace. You know, there's still, you know, even men and women in positions and all kinds of things. Like, it's hard to change all of that in a short time. **– Edmonton Service Provider 8 (Front-line Worker)**

> There's still discrimination I believe, and uh, racism... [S]ome women have a hard time to find jobs just because of their names. So employers see that it's an immigrant name, they cannot pronounce it, they don't want to call… it's silly! **– Winnipeg Service Provider 9 (Front-line Worker)**

Perspectives on the impact of racial discrimination were diverse amongst immigrant participants, with some expressing significant frustration and hardship. Others felt the impact was minimal, or that Canada was much better in this respect than they had expected:

> If you look at Canada from the outside it appears very welcoming and diverse but when you get here it's very different and that's a bad thing. **– Hammy (BSc, Electrician working as a taxi driver)**

> Oh, Winnipeg is… a bunch of warm people, Winnipeggers are a bunch of warm people. I braced myself for racial discrimination, but I haven't seen one yet. Or maybe I didn't… bother? – **L. (Medical Doctor, Pediatrics Specialist, working as a health care support worker)**

Three immigrant participants who were people of colour talked to me extensively about their concerns about racism before coming to Canada, but noted they had not personally experienced it since arriving. Many others, however, shared challenges related to racial or linguistic discrimination. Although many of the immigrant professionals I interviewed still spoke very

positively about their experiences, service providers commented about the fluid nature of discrimination and how important it is to identify implicit discriminatory perspectives.

> There's this undercurrent in the media, always that – full of stereotypes that immigrants take jobs, they cause criminal justice problems, and all of that – there's bias in the media, and that bias kind of feeds into government policy. It's like they work in tandem almost, and hence, they affect public opinion in a really significant way against immigration. **– Edmonton Service Provider 5 (Executive Director)**

> I think there's discrimination, - no, I know there's discrimination (laughs) based on accents, language abilities, skin colours, it's… you just, you know there is. So, part of it is working with that, but… that might be more systemic. **– Winnipeg Service Provider 8 (Program Coordinator)**

This public discourse on the "problematic immigrant" helps create the perception that immigrants are too different to fit into Canada. In fact, the underlying philosophy driving immigrant service provision often focuses on "teaching somebody to fish," on promoting independence and self-reliance amongst immigrant clients (Thomas, 2015). This philosophy reinforces the assumption that immigrants are dependent on support and are not working hard enough to "make it" in the Canadian economy. Such assumptions and philosophies reify and strengthen the distinction between ideal and problematic immigrants.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Immigrant professionals and service providers have a common understanding of many labour market barriers, but divergent perceptions of challenges may influence the focus of interventions. Although it is important to provide individual-focused training to immigrants who require assistance, there is also a need for broader societal change. While some immigrant professionals truly need assistance revising their résumés and practicing for interviews, many of the participants in this study did not. On a broader level, if immigrant cultural capital and

credentials were valued more from a cultural wealth perspective, immigrants' potentially different worldview could provide diversity, new approaches and ideas in the workplace. Moreover, a deficit-based approach does not address (and may reinforce) discriminatory assumptions regarding the inferiority of international skills and experience. Participants strongly emphasized the existence of widespread employer preferences for Canadian credentials and experience.

The preference for Canadian norms in the workplace represents an implicit and unconscious bias that assumes immigrants' international skills and cultural knowledges are not valuable in Canadian workplaces. Critical race theory highlights the link between these assumptions and perceptions of immigrant professionals' "foreignness" with the devaluation of professional credentials and experience. CRT helps explain why this discrepancy exists between immigrant and service provider perspectives. Immigrants want to be included in the workplace without assimilative requirements, while service providers are either attempting to address discrimination through pragmatic means, or do not recognize deficit-based thinking as a discriminatory barrier (Yosso, 2005). Taking this a step further, as described by both immigrant and service provider participants, it is discriminatory when immigrants are judged as culturally incompatible and their cultural capital is devalued and "lost in translation" as they attempt to meet the expectations of Canadian employers.

There is tension between service providers recognizing a need for the elimination of discriminatory preferences, and working to provide immediate solutions to help people find employment – preferably a meaningful, or at least transitional, position. These solutions do not

consider why employers are reluctant to hire and train international professionals. Moreover, the individualistic focus in this approach assumes that immigrants who do not succeed in the labour market simply did not work hard enough.

One common theme I encountered is the implicit distinction between the "right" and the "wrong" types of immigrants. From the perspective of immigration policy, it is professional immigrants that are usually considered the "right" sorts in comparison to family, refugee and temporary foreign workers (Chuong, 2015). But the "right" and "wrong" dichotomy also distinguishes between newcomers who are seen to have sufficient amounts of different forms of capital and, hence, "fit in" with Canadians, and those considered too different or not driven to succeed. Critical race theory provides an important critique of this discourse. The social construction of immigrants as the "problematic other" ignores the impact of structural barriers such as racism, preferences for Canadian experience, credential devaluation and linguistic discrimination.

Instead, we should value the diversity and potential for new approaches and ideas, taking what we might call "newcomer cultural capital" approach. This "cultural wealth perspective" draws from the experiences of communities of colour whose members bring skills, resources, networks and strategies that help them "survive and resist macro and micro-forms of oppression (Yosso, 2005, 77). Critical race theory shows how this model previously applied within the educational system can help conceptualize how immigrant professionals bring varied skills and strategies to Canadian workplace that are undervalued within white-Canadian norms. Currently, most of the emphasis for adaptation rests with immigrants, leading to conclusions about poorer

work ethic and irresponsibility issues among immigrants when, in fact, study participants pointed to the existence of significant problems at the structural level. We must acknowledge the systemic nature of these problems rather than continuing to focus only on individual level interventions. While focusing on individual issues that prevent integration, such as real linguistic deficits or more streamlined re-accreditation processes, there is an equal need to engage employers and adjust societal expectations for immigrants. This involves addressing discrimination, particularly the forms of subtle racism identified through a critical race perspective, and acknowledging the value of cultural capital that newcomers bring to the workplace. Moreover, returning to one of the primary differences between immigrant and service provider perspectives identified in this study, there is a need for realistic expectations, but it is also a realistic expectation to think that continuation of successful career and inclusion into a new country is meaningful.

Strengths, Limitations and Future Research

Qualitative research is a useful methodological approach for answering questions related to the lived experiences of immigrants and the conceptual understanding of that experience held by service providers. It is important, however, to acknowledge that this small scale study cannot be generalized to all immigrants or all service providers. Future quantitative survey research could provide more detailed analysis regarding differences in perceptions between these key stakeholder groups.

Qualitative research also provides a strong basis for understanding the processes by which immigrant professionals understand the barriers experienced in the labour market. The findings of this study are strengthened by theoretical sampling techniques that allowed for more

similarities amongst participants (internationally trained professionals) than would exist had all immigrants been the focus of investigation. Another primary strength of this study relates to its theoretical orientations – critical race theory used to re-examine forms of capital – that outlined the links between individual-focused and systemic issues.

Future research could examine the point of view of employers to determine strategies that will help mitigate barriers to immigrant employment. Projects that systematically assess employer perspectives related to perceived deficits in skills, credentials, language and soft skills would be useful. Moreover, qualitative research to identify the thought processes behind and justifications provided for employer perceptions would be valuable for designing intervention programs and policy that may encourage employers to abandon discriminatory hiring practices. For example, what myths do employers hold that promote deficit thinking related to newcomer professionals and their credentials? What would ensure employers hire immigrant professionals equitably? In particular, qualitative research could delve into how and why employers perceive international professionals less favourably than they perceive Canadian-born employees. In contrast, larger scale survey research could better address how widely-held prejudicial attitudes impact the opportunities for immigrants. These avenues of future research may help provide avenues to ensure a more equitable labour market and provide access for newcomer professionals.

Paper 4: Working Together or Not? Settlement Services in Mid-Sized Canadian Cities

Abstract: This study is based on semi-structured interviews with 38 newcomer professionals and 22 service providers in Winnipeg and Edmonton, to examine if and how service providers and immigrants are "working together" to overcome labour market exclusion. A cross-provincial comparison also identifies if and how economic and political differences result in differing experiences or strategies. Although immigrant professionals are appreciative of the services provided, a dominant theme was the need for specialized and profession-specific support. While pragmatic individualized responses are necessary, these approaches may reinforce the segmentation of immigrants in "transitional" or survival jobs where their skills and experience are underutilized. Importantly, newcomer professionals are highly proficient in adapting and learning about the needs and expectations of the Canadian workplace partially due to their international perspectives and high levels of human capital. Immigrant participants suggested that occupation-specific information, particularly if delivered via people that have gone through the process, would be more valuable than workshops focused on learning how to "Canadianize" their résumés and experience. Although settlement service providers are constrained by funding mandates, there is more room for occupation-specific pre- and post-arrival orientations, and a greater need to focus on addressing discrimination and employer adaptation.

Keywords: immigrant integration, settlement services, labour market inclusion, anti-racism, neoliberalism

INTRODUCTION

Newcomer-focused agencies are an important resource for immigrants searching for meaningful careers in Canada since such agencies assist in easing the transition process and can act as important advocates for inclusive workplaces and hiring practices. Organizations must work together with clients, governments and employers to ensure that professionally-educated immigrants have access to employment opportunities at the beginning of the settlement process. An ideal conceptualization of newcomer settlement in Canada would involve a "two-way street of adaptation" with immigrants adjusting to Canadian culture while the host country becomes more welcoming of diverse languages and practices (Winnemore and Biles, 2006). Unfortunately, much of the emphasis for adaptation rests upon immigrants, and as a result, service provision often focuses on individualistic interventions.

This study examines the role of service providers in assisting professionally-educated immigrants during their employment search. I compare Edmonton, Alberta and Winnipeg, Manitoba to see if economic and political differences result in differing experiences or strategies. The oil and gas industry drives boom and bust cycles of the Albertan economy, while slow economic growth and periods of stagnation characterize Manitoba's economy (Mansell and Schlenker, 2006; Mansell and Percy, 1990). Importantly, until April 2013, Manitoba had jurisdictional authority over the administration of settlement services in the province, while the administration of services in Alberta was under federal jurisdiction (Clement, Carter and Vineberg, 2013). Although both provinces have since experienced party changes in provincial elections, at the time of data collection (February to December 2013), Alberta had a Conservative government. Expectations for immigrants and support for the non-profit sector

were more restrictive than with the left-wing New Democratic regime that held office in Manitoba until 2016 (Adams, 2008; Woolford and Thomas, 2011). Although one might expect differences between the two provinces, the prevalence of neoliberalism in Canada might also influence similar policy approaches despite considerable economic and political differences between the two provinces.

This study of immigrant serving agencies in Edmonton and Winnipeg is a unique contribution to the immigration literature because fewer studies examine the experiences of immigrants in mid-sized Canadian cities. In general, there is a need for research on immigrant-serving organizations and the experiences that immigrants have with services. This study addresses these gaps in the literature, while interpreting these processes from a sociological perspective. Moreover, by speaking to both immigrants and service providers, I gained multifaceted insight into the labour market experiences of newcomers. I conceptualize this process as involving two-way information exchange, where service organizations and immigrants work together to navigate a labour market characterized by persistent ethno-racial inequality. Ideally, this information sharing should begin before newcomers leave their country of origin with robust, and honest, pre-arrival orientation.

Pre-Arrival Training

People that consider migration to Canada benefit from accurate information prior to their departure. Funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, the Canadian Orientation Abroad (COA) program has provided pre-arrival support to immigrants since 1998 (Canadian Orientation Abroad, 2015). COA collaborates with service organizations to gather and

disseminate up-to-date pre-arrival information and resources to potential immigrants. The Canadian Immigrant Integration Program (CIIP) has also provided pre-departure training for economic class immigrants since 2007 (Canadian Immigrant Integration Program, 2015; Planning for Canada, 2015). The COA program, in conjunction with the CIIP, now offer a joint program called Planning for Canada (PFC). Full-day in-person sessions provide information about "what you need to know" and "where to find more information", personalized planning, connections to key Canadian organizations for pre-arrival guidance and access to online information sessions (Planning for Canada, 2015). Pre-arrival orientation encourages immigrants to prepare while they are still in their home country, teaches about job search strategies, educational institutions and credential assessment bodies, and provides an overview of Canadian workplace expectations and culture.

These pre-arrival programs are geared towards preparing immigrants before their departure to Canada, but what can governments do to reduce the barriers faced by newcomer professionals once they arrive? There are extensive settlement services in most major Canadian cities, and these organizations exclusively provide services for immigrants. Services typically are multifaceted but focus on issues such as language training, health care, employment training and broader settlement and integration (Creese, 2011; Thomas, 2015). Research conducted by the Canadian Immigrant Settlement Sector Alliance (CISSA-ACSEI) indicated that settlement agencies recognized a need to expand their individualistic focus to better help families and communities (Burstein, 2010). Clear tension exists between the goals of addressing individual concerns and tackling broader systemic barriers. Put simply, agencies are faced with the challenge of meeting funding mandates through providing individualized training and working to

"advocate for cultural competence, inclusivity, and equal opportunity" (Manitoba Start, 2016). Some of the larger agencies, such as Manitoba Start in Winnipeg or the Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers, have the fiscal security, skills and explicit mandate to work as advocates for immigrants.

Immigrant-Serving Organizations in Winnipeg and Edmonton

One of the primary differences between Alberta and Manitoba is that Manitoba had jurisdictional control over administering settlement services due to the Canada-Manitoba Immigration Agreement (CMIA) while services in Alberta were under federal jurisdiction. During the course of this study, however, the CMIA expired and administration returned to the federal level because of the Federal Government's desire for settlement services that are "flexible, responsive and reasonably comparable" across the country (Clement, Carter and Vineberg, 2013, 4).

The Province of Manitoba developed an "Integrated Service Model" which includes pre-arrival information, centralized registration and referrals, centralized orientation, employment, language assessment, integration, employment and language services (Clement, Carter and Vineberg, 2013, 6). As such, services in Winnipeg are relatively specialized and several large organizations (Entry Program, Manitoba Start, Immigrant Centre, Winnipeg English Language Assessment and Referral Centre, Success Skills Centre) provide the bulk of programming to immigrants arriving in the city.

Many other smaller organizations in the city provide specialized services to youth, seniors, refugees and women. It is my observation that larger organizations have relatively stable funding, while some of the smaller groups mentioned the difficulties of obtaining secure funding. From a feminist intersectional perspective (Collins, 1990; Crenshaw, 1989), this is potentially problematic because these organizations make a difference in ensuring accessibility. If all the funding is provided to the "one stop shop" it may create a problem of less access for individuals, such as women, who may feel more comfortable receiving services at agencies that work exclusively with women. Ensuring women have access to services can be challenging, so more specialized support located closer to the immigrant communities, rather than downtown Winnipeg, is helpful.

A typical integration trajectory involves newcomers starting at the ENTRY program to complete settlement orientation. Then those who require additional employment support turn to Manitoba START, the Immigrant Centre, and Success Skills Centre for employment services. For language training in Winnipeg, immigrants are referred to the Winnipeg English Language Assessment and Referral Centre (WELARC). Importantly, the CMIA expired in April 2013, and jurisdictional realignment returned the administration of settlement services to the federal level.

Settlement services developed in Alberta in a similar fashion to those in Manitoba, with specialized organizations assisting immigrant populations with various aspects of settlement. Although the Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers (EMCN) and Bredin Institute are the primary service providers in the city, there is not necessarily a "one stop shop" in Edmonton as there is in Winnipeg. For language assessment, newcomers receive assessment and referrals

primarily through Catholic Social Services. Interestingly, another important difference is that Edmonton's settlement services have well-developed bridging programs for internationally-trained engineers, accountants and pharmacists that are located in-house. Perhaps due to the nature of the economy in Alberta, and the high demands for skilled labour (at the time of my study), the existence of bridging programs housed within immigrant-serving organizations in addition to what is traditionally provided by post-secondary institutions is an important distinction.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

This analysis critically assesses neoliberal assumptions for how the economy, communities and governments should operate. Neoliberalism promotes the self-organization of community activity to respond to any shortfalls of the market. Within neoliberalism, a strict separation between civil society and the state is seen to be necessary to best facilitate the free choice of citizens (Duggan, 2003; Jessop, 2002). In other words, state intervention is "an intrusion" that inhibits the freedom of individuals. Therefore, the community is responsible for supporting people who are unable to find employment due to market inadequacies. Rather than acknowledging systemic problems facing newcomers when they are trying to obtain employment, a neoliberal government will often "download" accountability to the community or individuals themselves. Such policies focus on "personal responsibility of the family and civil society" and divert social service costs from state agencies to individuals and their households (Duggan, 2003: 14). Proponents of this perspective see newcomer unemployment and underemployment as a result of individual deficiencies, and are more likely to reduce the availability and scope of settlement services. As such, neoliberal assumptions shape government

policies which in turn influence the employment outcomes of newcomers and play a role in the provision of settlement and employment related services.

Critical race theory (CRT) provides a deeper understanding of how newcomers may face discriminatory obstacles to entering meaningful jobs in the labour market. CRT is an alternative explanatory perspective that challenges human capital and neoliberal approaches to the labour market exclusion of newcomers. Rather than emphasizing the so-called deficits of individuals, as would be the focus of human capital explanations, a critical race approach highlights how segmentation in the labour market results from racial and/or ethnic discrimination. Moreover, immigrants face additional obstacles due to the presence of other marginalized individual traits such as gender, sexuality, disability, and class. These issues are not well accounted for within a human capital perspective, and therefore, I position this project with a critical anti-racist approach.

Critical race theory does not see opposition to racism as the sole goal of scholarly activism. Rather, it requires anti-racist practitioners to develop a "clearly articulated vision of a post-racist world and strategies to move forward" towards that ideal (Alyward, 1999; Hall, 1993; Lee and Lutz, 2005: 4). This requires researchers to be willing to interact and listen in a way that affirms difference, with the eventual goal of developing policy that leads society to live and celebrate difference in a meaningful way (Hall, 1993). Ensuring an inclusive labour market requires the critical assessment of how power operates between immigrants and employers, but also within settlement service agencies and government departments that develop policy and provide funding to agencies.

Racism is not a static phenomenon and researchers must be aware of how prejudice and discrimination shift to meet the demands of power relations (Alyward, 1999; Lee and Lutz, 2005; Solomos and Back, 2000). Within the Canadian context, these power relations position non-European immigrants, and particularly people of colour, as the "others" through the socially constructed "racialization" process (Alyward, 1999; Lee and Lutz, 2005: 6; Miles, 1989). Rather than reifying racial categories, my project identifies inter-group relations as a process whereby a white-settler Canadian mainstream perceives certain groups as racialized "others". CRT theory assists in identifying the discriminatory processes that devalue the contributions of immigrants to Canadian society (Yosso, 2005). CRT allows the frame to shift from normalizing the values of white-settler Canadian culture to incorporating the wealth of communities of colour.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND METHODS

With the segmented and unequal Canadian labour market as the broader context, several research questions guide this analysis. First and foremost, this research addresses the question of whether or not immigrants and service providers are "working together" to address labour market barriers and employment inequality. To be more specific, I was curious about if and how immigrant clients or communities shape the philosophical orientation and practical approach of service organizations. Stated differently, are immigrants and newcomer communities working together with service providers in program development? Additionally, what aspects of services were the most helpful for newcomer professionals? Although most organizations are oriented towards helping individuals, I examine if and how organizations address systemic barriers by advocating to employers on the behalf of newcomer clients. Finally, I wished to know whether or not there are any cross-provincial differences between Manitoba and Alberta as my two distinct

research sites. Building off this question, I draw on critical race theory to assess the similarities and/or differences between the perspectives of these two groups of participants regarding the services provided (or needs perceived) and identify areas that could be improved by addressing gaps in service provision.

Between February and December 2013, I interviewed 11 service providers and 21 immigrant professionals in Edmonton, Alberta and 11 service providers and 17 immigrants in Winnipeg, Manitoba for a total sample of 60 individuals. Immigrant-serving practitioners represented eight organizations in Winnipeg and seven organizations in Edmonton. Snowball, theoretical, and opportunity sampling ensured that participants represented both a wide range of agencies and immigrant professionals (in terms of age, gender, country of origin, length of time in Canada and professional field). Service provider participants represented both large and small immigrant-serving organizations as well as various roles within agencies. For example, I interviewed both management (executive directors, managers, and program coordinators) and front-line employment counselors. Snowball sampling also involved participants providing referrals and recommendations to people within their social network (Patton, 1990). It was not my intention to create a representative sample, but I wanted a wide range of perspectives from a variety of organizations and roles within organizations, as well as variation and diversity amongst immigrant participants.

Before participant recruitment began, I reviewed the available settlement and employment services in both cities to generate a list of agencies that were appropriate for inclusion. Service providers I interviewed worked at the largest newcomer-serving organizations,

ethno-cultural organizations, and at smaller neighbourhood-based agencies. Recruitment occurred through a letter or email of introduction to executive directors, followed up with a phone call, which sometimes led to referrals to other staff within the organizations. In my study, these individuals are knowledgeable informants who could explain the mandate and vision of the organizations, and provide information about the local immigrant groups and labour markets. I spoke to executive directors of organizations and managers, but I also interviewed employment counsellors and other "front line" workers. This theoretical-oriented sampling allowed for a wide range of participants situated at different locations within organizations, and represented agencies with varied mandates and both universal and targeted clientele focus. For example, I included one smaller agency that worked primarily with women in addition to the larger settlement organizations. It is important to note that all organizations of this type typically view employment as only one component of immigrant settlement, and therefore, provide a wide range of settlement support. I began interviews with service providers in each city, and immigrant participants were recruited simultaneously as fieldwork with service workers was winding down. Moreover, although my study focused on immigrant professionals, many of the organizations I examined provided services to all immigrants, although some organizations or programs specifically catered to highly educated professionals.

I focused my study upon immigrant professionals due to increasing government insistence that immigrants arrive in the country with high levels of education, skills (particularly "transferrable skills"), and other human capital (CIC, 2015a; CIC News, 2015). Participant recruitment primarily occurred through posted ads on bulletin boards in settlement agencies, educational institutions, neighbourhood organizations and ethno-cultural groups (even

international grocery stores). I also utilized newspaper ads and internet postings on the volunteer section of Kijiji. Word of mouth between participants as well as assistance from service providers helped to inform others about my study. One settlement provider sent a recruitment email to their local email list-serve. By the end of my study I had to turn down a large number of interested participants due to limited funding and researcher time. Although I provided a twenty-dollar honorarium to cover parking or transit costs for participants, the high level of interest in my study is likely related to the considerable difficulties that immigrant professionals face when obtaining employment related to their previous careers.

I developed a list of themes to guide interviews with both groups of participants. Primarily, I allowed participants to take control in our discussions by asking service providers about the organization, their individual role, and how they assist newcomer professionals. I started interviews with immigrants by asking about their personal, educational and occupational history as well as why they decided to come to Canada (the "immigrant journey"). My research philosophy emphasized the "meaning that the participants hold about the problem or issue" rather than on my own assumptions drawn from the existing literature (Creswell, 2008, 175). The University of Alberta Research Ethics Board approved this study. I utilized NVivo 10 for coding and analysis of the results.

RESULTS

Collaboration on Service Needs and Development

Service providers understand the importance of linkages to the community in order to be responsive to immigrants' evolving needs, and to identify gaps in programming. Funding constraints can prohibit the types of "deep settlement" work that meaningfully engages

newcomers in the community (Thomas, 2015; Yan, Chau and Sangha, 2010). Service providers are often frustrated by their funding mandates' focus on immediately measurable outcomes with less attention to building collaborative capacity between agencies and the communities they serve. One agency in Winnipeg organized two volunteer advisory teams ("boards"), whereby immigrants provide feedback:

> [Our newcomer advisory board] is 100 percent composed of the area newcomers – and, so there are people who have been here less than a year to as much as fifteen years, so we get a whole spectrum of people. So, the goal is [that] there will always be a representative on each one to make sure information transfers not just horizontally but vertically, so there's that dissemination of information in and out, saying what we are providing getting the information out but also learning about the gaps and the needs, and figuring out, as a community, um, who should be doing what, or what makes sense. **– Winnipeg Service Provider 8 (Program Coordinator)**

Another service provider mentioned that newcomers "don't like to be programmed, so the agency doesn't program, it responds to need" by consulting with community leaders and members to identify areas where additional services would be beneficial. Put simply, most agencies have some mechanisms for identifying community needs, whether it is formally through volunteer boards that provide feedback and advice regarding programming, or through focus groups and surveys of clients and newcomer communities. Much like the ideal process of newcomer incorporation to Canada being a "two-way street" process (Winnemore and Biles, 2005), there is an awareness of a need for responsive services. As one service provider mentioned in the previous quotation, information transfer needs to be both horizontal and vertical with the two-way dissemination of knowledge.

Pre-arrival and Timing of Access to Services

Pre-arrival orientation is a significant gap that many immigrants and service providers addressed. Some participants stated that they would not have come to Canada if they had known

about the lengthy credential recognition process. They also felt that the Canadian government could be more pro-active and honest about the lengthy process of professional reintegration (See Paper 2). Notably, only two participants had gone through the CIIP, but the importance of pre-arrival orientation was discussed very positively by these individuals as well as by service providers who were involved with pre-arrival programs. One such participant stated the importance of not only pre-arrival training such as the CIIP, but also the importance of accessing services and the right information in a timely manner:

> Once they get here… if they don't access the right settlement services, or the right information, the right people at the right time. Then they won't even know about qualification recognition. When I did that research needs assessment, 80 percent of the participants had not even thought about qualification recognition as a process, and – so that's a really high number that don't. **– Winnipeg Service Provider 8 (Program Coordinator)**

There is a point in time where it is critical for newcomers to obtain support if they require assistance navigating the labour market and adjusting to the process of searching for employment in Canada. Importantly, for the two immigrant participants who went through the CIIP, they felt that services in Canada were redundant, given their orientation abroad:

> Actually, they – the CIIP, provided information, they have their partners here who provide information as well. I noticed that many government services providers will be doing the same thing. So, I was asking myself, why don't they integrate and everybody will do a specific thing instead of unnecessary repetition. – **Mahmoud, B.Sc. Engineering, working as a security guard**

Providing timely access to services that are relevant to immigrant professionals is a challenging goal, particularly as immigrant-serving organizations serve varied clientele who may have very different needs. Significantly, the overwhelming majority of immigrant participants stated they were very happy that services existed, but they still had suggestions about information and supports that would be more relevant.

If and How are Services Helpful?

I asked immigrant participants about their interactions with service agencies, and if they perceived the support provided as helpful. Many immigrant professionals arrive in Canada with the internet literacy to search about employment search processes themselves. Very similar statements emerged on this issue:

> We are told about these sorts of immigrant service agencies from our friends before we started from there. They were very helpful, initially they were very helpful. But in regard to finding a good job, I don't think they have been so successful. **– Ben, PhD Sociology, searching for employment**

> I will say that my perceptions of my Canadian experience, one key factor is definitely that information is far easier to come by in Canada provided you have the linguistic and technical resources at your disposal, and that was the case with me. So I never had any issues at any point, of how to negotiation the immigration system, how to get a health card, how to get a bus pass, how to get Craigslist and Kijiji to find an apartment if I needed to. So it was easier for me and definitely there's no shortage of information here. **– Angie, PhD Social Anthropology working in a Health Sciences Post-Doc**

> I think a lot of the things they are offering I think I could do myself. So I haven't bothered to go to any of them, I think for immigrants – maybe that have trouble with the language, or have trouble with being able to do a lot of these things themselves, yeah that would be beneficial, but for a lot of highly skilled professionals that would know their way themselves… you know, I don't think there's any need. **– L.B., MSc Public Health, working as a health-care aid**

Immigrant participants were tremendously thankful for the well-developed immigrant-serving organizations that offer support in both cities. Many participants, however, also mentioned that they would benefit from guidance that was more specialized and tailored to their industry. For example, the doctors and nurses I spoke with expressed that it would be beneficial if they had workshops related to going through the regulatory process rather than workshops for résumé writing, job searching and Canadian workplace culture. Put simply, participants require specialized information from people who have gone through the process (regulatory or industry specific trajectories). Winnipeg and Edmonton both have immigrant-serving organizations that

focus on internationally-trained professionals (i.e., Success Skills Centre, EMCN's Engineers' and Technologists' Integration Program, the Bredin Centre for Learning), but either there is a lack of awareness of these services or there is a lack of capacity to meet the needs of the community.

In addition to immigrants' desire for specialization of services for newcomer professionals, there were critiques from within the system as well. Many service providers were reflexively self-critical of their inability to address systemic issues of racism, employer discrimination, and problems related to changing immigration policy. Several service providers questioned the settlement system itself and equated it to a circular loop whereby immigrants move from agency to agency without a meaningful conclusion (e.g., career-related employment). One service provider, who was a front-line worker and an immigrant as well, stated it simply:

> **Winnipeg Service Provider 1 –** They're just going around (draws a circle and motions in a circular fashion)
>
> **JT – Just in a circle?**
>
> **Winnipeg Service Provider 1 –** In circles, going around, here – this is about a job at [another agency], now you will be referred to people in agencies within. You live in [neighbourhood 1]? You live in [neighbourhood 2], [neighbourhood 3], go to those ones, you know? The reality is they just go around, then to a job fair but if there was a job then a job fair is not really something that is needed.

It is important that immigrant-serving organizations recognize a need for specialization that meets the diverse needs of clientele. Otherwise, immigrants may be referred to multiple organizations, but still not receive the information required to re-enter their professions.

Helpful suggestions from many participants (immigrant and service provider) related to providing more paid internships, or offering stipends for language or occupational training. One immigrant I spoke with, who was a professor in her country of origin, stated:

> If Canada needs professionals, they should find out some means to accept these professionals. Like a bridging program or something, in which there is more stipends also. Because here there is nothing, and so many professionals like PhDs and other people are working as drivers. **– M.J., PhD Psychology, searching for employment**

As previously discussed, bridging programs do exist, but they do not currently have the resources to meet the needs of the community. It was not possible to get specific information about wait lists for bridging programs, but one immigrant engineer stated there was a one or two year wait. In addition to a lack of spaces, these programs sometimes require newcomer professionals to demonstrate financial need. In other words, they need to have exhausted their financial and other resources before they can access the program.

Working with Employers?

Significantly, the interviews conducted with service providers illustrated an overwhelming focus on immigrant adaptation and less on employers. Despite awareness amongst service provider participants that employer discrimination manifests in forms such as requiring Canadian experience or education (OHRC, 2013), individualized strategies of improving immigrant skills comprise the majority of programs available in these agencies. Yet there were important exceptions. For example, in some larger agencies service providers indicated that due to a more diverse pool of funding resources they were able to modify their role to address issues with employers:

> We have Employer Liaisons and Job Developers (ELJDs), because we recognized that for us to be successful we needed to start developing, as an agency, relationships with employers, and support the employers in making it successful for them. **– Edmonton Service Provider 3 (Program Manager)**

From this perspective, ELJDs work to build networks between agencies and employers to provide access to labour market opportunities. In some ways, I interpret these networks as directly countering a deficit thinking approach based on examples shared with me of employers reaching out to agencies and programs when they are searching for employees. Service providers, however, stated that these programs, particularly those that focus on building inclusive workplaces, are underutilized. Overall, service provider participants appeared to want to do more work with employers, but it is difficult without incentives for employers to hire (or consequences for not hiring) immigrant professionals. For the most part, building relationships with employers involved immigrant-serving organizations "vetting" their professional clients as worthy of hiring because their skills meet employer expectations. But these liaisons do provide an avenue to challenge employer assumptions about internationally-trained professionals. Some service providers in these roles indicated that often employers express surprise and that "they had no idea" people with international credentials would be so effective in the roles into which they were hired.

Another important role that immigrant-serving organizations can assume is "diversity" consulting. Many agencies offered these services to employers, working with their internal staff (such as HR) to review hiring practices and to identify other ways that biases play a role in excluding immigrants, particularly immigrants who are people of colour, from meaningful employment opportunities. For example, one executive director explained how their agency worked to eliminate racism in workplaces:

> So, we can work on a consulting basis, with people in HR for example on looking at some of the things I was just mentioning. Hiring procedures, advertising … We'll provide education sessions for any group of people in a workplace, we like to work with everybody, but sometimes you begin work with people who are most interested, that's

> usually what will happen. You know, the people who recognize it's an issue, so you go in and start working with them, and you can help them develop tools to address the issue in their own organization, sometimes you're working with senior managers who are interested in the issue and want to do something about it, who recognize that things need to be done. **– Edmonton Service Provider 5 (Executive Director)**

To work on critical anti-racism issues in the workplace, agencies require "buy in" from employers. If there is no one in an organization that identifies a problem, then these valuable services go underutilized. Generally, service providers expressed disappointment that many employers did not use these types of services, but they clearly are one mechanism for developing a shared expectation for adaptation between both immigrants and employers.

Making the Case for Hiring Immigrants: Advocacy Roles

Settlement organizations have spent considerable time building connections with employers. This allows service providers to directly address discrimination in the labour market by engaging employers and challenging their assumptions about the "inferiority" of international credentials and experience. Service providers also place significant focus on ensuring that clients have the skills to succeed in the workplace. Service providers or immigrant professionals do not generally have expectations for employers to provide training:

> If I was going to recommend someone for a job and accounting software is a requirement, then we need to address that. So we now have a person delivering these sessions to at least give them, it's not going to take them to an expert level, but just to provide them with an overview of what is it and take them from – I don't know if it's even a bit intermediate, intermediate level – but just let them have an understanding of how to work with the software so they can put that on their résumé and it helps with our marketing as well. Because if that is a strong requirement, I can't really – ***as much as I can advocate for a person with an accounting firm, if they're missing that then they're not going to consider***. Unless it's a smaller business that has time to train someone to do those things, but you know that's not always the case. **– Winnipeg Service Provider 3 (Program Manager)**

While this is also an example of how service providers are capable of providing specialized skills and training, it still does not address the lack of emphasis on employers providing training.

Service provider-industry connections can help employers recognize that agencies are vetting immigrant candidates. Employers with a history of hiring individuals who go through training programs will actively contact the agencies providing such programs when they have vacancies or to share job advertisements. One service provider remarked on the benefits of this arrangement for all stakeholders:

> Many times I'll get calls from employers and they'll ask "do you have anybody, this is what I'm looking for, these are the requirements." They call me directly, and on the website there's a job form where they can submit their postings, and that goes directly to my email. So I share that with the employment team and then we kind of try to match up the employer with the clients. It's kind of like a matching system that we use. – **Winnipeg Service Provider 4 (Program Manager)**

Several service providers mentioned that the Canadian-born employer hesitancy to hire newcomers is inherently problematic. It is important, therefore, to seek solutions such as immigrant-serving organizations acting as advocates to push for greater inclusivity.

Canadian Immigration Policy: From Racism to Classism

There were several important themes arising from interviews that relate to moving beyond providing services that improve individual "deficits."

> Most newcomers are doing well in Canada, so why not focus on those successes rather than the one or two cases that are not. This portrays a negative view of immigrants and influence how people view them. We've moved from a racist immigration system to a classist immigration system that selects a particular class of people. I'm worried about how policy and language is being used and it might make Canada less welcoming. – **Edmonton Service Provider 3 (Program Manager)**

Two points stand out from this statement. First, it is important to acknowledge the successes and contributions of immigrants to Canada and to question the assumption that all immigrants experience problems. Many newcomers excel after arrival in Canada, but too often the focus is on barriers and challenges. Second, this quotation suggests that Canada's immigration system is

exclusionary, based on socioeconomic status and resources. According to this service worker, the Canadian government is only interested in granting entry to Canada for people who can be "plugged in" and are "not a drain"; the focus of immigration policy is less upon family reunification and building welcoming communities. As our discussion continued, the service provider suggested that this alone is racist and classist. Interestingly, another service provider independently referred to Canadian immigration policy as classist:

> Right now, I think the government prefers rich immigrants with strong education. Immigration policy, we talk about it as becoming less racist in the 70s and 80s, but what it became – I think is classist, because we were built on the – this province was built on the labour of peasant Europeans who came over to work the land. So, this shift that we've made is 'okay well we'll accept people from everywhere but we want them to have strong education and money to back them up for when they get here.' So it's a classist system. **– Edmonton Service Provider 4 (Program Manager)**

This focus on attracting only the "right" sorts of immigrants reinforces the neoliberal rationale of responsible and independent workers. I will explore the distinction between the "right" and "wrong" type of immigrant typology shortly, but I first want to emphasize another important point regarding the overwhelming focus on the challenges that immigrants face with less acknowledgment of the resiliency, creativity and advantages that characterize newcomer professionals.

The Immigrant Advantage? Positive Experiences of Newcomer Professionals

Many of the immigrants I spoke with discussed significant challenges in obtaining career-related employment. As a result, nearly half of immigrant participants expressed significant disappointment and even wished or planned to leave Canada (See Paper 2). On the other hand, by emphasizing cultural wealth rather than deficit, the skills, abilities and networks of newcomers are extensive but need to be incorporated into a system that currently privileges white-settler norms as ideal (Yosso, 2005). Reflecting this perspective, many of these thirty-

eight immigrants shared positive stories with me. In other words, although most people faced challenges, the same individuals shared their optimism, hope and resilience. One positive theme underscores the fact that immigrants provide different assets to employers because of their international training and ability to speak multiple languages.

I specifically asked people if they felt that they had advantages as immigrants – or as international professionals – and if they had positive experiences or successes they would like to share. Smash and Giju both articulated a common theme clearly:

> **Smash –** Advantages? When I got recruited, where I work now, it was because of the perspectives I brought up in the interview. I came in with the perspective that wowed my interviewer panel. Maybe because I had some international perspective into it, I saw things differently.
>
> **Giju –** And so, um, you need people with more perspective. People who have seen the world, I'm not saying it's me, but a person like me … I'm educated in India, I did my certificate in John Hopkins, which I think it one of the most reputable places. I studied in England, I studied in Russia – so I've been through five education systems.

International perspective is important as it may provide innovative ideas for an employer. Inclusive hiring practices may certainly foster diversity of thought while promoting "alternative" sources of ideas (Esty, et al., 1995). Moreover, immigrant professionals are experienced working within various systems and some participants had a long history of migrating to multiple nations to obtain education and work experience. Despite an increasingly interconnected world with a mobile workforce, these skills are clearly undervalued by Canadian employers.

Is Manitoba so Different from Alberta?

One research question addressed how immigrant employment experiences and service provision may be different across the two provinces due to different political and economic contexts. The simple answer is that yes, both provinces have differing economic and political

climates and different driving forces behind migration to either province. Despite these differences, however, the experiences of newcomers and the philosophies and organization of services are relatively similar. Neoliberal assumptions regarding personal responsibility and independence were the primary focus of service providers in each province, despite significant differences in the political orientation of the governing parties. Although immigrants in Alberta benefitted from easier access into meaningful employment during boom cycles, the experiences of immigrants in both cities were relatively comparable after acknowledging that difference.

The administrative structure of services was different in Manitoba until the transition of jurisdictional responsibility moved back to Ottawa in 2013. Although the federal government justified this change by stating that settlement services should be reasonably uniform across jurisdictions, interestingly, settlement service provision in both provinces did not appear to be all that different prior to the change. One difference between immigrant-serving organizations in the two cities links to the spatial centralization of agencies in Winnipeg compared to Edmonton. For example, Manitoba Start, the Immigrant Centre and the ENTRY Program are located in downtown Winnipeg whereas in Edmonton the Mennonite Centre for Newcomers is more closely situated to the inner-city neighbourhoods just north of downtown where immigrants are more likely to settle. Although the large agencies are located downtown in Winnipeg, there are also the many sites of the Neighbourhood Immigrant Settlement Program that are affiliated with the Immigrant Centre.

Overall, I conclude that immigrant-serving organizations in Winnipeg are more extensive and collaborate more effectively than the services available in Edmonton. This may link back to the fact that during the expansion of the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program, immigration to

that province was driven largely by political will to encourage newcomers to move to Manitoba to address labour market shortages. Whereas in Alberta, the driving forces of migration are largely based on perceptions that there are plentiful jobs and lots of opportunity in that province. In other words, the provincial government of Alberta did not have to do a whole lot to encourage migration, whereas in Manitoba it was a concerted strategy largely championed by the long-time provincial New Democratic Party to draw immigrant settlement to the province.

The most obvious difference between the two cities related to economic conditions; when the economy in Alberta is booming, it is easier for immigrants to obtain career-related employment. Several settlement providers addressed this point, and expressed frustration because it prevented "soft skill" development:

> Language is the problem, and if you don't recognize – it's complex, and I think sometimes newcomers underestimate the importance of soft skills. So then, that's – the onus is one them to do that. I would say, when newcomers come with a really strong attitude, in Alberta right now, I think they do pretty well. If they accept help, if they accept the steps that they have to do to get from A to B, they do pretty well. **– Edmonton Service Provider 3 (Program Manager)**

Many service providers in Alberta remarked that good economic conditions allowed for significant opportunities for immigrants. Another implication of a strong Alberta economy relates to employment mobility and the impact on communities. Service providers remarked that it was difficult to do meaningful work when you cannot build stable connections with individuals and communities:

> There's a real lack of social cohesion because of high mobility employment, people are coming in for the oil and gas industry and they're not interested in community. There's a need for better contact with families and communities but this is a real challenge and there's a lack of funding to develop things that get people together in meaningful ways. There is a need for people to make connections. **– Edmonton Service Provider 4 (Program Manager)**

Clearly, the economic conditions in Alberta (at the time my data were collected) played a role in the opportunities available. They also played a role in the specialization of services in the province. Another result of the higher demand for skilled labour and labour mobility is the more highly developed bridging programs and specialized information available to engineers, dentists, accountants and pharmacists. These programs were housed in settlement organizations in collaboration with post-secondary institutions whereas similar programs are less developed in Manitoba, although they are quickly becoming more elaborate.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study examined a broad research question related to if and how immigrants and service providers of immigrant-serving organizations are "working together" to navigate the inequities and segmentation of the Canadian labour market. Overall, these findings indicated that service providers and immigrants' strategies and interpretations of needs are both collaborative and contradictory. Collaborative approaches are emphasized when immigrants and service providers worked together, promoted advocacy and criticized discriminatory aspects of labour relations (e.g., a demand for "Canadian experience," and expectations for conforming to workplace culture). That said, service providers also placed significant emphasis on some of the very strategies they criticized, such as teaching newcomers how to fit into Canadian workplace culture or adjusting their expectations. These findings are not necessarily indicative of a lack of awareness regarding systemic discrimination on the part of service providers, but rather, also reflect how they use pragmatic strategies to meet immediate needs within funding and mandate restrictions that limit "deep settlement" work (Thomas, 2015; Yan, Chau and Sangha, 2010).

This study is a unique contribution to the immigration literature. It examined newcomers' experiences with settlement services, and the focus on mid-sized Canadian cities of Edmonton and Winnipeg expanded prior research which focused on Montréal, Toronto and Vancouver. Additionally, this research explicitly identified the tensions between neoliberal philosophies and anti-racist advocacy through critical race theory. Through my analysis, I contributed to a better conceptual understanding of the experiences immigrants have with both the Canadian labour market and with immigrant-serving organizations. Finally, the perspectives of immigrant professionals and service providers offered a unique comparative approach to understandings of the labour market and provided a multifaceted understanding of the needs of immigrants, gaps in services and avenues for improvement.

One critical policy implication is the need to rethink the orientation of broad generalized services for immigrant professionals. While generalized information sessions are helpful for many immigrants, they do not necessarily meet the employment support needs of individuals with advanced educational and occupational experience. It would also be worthwhile to consider working as advocates targeting the development of a streamlined regulatory process. Settlement organizations could provide mentorship to those going through the regulatory process from people who have successfully done so. The expansion of bridging programs and industry-specific information sessions were suggestions offered by immigrant professionals who participated in this research. The Edmonton Region Immigrant Employment Council (ERIEC) matches skilled immigrants with mentors who share similar occupational backgrounds, for example, but there is a clear need for more of these types of programs.

There are three major points drawn from this analysis of settlement worker and immigrant perspectives on services available in Winnipeg and Edmonton. First, although there is immense value in the available employment services provided in both cities, newcomer participants identified that they require more specialized and industry-specific information (e.g. regulatory process, professional mentorship, paid internships). Second, it is important to ensure that employers are included in this framework, since settlement agencies can act as critical advocates that help adjust employer misperceptions and discriminatory assumptions regarding immigrant professionals. Third, underlying themes emerged throughout fieldwork related to the persistence of discriminatory perceptions of immigrant professionals (requirements for Canadian experience, inferiority of credentials, overt racism and the "right" versus "wrong" types of immigrants) which are also grounded in neoliberal ideological assumptions that focus on creating responsible citizens rather than broader systems of oppression.

There are two major problems with an implicit (or explicit) distinction between "right" and "wrong" types of immigrants. First, it assumes that immigrants are not finding meaningful employment because of their lack of skills. Assuming they are the "wrong" sorts of immigrants ignores broader systemic and racial inequality. Racism, however subtle as it can be, gives preference to those with Canadian-acquired credentials and experience – and those who are racially white and English speaking. Critical race theory shows how this preference for "Canadian experience" excludes immigrants perceived as "too different" due to characteristics related to race, disability, sex and language ability. The disproportionate duty for adaptation is placed on immigrants, unlike within a more useful "two-way street" model whereby Canadian society adjusts to ensure that immigrants feel welcomed in their communities and workplaces

(Winnemore and Biles, 2006). Based on the interviews with participants, it appears that philosophies and strategies of service provision also appear to reflect these assumptions, with services overwhelmingly focusing on improving individual "deficiencies" to create responsible and idealized citizens.

Second, the distinction between "right" and "wrong" immigrants exists in the federal government's immigration program itself, which measures success and failure primarily in terms of labour market performance. Is Canada inviting people to build diverse communities, or is immigration a vehicle for economic growth, focused on attracting "responsible and independent" newcomers with skills highly desired by employers? This question reflects broader themes of neoliberal responsibilization that permeate public discourse on immigration policy (Chuong, 2015, 108). Promotion of the Canadian immigration project is driven primarily by market forces which rely upon immigrants to ensure the growth of the Canadian economy (Bucklaschuk, 2015, 1-2; Chuong, 2015). Although the economic and provincial nominee categories[10] invite highly qualified applicants, employers appear reluctant to accept international credentials and experience, thereby relegating immigrant professionals to the periphery of a segmented labour market. Put simply, significant and persistent ethno-racial inequality exists in the Canadian labour market. Service providers are constrained by this system as well, insofar as many provide employer training and diversity consultation services, but these services are underutilized. Unless there are incentives for employers to use these services, they are not as effective as they could be.

[10] Provincial Nominee Programs allow Manitoba and Alberta to nominate candidates to complete applications for permanent residency, while economic immigrants submit applications directly through the Government of Canada.

It is critically important to move beyond providing services that address the "deficits" of internationally trained professionals. This approach inherently focuses on immigrants as "tools of neoliberal ideology driven by market logic and contribution" (Chuong, 2015, 107-108). Current immigration policy emphasizes selecting individuals who can integrate easily into to the Canadian economy, who are self-sufficient and independent. The "right" sorts of immigrants, therefore, are those who are immediately ready to enter the labour market, whereas those who are struggling are the "wrong" sorts, missing the appropriate and necessary skills.

Future research should examine the role of employers in immigration policies and programs, and why they perceive international credentials as inferior to those obtained in Canada. Service providers I spoke with often reflected on how immigrants offer advantages to Canadian employers based on their potentially differing worldviews, experiences, and linguistic skills. With market expansion in an increasingly global economic system, the competitive advantage of a "diverse" workforce is apparent (Okoro and Washington, 2012). For example, newcomer professionals commonly spoke three or four different languages, making them highly versatile employees with different worldviews. Multilingualism is a great asset for many companies in the contemporary global economy (Lau and Kleiner, 2012; Okoro and Washington, 2012).

In sum, although employers are bound by human rights legislation to ensure inclusive hiring and promotion practices, these ideals are not always realized in practice. Critical race theory shows how discrimination is pervasive and masks itself in justifiable language such as the insufficiency of international skills and experience. Future research is needed to determine why

employers are reluctant to hire newcomer professionals, and why they assume immigrants lack the language and technical skills despite evidence to the contrary on résumés and CVs (Dechief and Oreopoulos, 2012). In addition to complying with human rights requirements, employers need to recognize that newcomers provide incredible benefits to the workplace, and should not assume there are deficits in linguistic ability or technical skills. Both survey methodology and qualitative interviews would provide insight to understand why Canadian employers prefer to hire Canadian-born and/or Canadian educated employees. Additionally, referring back to the Canadian Immigrant Integration Program, Canadian Orientation Abroad and *Planning for Canada* programming, future investigations could examine the scope of these services to see if and how they are useful to newcomers by examining qualitatively and quantitatively if there are differences in outcomes and expectations for those who went through these programs and those who did not.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

These four substantive papers explore the complex interplay between immigrant professionals and the settlement system, and how these actors navigate the labour market and broader settlement processes. The question of whether collaboration exists between immigrants and settlement providers does not yield simple yes or no answer. Rather, there are times when practitioners at immigrant-serving organizations work cooperatively with immigrant professionals and communities. At other times, we see elements of paternalism influenced by neoliberal ideological expectations for responsible subjects or the "right types" of immigrants.

We need to recognize that the actors and research field are not static. Immigrant professionals and immigrant-serving organizations are influenced by governmental changes, shifts in jurisdictional responsibility, economic trends and disruptions, boom and bust cycles, and changes to immigration policies. With respect to this study, my fieldwork was conducted just prior to government changes federally and in both provinces. In Alberta, participants focused on how the economy was finally improving after the global economic downturn of 2008 which hit the province hard. Meanwhile, the participants in the settlement sector in Manitoba rarely focused on the downturn. They were adjusting to the administrative shift marking the end of the Canada Manitoba Immigration Agreement (CMIA) which previously allowed the province to administer settlement services since 1998 (Clement, Carter and Vineberg, 2013). Moreover, some agencies with explicitly anti-racist programming expressed how they lost their federal funding unexpectedly. In the future, it will be possible to examine if current governmental policy changes (particularly resulting from the election of the federal Liberal government in late 2015)

have had a positive impact on this last issue specifically, as throughout my analysis I recognized a greater need for anti-racist education and programming.

A continuity of contemporary immigration discourse involves the propagation of the false narrative of Canada as a welcoming nation. This representation encourages internationally-trained immigrant professionals to migrate to Canada where they believe they will be able to successfully continue their careers. Canadian society also perceives itself as a nation that promotes inclusivity and accommodation. This vision of Canada views immigrant inclusion as a "two-way street" whereby Canadians adjust to incorporate different cultural practices while immigrants adjust to participate in Canadian society (Winnemore and Biles, 2006). This model should mean that Canadian employers would hire immigrant professionals and ensure that workplaces are sensitive to variable lived experiences such as racial and ethno-cultural diversity, multi-lingual skills, internationally obtained credentials and experience. The exclusion of immigrant professionals from their previous career paths is, at best, an indication that Canadian employers and workplaces have not adopted the two-way street model and require further changes. At worst, the exclusion of immigrant professionals is blatant racism and discrimination, particularly for people of colour and others who are situated at the intersections of various forms of oppression.

This dissertation examined the interactions between immigrant professionals and settlement services, and the process by which newcomers search for employment with guidance and support from immigrant-serving organizations. Several interrelated research questions guided this investigation:

1. If and how settlement services assist newcomers to find meaningful employment:
    a. What services are provided?
2. What are the philosophies and strategies that inform the way settlement service providers approach assisting newcomers during their employment search?
3. What are the experiences of newcomer professionals once they arrive in Canada?
    a. What are immigrants' experiences searching for employment?
    b. What are immigrants' experiences with settlement services?
4. Do service provider perspectives match up with the concerns and needs of the communities they work in?
5. Are there any differences between Edmonton and Winnipeg based on the variable political economies of these two provinces?

Using these questions as a starting point, I remained open throughout the fieldwork process to what participants considered to be the most relevant and important issues. This involved a reflexive orientation that linked theoretical considerations to the everyday, real-life processes and relationships between immigrant professionals, settlement workers and the labour market (Burawoy, 1998; Creswell, 2008; Duneier, 1999). In this research, I tried to navigate the difficult positionality of being a white anti-racist feminist by ensuring I centered the lived experiences of participants and adjusted the research design to fit their concerns. This occurred in several ways throughout fieldwork. For example, I initially expected to find neoliberalism to be dominant within settlement agencies when, in fact, I observed nuanced influences of responsibility and self-improvement linked together with broader goals of advocacy and social change. Another example included my expectation that people of colour would express how racism contributed to discrimination and their exclusion. While racism absolutely impacted people of colour in their experiences searching for employment, there were also many participants who stated that Canada was better than they expected in regards to racial inequity. I do not intend to minimize the impact or the persistence of racism and colonial white supremacy in Canadian society, but I highlight this finding to illustrate the importance of remaining open to the contradictions that can emerge in social research.

Main Themes

Many important themes emerged in this study; some were unique to specific substantive chapters while others overlapped. What was particularly interesting were the ways in which the two groups of participants expressed both similar and diverging positions on some issues. This highlights the value of comparative research designs, whether that involves comparison of groups of participants such as immigrant professionals and service providers or comparison across research sites with variable political economies, such as the provinces of Alberta and Manitoba.

A continuum of employment

There is a need to go beyond "unemployed" and "employed" as markers of labour market success for newcomer professionals. There are additional factors that must be assessed such as whether the position is full-time or part-time, precarious, related to skills and education, and if the individual feels satisfied with their role. Even the notion of being precariously or under-employed did not sufficiently expand the binary understanding of employment because there exists a spectrum of employment positions at the boundaries of these categorizations. For this reason, I conceptualized employment on a continuum between survival, transitional and meaningful positions and opportunities (Bauder, 2003; Creese and Wiebe, 2009). To return briefly to these concepts, *survival jobs* are entirely unrelated to a person's previous career and experience, *transitional employment* is career-related but not equivalent to their previous position and *meaningful career-related employment* contains an objective and subjective element. A meaningful occupational position is roughly equivalent to a professional's previous position, but a meaningful employment position could also be transitional employment (or a survival job) in which the individual feels satisfied. For example, there were immigrant participants who stated

to me that while they were underemployed in transitional employment roles, they were still deeply satisfied with the work they were doing. While obtaining career-related employment may not be realistic in the initial stages of settlement, immigrant-serving organizations could work towards ensuring more meaningful job opportunities for clients.

Individualism versus broader advocacy

> So, and the idea again, and I really like this concept because it is that sort of, you know, teaching somebody to fish right? At the end of the day, you know, yeah it can be very easy to connect them to employment, but will they be able to retain it? **(Edmonton Service Provider 9)**
>
> We also have to work towards getting employers engaged, so we bring them here as much as we can because a lot of them don't have a clear idea of what a newcomer brings to the table. **(Winnipeg Service Provider 2)**

As I related my findings back again to theory, it was important to acknowledge nuance. Although this term is over-utilized, it does identify a need for accepting research findings that may appear contradictory upon initial examinations. My methodological sensitivity to participants' understandings of their lived reality demands that I process and report findings even when it causes dissonance for me or my expectations. So, for example, in '*Teaching Somebody to Fish'*, I planned to answer the question about whether or not immigrant-serving organizations reinforced neoliberal expectations for clients to be "responsible citizens" and the "right types" of immigrants, or if practitioners were taking on meaningful advocacy roles to push back against the racism and colonial white supremacy that prevents inclusivity.

My findings rejected a binary understanding of how these philosophies operated. On the one hand, service providers overwhelmingly focused on individualized intervention strategies that reinforced deficit-based thinking and responsibilized clients. Yet, on the other hand, service

providers were generally aware of how the broader mechanisms of racism, including the requirement for Canadian employment experience, impacted the opportunities for internationally trained professionals. This is particularly true for immigrants with intersecting experiences of oppression such as people of colour, women and femmes, disabled people and LGBTQ2S+ people. In other words, the philosophies that informed how service providers conducted their work involved multiple and often contradictory orientations. These positive notions of empowerment (anti-racist/oppression work) contrasted with negative forms of empowerment (neoliberal responsibilities for self-improvement or community downloading) played out in interesting, troubling and unexpected ways.

Neoliberal responsibility and self-improvement

> [T]hey're wanting to move those – the stronger, harder working newcomers into more of a management role … **(Edmonton Service Provider 2)**

Despite varied rationales, neoliberal philosophical approaches informed immigrant-serving organizations and the methods they used to help professionals find employment. This neoliberal perspective stipulated that individuals must take responsibility for their employment trajectory and service providers provided assistance for improving perceived individual deficiencies. Services offered to immigrant professionals overwhelmingly focused upon moving them through workshops on résumé preparations, Canadian culture and workplace training. These examples indicate that neoliberalism is more than an economic rationality; it is a complex "technology of government" that requires self-regulation of individual citizens within society (Jessop, 2002; Ong, 2006, 3-4). Moreover, beyond the individual immigrants' experiences, there is also the sense that immigrant communities need to make up for the shortcomings of the market (Duggan, 2003; Jessop, 2002). Specifically, participants from many immigrant-serving

organizations were trying to "build up" immigrant communities so they would have a greater capacity to support subsequent waves of newcomers. But I acknowledge that there is a fine line between empowering communities to help themselves and the neoliberal downloading of governmental responsibilities. The way in which these philosophies operate are not always mutually exclusive, and requires one to have an orientation that can accept competing approaches to advocacy work and research.

False narratives of Canada as a welcoming nation

> The culture here seems a bit closed, the most important challenge is the need for Canadian references, at interviews they ask for them... **(Priya, Edmonton, former post-doctoral researcher, seeking employment)**
>
> I know the realities. I have many frustrations about that. I just want the chance to contribute. **(Wing, Edmonton, former engineer, seeking employment)**

Canada cultivates an international reputation as an immigrant-friendly nation with an inclusive and extensive immigration program. The inability of immigrant professionals to continue their careers once they arrived in Canada contradicted the welcoming-nation narrative. Participants experiences also indicated the wasted of potential for the Canadian economy and illustrated widespread discrimination manifesting as explicit preferences for Canadian-born employees (Caidi and Allard, 2005; McKenna, 2012, 3-4; Reitz, Curtis and Elrick, 2014). Critical race theory encourages us to recognize how this mismatch between expectation and reality is the result of subtler forms of racism. Newcomer professionals' highly sought after skills and experience are of immense value and would be tremendously beneficial to the Canadian economy. This study indicated that what is true for the education field is also true for the labour market, that immigrants (especially people of colour) are perceived with deficit-based thinking rather than recognizing their cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005). These professionals chose to come to

Canada because they believed they would be welcomed and would be able to continue their careers. Yet these expectations were met with significant downward social and professional mobility and, for many, unemployment or underemployment in survival jobs.

Mismatched expectations and reality

My interviews highlighted a significant mismatch between immigrant professionals' hopeful expectations when beginning their immigration journey and the reality of their disappointing settlement and employment search experiences. Although many settlement practitioners suggested that immigrants need to have more "realistic" expectations, I challenge this assumption. It is not an unrealistic expectation for a highly skilled internationally-trained professional to be able to continue their career after choosing to migrate to a destination country that promotes a (false) narrative of multicultural celebration and inclusion. Critical race theory describes the discriminatory practices of credential devaluation, or of asking for Canadian experience, as code for employer preferences for job candidates that are similar to themselves (Guo, 2013b, 2015). There is an implicit preference for employees who conform to white-settler Canadian mainstream norms (Bauder, 2003, 699-700; Guo, 2015). Previous research also reveals a gap between pre-arrival expectations of immigrants and their life satisfaction post-migration (Jedwab, 2012), but concludes that most immigrants would make the same decision despite their disappointed expectations (Shields, Türegün and Lowe, 2014, 12; Houle and Schellenberg, 2010, 6). I am less certain that the participants in my study would agree. In fact, most of the immigrant professionals in my study expressed a strong desire to leave and return to their home country.

The desire or plan to leave Canada

> [W]hen I came here, it was a little bit hard for me. I wanted to go back, I really wanted to go back, because I got depression that I will have to start everything, everything again. **(Sherriff, Edmonton, former teacher, working part-time in an after school program)**

> So, it's like a trap I felt, I can't go back to India because I have so much debts now, and uh, at the same time I don't want to continue here. **(M.J., Edmonton, former professor, seeking employment)**

While some immigrants arrive in a country with the intention of eventually returning home, the participants in this study indicated that their move to Canada was not meant to be temporary. It was their disappointed career expectations that generated regret about their original migration decision. Although I did not explicitly ask participants if they planned to leave Canada, this desire nevertheless came up very frequently. The wish to leave, but being unable to do so, was particularly troubling for immigrant professionals who felt they were trapped without the resources needed to return, or for those with some family members who wanted to stay while others wanted to leave. One immigrant professional did, in fact, return to the United Kingdom for a year before deciding to come back and make Canada their permanent home. Additionally, a married couple who were both medical professionals ended up moving back to their country of origin. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that, in early stages of settlement, there may be greater dissatisfaction since the initial adjustment period is extremely demanding. Some immigrant participants indicated that, during their initial settlement, they wanted to leave. After some time passed, however, they became more integrated in their community and felt more positively about their migration decision. Settlement service providers also suggested that more pre-arrival training would be appropriate to ensure that immigrants arrive with more realistic expectations.

Complexities and intersectionality of exclusions

> Like about my family… people ask … I tell, but I always talk about my partner. I've never had any situation that I had to tell that it's a woman. Because partner, people think is a partner. In the end I talk not. **(Em, Edmonton, former marketing researcher, working in the hospitality industry)**

It is important to acknowledge a need for intersectionality and transnational feminist orientations that are inherent within an anti-racist framework. Racism is linked with other oppressions that interact in different ways for this heterogeneous group of people. Despite broad similarities in their lived experiences, immigrant professionals who participated in this research should not be homogenized. For example, some study participants were bracing themselves for racial discrimination only to be pleasantly surprised that Canada was more welcoming than expected. Others experienced significant hardship as a result of racism. My study revealed how multiple statuses interact and relate to both privilege and oppression. It is not solely race, sex, class or gender that are barriers to inclusivity. People may have class privilege while they experience racial discrimination or homophobia. Critical race theory, intersectionality, and transnational understandings of feminism bring these complexities together for a fuller picture of participants' experiences. Oppressive systems, in other words, are not limited to one category of disadvantage, and operate in a framework of intersecting statuses that participants justified, or resisted in varied ways.

Disentangling Sexism and Racism

Taking an explicitly intersectional perspective allowed this project to deconstruct how various marginalized identities played a role for people of colour, especially women of colour and those who are multiply-marginalized by race, class, sex, gender, sexuality, ability and other statuses. One aspect of the experiences of immigrants of colour that surprised me was how many

people expressed the sentiment that racism had not impacted them as much as they expected. This does not indicate that people did not experience discrimination, but rather, that they had expected worse treatment. It is important to compare and contrast the experiences of people of colour who experienced significant discrimination to those who shared that they were less impacted by racism.

This analysis does revolve around two primary challenges, the first being my positionality as a white researcher, and second, the tendency for people to not always interpret their experiences with an understanding of systemic oppression. I will begin by acknowledging that as a white person, participants of colour may be less likely to share the ways that racism impacted their lives. That being said, it was the case that many participants (including women of colour) explicitly stated how racism and discrimination impacted their experiences. This was not the entire story, however, because immigrants of colour are not monolithic, and some participants were very pleasantly surprised that racism "wasn't as bad as they expected" in Canada. Moreover, people have different life experiences and may interpret racism differently, but that does not mean that racism is not a systemic issue.

It is important to accept these seemingly contradictory findings and understand that both perspectives have validity. In other words, oppression does not fit cleanly into binary yes or no categories but, rather, there is a continuum of experience for people of colour. Some people experienced minimal barriers while others faced significant hardships based on sexism and racism. Despite nuanced findings, the patterns of racism experienced were clear (e.g., feeling or being treated like a foreigner or bullying) and also manifested indirectly (e.g., international

credentials and experience perceived as "less than" those obtained in Canada. Finally, it is important to note that many participants had significant educational and financial privilege, compared to non-professional immigrants, which may mitigate some of the impact of sexism and racism.

Similarly, sexism impacted women of colour more significantly than participants who were white (although English language ability was also a facet of discrimination). Several women of colour shared that child-care was a significant barrier while others shared with me that they wanted to leave Canada but felt stuck because their partners (or children) did not want to leave. More male immigrant participants brought their children to interviews than women, which I found interesting. This outlines how women sometimes find survival employment more easily, and how caregiving and other family tasks shift. In other words, caregiving is traditionally viewed as "women's work" but the experiences of male participants offered insight into how these roles shift during the integration process.

Perceptions of challenges

Although immigrants and service providers had similar understandings of labour market barriers faced by immigrant professionals, they differed regarding what interventions were best. It is important to acknowledge that individualized interventions may be required for people who legitimately need support in developing their English language skills, résumés, or understandings of Canadian workplace norms (more often the perception of service providers), but there is also a need for broader advocacy roles that address systemic barriers such as racism (a greater concern among immigrant professionals). Critical race theory helps explain why the requirements for

Canadian experience or education are discriminatory expectations that need to be eliminated; immigrants should be included in the workplace without demands for conformity to white-settler Canadian norms. Nevertheless, while some settlement providers are trying to address discrimination, there is tension between how to promote broader systemic change and working to provide immediate solutions to help people find employment, preferably in transitional or meaningful occupational roles.

Working together or not?

> I always look at it as a two-way street, and everybody has to meet somewhere halfway. For immigrants it can't be all just helping them out, they've got to move in that direction, and the same with employers. Employers shouldn't have to take them and meet them all the way to the other side, they should come half-way. And so, all of our events, and all of our initiatives we're really trying to hit two populations, the immigrant that's trying to find work here, but also the employer who may not realize how difficult it is, you know, the immigrant journey. **(Edmonton Service Provider 9)**

Determining if service providers and immigrants are working together is a difficult question to answer. Immigrant clients and settlement practitioners are clearly trying to work together because they share the goals of ensuring meaningful employment and social inclusion. My findings offer insight into how their efforts can be broadened to meet additional goals such as conceptualizing how employers could also adjust their expectations and create more inclusive workplaces.

For example, Manitoba Start actively engages with employers to advocate for clients and promote the skills and experience of immigrant professionals. Interviews with employees at this organization showed that they move beyond providing deficit-based, individualized training by bringing employers to listen to presentations by clients advocating for themselves. This is

"working together" in two ways. First, service providers and immigrant professionals are truly working together to create space that brings employers directly into the system rather than solely focusing on the deficits of immigrants. Moreover, in these presentations employers receive what I interpret as implicit anti-racist education because their assumptions about the inferiority of international credentials and experience are challenged. For example, immigrant-serving organization employees I interviewed expressed that employers are surprised that immigrants have such a wealth of educational, experiential, multilingual and inter-cultural skills.

Another example of working together that was more broadly utilized involved receiving feedback from clients and the communities where immigrants primarily live. While most organizations collected feedback from short surveys completed after workshops, broader community-focused needs assessments were conducted by some agencies as well. For example, I attended several steering committee and research design meetings with one organization in Winnipeg that was clearly following a participatory action research model (PAR, Whyte, 1991). The PAR model is helpful for advocacy work because not only does it go directly to the community to determine need (this is helpful to gather information that may be missed by speaking to leaders alone), but community members themselves are often participating in the data collection and analysis process. This was the case for the project in Winnipeg, where community members received training and meaningful paid employment as a result of this project.

In sum, my study illustrated various ways that service providers and immigrant professionals were "working together." These examples were not the norm, however, as scarce

funding resources restrict such initiatives. Moreover, several smaller organizations said that their funding mandates were extremely limited and they lacked the staff expertise or hours to design and implement frameworks that went beyond the individualized deficits-based strategies. The employer liaisons and cross-cultural sensitivity training provided by Manitoba Start is an excellent model that exemplifies how settlement providers and immigrants are "working together." This model addresses the serious need to ensure employers are held accountable for their resistance to hiring immigrant professionals. These approaches move beyond the individualistic deficit-based framework that offers services to immigrants to "fix" their résumés, "upgrade" their technical abilities, or learn about "Canadian workplace culture." While these frameworks may also be necessarily, the overwhelming focus on an individualistic approach reinforces neoliberal expectations for individuals to be responsible subjects and that communities themselves must work to overcome labour market dysfunction.

Are services helpful?

> I think a lot of the things they are offering I think I could do myself. So I haven't bothered to go to any of them, I think for immigrants – maybe that have trouble with the language, or have trouble with being able to do a lot of these things themselves, yeah that would be beneficial, but for a lot of highly skilled professionals that would know their way themselves… you know, I don't think there's any need. **(L.B., MSc Public Health, working as a health-care aid)**

Overall, immigrant professionals expressed that they were very pleased that services were available to assist them to find employment. Most participants I spoke with utilized such services, however, they also felt that what was available was not specialized enough to assist them to find professional employment related to their previous careers and experience. Many participants stated that they required advice and mentorship from people who had "gone through

the process" themselves. In other words, doctors, nurses and other professionals who had successfully navigated the regulatory system can provide guidance and support to those currently working through that process. I should note that most immigrant professionals I spoke with arrived with significant financial, educational, and cultural capital. For those who arrived as refugees, with fewer resources at their disposal, with less of an understanding about employment or with linguistic and other barriers to meaningful employment, these services are extremely beneficial.

How to improve services?

I fully acknowledge the important work and support that settlement services currently provide to immigrant professionals in mid-sized cities like Edmonton and Winnipeg. I also suggest throughout this study that there are ways services can be improved. These improvements fall into three general themes: broadening service mandates to move beyond an individualistic deficit-based approach (i.e., by explicitly incorporating an anti-racist advocacy framework); ensuring that service providers and immigrants are truly working together; and bringing employers into the picture in a meaningful way.

Throughout this dissertation, I have consistently critiqued the settlement sector for generally supporting the status quo assumption that immigrants have deficits that require upgrading, training, and general improvement so they are ready to "fit into" Canadian workplaces and succeed. These assumptions are informed by broader neoliberal, and colonial white supremacist, narratives that dominate policy implementation in Canada. It is critical that practitioners seek creative ways to meet their funding mandates while also developing services

that are focused more on the two-way street model of immigrant integration. This involves addressing the discriminatory preferences for "Canadian experience" and the barriers for entry to regulated professions. Additionally, services need to target the specialized needs of immigrant professionals. More internship positions, that include paid stipends rather than volunteer labour for the benefit of employers, would also provide opportunities for immigrant professionals to integrate into the labour market.

Another critical way to improve services is to ensure that immigrant-serving organizations and immigrant professionals are truly working together. As discussed previously, there are meaningful examples of this type of work such as PAR research conducted with communities to develop needs assessments while also providing meaningful training and employment to community members themselves. Other approaches include the work of employer liaisons and creating spaces to educate employers on the value and contributions that result from hiring immigrant professionals. Immigrants can contribute linguistic and cultural diversity to workplaces that would be homogenous if employers only hired white Canadian-born individuals. In other words, it also makes good business sense to promote inclusive workplaces rather than to have a preference for Canadian-born employees or Canadian experience requirements, preferences which are both clearly recognized as human rights infractions.

Finally, ensuring the settlement system broadens its scope is the last and perhaps most significant way to ensure services are more helpful. To build an inclusive society, we need to focus on more than improving immigrant "deficits" and helping internationally trained professionals adjust to fit into Canadian workplaces and society. Moving beyond individualistic

interventions, especially by targeting employers, may create change that promotes more opportunities for immigrant professionals to continue their careers in a meaningful way.

Policy Implications

Broader Anti-Racism Work

There is a great need for systemic approaches to reduce the prevalence of racism in Canadian society. Critical race theory recognizes the importance of identifying the various layers and operations of racial discrimination that are not necessarily easily recognized. Put simply, racism is not always overt, and it plays out in ways that continue to reinforce white domination but may not easily be recognized by most white settlers as racial discrimination or systemic exclusion based on race. For example, the requirement for Canadian work experience illustrates how racism becomes justifiable through acceptable language, but the result is the systemic exclusion of immigrants, predominantly people of colour, based on the notion that they do not have the experience or skills that Canadian employers require. So, rather than the central goal of employment programs focusing on preparing immigrants for Canadian workplaces, there should be increased activity towards promoting inclusivity. More funding and programs could facilitate better integration of immigrant professionals in their chosen careers.

Honest Pre-Arrival Orientation

Despite conducting significant research before coming to Canada, many immigrant participants in this study were surprised at the length of time it takes to obtain credential accreditation with regulators. Those in the non-regulated professions were dismayed that employers did not recognize their credentials and experience. Canadian policy makers must address the misperceptions related to pre-arrival orientation and information. This may involve

expanding the CIIP, COA and PFC programs to provide potential immigrants with access to people currently living in Canada so they can ask questions and receive meaningful information and feedback about the immigration process. Moreover, it would be useful to match immigrants with people who have specialized knowledge about their professions or industries. For example, many service provider participants stated that immigrants need to temper their expectations and accept jobs that devalue their experience and credentials. I suggest an alternative approach, that immigrants would arrive with "realistic expectations" if international discourse on Canadian immigration policy and integration experiences were presented more honestly. Prospective immigrants can then make the decision to migrate to Canada based on accurate information and, therefore, will reduce the surprise they experience when their expectations do not match lived reality once they arrive in the country.

Improvements to the Settlement System

My research suggests that the settlement system has a critical role to play in assisting immigrant professionals obtain meaningful employment. It may be helpful to compliment this focus on immigrants with anti-racist research and educational campaigns to bring employers into the fold and ensure there are widespread educational interventions to counter the demands for Canadian experience. Shifting the focus to eliminate discriminatory barriers will provide improved opportunities for immigrant professionals. Truly, immigrant professionals can obtain as much individualized training as possible, but if employers will not recognize their credentials, or if they hold implicit, or even explicit, biases against people of colour and others who experience intersectional marginalization, how are immigrants expected to overcome these barriers when they are simply not the problem? The settlement system needs to emphasize that

immigrant settlement is a two-way street with employers making adjustments for better inclusion and meaningful employment opportunities.

Furthermore, while some immigrant professionals may need individualized assistance with revising their résumés and practicing for interviews, there is a large proportion of professionals who do not require these services and would prefer support that helps them build their professional networks or provides step-by-step support for those who need to work through the regulatory process. This specialized approach is likely more effective, and realistic, for regulated professionals, but it may be helpful for all immigrants to receive information from people who have similar lived experiences and employment backgrounds.

Reduction of Labour Market Barriers

Employer demands for Canadian work experience remain one of the most significant challenges for internationally-trained professionals as they attempt to restart their careers upon arrival to the country (Guo, 2013a; Sakamoto, Chin and Young, 2010; Slade, 2011). The most common concern of immigrant participants – particularly those who had been in Canada for less than a year – was about their frustration about not having any Canadian experience, and where they could obtain it since they had just arrived in the country. Although unrecognized credentials and experience recognition are the primary barriers, participants in this study (both service providers and immigrants) recognized the multifaceted nature of labour market exclusion. Other barriers included, and this list is not exhaustive, access to child-care, language training, professional networking, the hidden job market, and experiences of discrimination.

Building Advocacy within a Neoliberal Climate

While many service providers were limited by their funding mandates, some participants shared how they wanted to do more. Many workers advocated for immigrant clients and identified the need for advocacy and deeper settlement work. That said, however, many programs offered by immigrant-serving organizations focused on self-improvement to develop "responsible" and "flexible" immigrant professionals rather than pushing for more equitable hiring practices. In short, a major avenue for future work could involve creating programs geared towards employers. More advocacy work is needed, but the dominance of neoliberal ideologies makes it increasingly difficult to accomplish these goals because of both decreased public support and funding resources.

Cross-Provincial Comparison

I designed this project as a cross-provincial comparison, recognizing that comparing two cities can offer insight into how political and economic conditions played a role in the lived experiences of immigrant professionals. As stated in Paper 4, the economic and political climates vary considerably between Manitoba and Alberta resulting in some different factors driving migration to either province. Despite these differences, however, there are also significant similarities in approaches, philosophies, as well as related to the experiences of newcomers themselves. Immigrant-serving organizations in both provinces overwhelmingly focused on the neoliberal assumptions regarding personal responsibility and fostering independence of both individuals and communities.

Despite similarities between the two sites, there were important differences that were not necessarily the result of differing provincial politics. One of the most important was the differing economic conditions between the two provinces. Although the types of services provided were

quite similar, there were highly specialized immigrant-serving organizations that provided streamlined training for engineers, accountants and dentists (in addition to other professions) in Alberta, whereas in Manitoba these sites for professional upgrading were less developed and generally located within post-secondary institutions. In other words, the booming economy in Alberta was a drawing force for many internationally-trained engineers. The settlement system responded by creating specialized programming to move people back into their professions to meet labour market demands. In the words of many settlement provider participants, when the Alberta economy is booming, it is not always difficult for immigrants to find employment in the province. Economic conditions were much less of a consideration in Manitoba despite recent low unemployment rates compared to the national average.

The organization of the settlement systems in Edmonton and Winnipeg did differ, with a more centralized intake system in Winnipeg. This may be due to the fact that, between 1998 and 2013, Manitoba maintained administrative authority over settlement services in the province, while Alberta was under the jurisdictional control of the federal government. Put simply, when immigrants arrived in Winnipeg, there was a somewhat linear process for their engagement with the settlement sector starting with centralized services like the ENTRY program, the Winnipeg English Language Assessment and Referral Centre (WELARC) and Manitoba Start. These organizations offer centralized services for all immigrants along the continuum of needs based on initial orientation, language assessment and employment. There are specialized services for immigrant professionals within these organizations, alongside a well-established norm of also referring people to organizations such as Success Skills Centre that work solely with internationally trained professionals. The settlement sector in Edmonton is slightly different,

with a couple of large immigrant-serving organizations but less of a clear distinction of how immigrants move through the organizations of the city. It is unclear why these administrative systems worked out differently, but it would be an interesting question to ask settlement workers and policy makers in future research.

Another point of difference between Edmonton and Winnipeg is the fact that Alberta contains another metropolitan area (Calgary) and other smaller cities with robust economic opportunities during "booming" economic times. In other words, immigrants could search for career-related opportunities in both Edmonton and Calgary, and although relocation would be costly, it is important to acknowledge that there are more regional opportunities. If immigrant professionals in Winnipeg wished to relocate for job opportunities, it would likely have to be outside of the province since there are only smaller cities within a short driving distance from Winnipeg.

Significance and Contributions of this Research

As mentioned throughout this dissertation, much of the literature surrounding newcomer settlement and service provision examines the three major cities of Canada. Previous research on the prairie provinces focused on many aspects of the immigration journey, but scholars have not conducted broad and focused research on settlement organizations. This study offers insight into how settlement processes operate in mid-sized Canadian cities. There are clearly differing needs in these communities, and for immigrant professionals in general, leading to policy suggestions that could offer solutions for persistent labour market challenges.

Additionally, this two-city comparative approach contributed to research in this area because most previous studies focused upon a single location. My study indicated a need to acknowledge how different economic and political climates impacted immigrants during their settlement journey. Previously, few studies examined Provincial Nominee Programs (Carter, Morrish and Amoyaw, 2008). My research indicated that immigrants recognized how migrating to mid-sized cities with nominee programs offered what they perceived as an "easier" way to obtain permanent residency, but that these smaller centres may also hold different challenges because immigrant communities are not always as well established. My study also provided a better understanding of the tensions and dynamics between provincial and federal governments over immigration policy and services. It suggests that local jurisdictions need a certain degree of autonomy, because a uniform system of settlement services may not be responsive to the needs of the local communities they are embedded within.

A second key contribution of this project is its inclusion of both service providers acting as representatives of organizations, and newcomers in their capacity as active or potential clients of these services. Previous research has typically focused either on settlement agencies or on newcomer groups, but not on the dynamics between them. Both newcomers and service providers had similar understandings and interpretations of local labour markets, while simultaneously holding contradictory views of what was important for newcomer professionals during their settlement experiences. Such findings can aid in the development of future services and anti-racist policy. There are significant power inequalities between governments, settlement agencies, communities, and immigrant professionals themselves. It is crucial to ensure that

immigrant-serving organizations and governmental bodies include their clients in the process of designing policies and services. This sometimes occurs and the impact can be substantial.

This research also contributed to a broadening of the literature on newcomer-focused social services. Previous research examined physical and psychological health services, and these are significant issues, but there was a need to expand the existing research to examine issues of employment, housing, discrimination, child-care and other essential components of the settlement process. I focused specifically upon employment to scale down the scope of my project, but as anticipated, participants responded with a variety of concerns that illustrated how employment is only one facet of settlement. Moreover, unequal access to the employment market is often exacerbated by other issues such as a lack of adequate housing or child-care.

A final major contribution is the expansion of how critical race theory, intersectionality and neoliberalism are conceptualized in the literature. For example, Yosso's (2005) community cultural wealth model has been well understood within the educational literature whereby educators are challenged for not recognizing the value of marginalized communities because it diverges from the white, middle-class mainstream. Similarly, immigrant professionals (and service providers) identified how employers do not value the contributions of immigrants and their communities insofar as immigrants bring multi-lingual, cross-cultural understandings and potentially new ideas and worldviews to the workplace that should be characterized from a community cultural wealth model rather than deficit-based thinking. Additionally, intersectionality and feminist approaches have been applied to research focused on the

association between under/unemployment and immigrant health, but again, usually focus on the big three destination cities.

Strengths and Limitations

Since I utilized a qualitative approach, my findings may not be as generalizable as those from some larger-scale quantitative studies. The transferability of my findings should be bolstered by continued research, both qualitative and quantitative, to confirm and expand upon these conclusions. Secondly, the focus of this current study was on the experiences of immigrant professionals. It is important to acknowledge that there are other complex challenges facing "lower skilled" or "unskilled" immigrants as well as newcomers in the temporary foreign worker program. Immigrant "professionals" are already the "preferred" category of immigrant and considered the "right types," whereas other immigrant groups face the barrier of being perceived as the "wrong" sort from the start.

I proposed a research project meant to be inclusive by taking into account the multiple actors involved in the utilization and provision of employment services for newcomers. Nonetheless, my research was inevitably limited due to the choices I had to make. I had limited resources and was only able to focus upon two urban centers such as Winnipeg and Edmonton. I was unable to comment upon the provision of services in smaller cities (for example, such as Steinbach, Manitoba or Fort McMurray, Alberta) which are of increasing importance in terms of prairie immigration and settlement. Additionally, due to my limited resources, I had to turn away significant numbers (nearly a dozen in each city) of immigrant professionals who contacted me as prospective participants. Although I ceased fieldwork when I felt I had reached "saturation" in

data collection, I expect that I would have received further insights and experiences from additional participants in both cities.

A final possible limitation is due to my social position and lived experience as a Canadian-born, English-speaking and white-racialized person. I conduct anti-racist research in part because of my recognition that certain groups in Canada, such as immigrants of colour, are limited because of their racial or ethnic identities. Although I have had considerably different life experiences than many of the immigrants who I interviewed, and while I cannot know for sure, I do not believe that my racial identity or status as a Canadian-born person limited my ability to develop rapport with participants. I do fully acknowledge, however, that I will never know what it is like to experience racism. As a result, I completely defer to the lived experiences shared with me in my research and I do not try to affix my own meaning to these stories. I share them with readers as an outsider who strives to work together with people of colour to eliminate racism and other oppressive systems. Put simply, I position myself as someone working to be an ally, or accomplice, with people of colour, and I hope that my research provides an avenue a more equitable employment market. I also recognize that working to eliminate racism is a personal project as a white person, and working together towards ally-ship is not something that has an end goal. In other words, decolonizing and unlearning racist assumptions is something that I will always have to work on as a white person. Please refer to Appendix A for a more detailed discussion of white ally-ship and my experiences as a white person conducting an explicitly anti-racist research program.

Future Research

Future research could expand upon this current study to determine how to bring broader advocacy and anti-racist programming into the immigrant services sector. I focused on the interactions between immigrant professionals and settlement workers to determine how these groups worked together to overcome labour market barriers. It would be useful, however, to examine settlement organizations in greater depth to determine their administrative approaches and philosophical orientations on issues such as anti-racist education and advocacy work. Themes from *Teaching Somebody to Fish* provided preliminary insight into these issues, but it would be helpful to examine a specific research question such as whether or not immigrant-serving organizations see a need for anti-racist interventions, and if yes, how do they navigate and address that need within their limited funding mandates.

Future research could also address the impact of funding cuts and compare the advantages and disadvantages of various funding models. Neoliberal ideological expectations of fiscal austerity manifest through responsible and efficient service delivery and place a burden on immigrant-serving agencies to "do more with less" (Shields, Türegün and Lower, 2014, 20). Many immigrant-serving organizations are heavily reliant on federal funding for their programming, and although it is important to diversify funding sources to increase organizational autonomy and stability, this also defers responsibilities for newcomer settlement onto communities.

Other interesting avenues would include longitudinal research that examines the migration trajectories of immigrants to Canada on a more representative scale. The research findings in *Should I Stay or Should I go Home,* indicated that many immigrants wished or

planned for return migration, or expressed regret about their migration journey to Canada. These themes were so dominant that it left me with questions about how these results play out amongst the population of immigrants in Canada more broadly. Moreover, it would be equally interesting to see the secondary migration pathways that immigrants take in terms of first settling in Toronto before coming to Winnipeg or Edmonton and vice versa. Findings from research examining both of these issues would be incredibly important for policy interventions around how settlement programs are funded. Put simply, settlement funding is allocated by a complex formula, but a foundational component of this formula relates to the proportion of newcomers that provinces are receiving. In other words, if Manitoba and Alberta receive a significant number of newcomers through domestic secondary migration pathways, these provinces would not be receiving sufficient settlement funding dollars. Further research is clearly necessarily to address this gap in knowledge.

Other research avenues involve studies that investigate the point of view of employers and why they are reluctant to hire newcomer professionals. It would be helpful to know why employers perceive internationally-obtained credentials and experience as inferior and exactly why they demand Canadian experience. Such research can help policy makers understand the thought processes behind, and justifications for, these discriminatory preferences, and may be useful for designing intervention programs that will encourage employers to develop more inclusive hiring practices and workplaces that truly incorporate diverse worldviews and experiences.

It will also be important to assess the impact of settlement services for other populations of immigrants such as those with less educational and financial resources as well as those who arrive as dependents, refugees and family class who are often perceived as the "wrong types" of immigrants to the country. Finally, revisiting the importance of pre-arrival training programs, future evaluation research should assess the reach and scope of the CIIP, COA and PFC programming. It would be helpful to see if these pre-arrival services ensure immigrants are more prepared for the realities of migrating to Canada and if there are differences in satisfaction, labour market inclusion and other outcomes when comparing people who went through these programs with those who did not.

Final Words

It has not been my intent to imply that immigrants are a monolithic group that overwhelmingly experiences challenges settling in Canada. In fact, most immigrants are very successful and happy in Canada, including many of the participants of my research. For those leaving countries perceived as politically and economically unstable, arrival in Canada is an overwhelmingly positive experience. Study participants frequently mentioned that "Canada is known as a good, peaceful country" and is a place where their family, and particularly children, are able to prosper and attain their potential. One couple I interviewed stated that, although they were surprised and discouraged that they would not be able to obtain professional employment in their fields (psychology and psychiatry), they were so relieved to be in a country with a stable political and economic system. Many of the people I interviewed were also satisfied with their employment positions (even if they openly acknowledged that they were "a bit overqualified" for the work they were doing).

Recognizing this, it remains critically important to address the significant labour market barriers faced by immigrant professionals, and to try to reduce and eliminate the discriminatory and exclusionary hiring and evaluative procedures that devalue and deskill immigrants' international credentials and experience. At the same time, it is also important for research to highlight positive stories of creative resiliency and success. Although there are many barriers to full labour market inclusion, most immigrants are faring well in Canada and we should not assume or universalize the diverse and heterogeneous experiences of immigrants. Synthesizing critical race theory and intersectional/transnational feminist perspectives allows for an acknowledgment of this diversity while aligning my research within the scope of social justice and anti-oppression

During the entirety of fieldwork for this study, I was continuously reminded of my privilege as a white anti-racist scholar, and that racial exclusion is not something I personally experience. Recognizing this, I align myself with others who critically reject the assumption that foreign acquired credentials and experience are less valuable (Guo, 2015). Moreover, the assumption that Canadian credentials and experience are inherently superior is, quite simply, false. For example, several healthcare professionals stated that the health care system in Canada was inferior to the system in the United Kingdom, and one participant in particular noted how someone with international experience could assist in promoting health access for underserviced groups (such as immigrants and people of colour). Following this thought, other research indicates that international experience is extremely valuable for Canadian employers if they are to remain competitive and to promote meaningful "diversity" in their workplace (Esty, Griffin and Schorr-Hirsh, 1995; Lau and Kleiner, 2012). In other words, diversity needs to be meaningful, rather than simply symbolic (or performative) inclusion.

Labour market barriers are multifaceted and require an examination of the interacting nature of oppressions, including how the labour market is segmented. By conceptualizing the Canadian labour marked as segmented, immigrant participants' experiences illustrated how access to the core labour market is difficult for those with international credentials and experience. Immigrant professionals are often relegated to the periphery in survival positions completely unrelated to their previous careers, or they are in "transitional" roles whereby employers are able to fill lower skilled positions with overqualified professionals (for example, draftsperson roles being filled by engineers, or health care aids filled by nurses or doctors). To reemphasize, the employers' (or service providers') assumption of skills deficits and expectation for Canadian experience from newcomers are inherently discriminatory perspectives. Critical race theory posits that racism and discrimination are pervasive, and although subtler or even unconscious in immigrant-friendly Canada. Employers exhibit preferences for white Canadian-born workers. Moreover, if immigrants, and particularly people of colour, do obtain a career related position, they are expected to conform to white-settler Canadian cultural and workplace norms.

To truly encourage inclusive workplaces, and inclusion within broader society, there must be a meaningful attempt to implement the two-way street model. While continuing to deliver programs that assist immigrants, we need to broaden the scope to address societal issues such as racism and labour market barriers such as discriminatory employer attitudes. This includes addressing issues of credential recognition and the perception of linguistic and/or skills deficits. Moreover, employers need to ensure they are providing meaningful training and professional development opportunities for immigrants in their workforce. Ensuring immigrants

have “realistic” expectations must be matched with shifts in Canadian society that allow for the meaningful inclusion of newcomers.

Although Canada promotes goals of welcoming and diverse communities, the immigration program inherently focuses on immigrants as “tools of neoliberal ideology driven by market logic and contribution” (Chuong, 2015, 107-108). Put simply, there is emphasis on individuals who integrate easily into to the Canadian economy and are self-sufficient and independent. The “right” sorts of immigrants, therefore, are those who are labour market ready individuals who are able to contribute, whereas those who are struggling must not have the appropriate and necessary skills and are the “wrong” sorts. This distinction between the “ideal” immigrant and those who are “failing” in their labour market and broader social inclusion are inherently problematic. Importantly, although many immigrants integrate relatively seamlessly into the Canadian economy, there are those who experience significant and persistent barriers. This represents how the story of Canadian society as welcoming and immigrant-friendly is actually a false narrative. Additionally, this is a marked failure of human rights when immigrants are arriving “with smiles and leaving with tears”. In order to truly become a society that promotes the meaningful inclusion of immigrants, significant policy shifts must include explicit anti-racist interventions and the elimination of labour market barriers. Only then will representations of Canada as an inclusive multicultural nation be honest and meaningful.

Appendix A: No More White Allies
Working Towards Being an Accomplice in Anti-Racist Struggles

My scholarly position aligns with critical race theory and anti-racist feminism to promote an active orientation for anti-oppression research. This approach is "active" because it allows me to challenge colonial white supremacy through education and policy recommendations that are meaningfully, rather than symbolically, inclusive of marginalized people. While I recognize that marginalization is multifaceted, I will outline and emphasize why it is important to focus on those with the greatest barriers to inclusion. Drawing from the philosophy of "following the turtle" (discussed below) it is critical to clear the way and ensure that those who are the most marginalized benefit from anti-oppression work (Gehl, 2011, 2013). In this methodological and theoretical reflection piece, I focus on how my identity as a white person impacted my journey and experiences during my doctoral work. This journey influenced my path towards radical equity and anti-whiteness (I will return to this concept shortly). I start by providing a few examples of my previous complicity in reinforcing racism despite my work as an activist.

When I began my doctoral studies, I held misguided notions of what working towards ally-ship meant as a white scholar. Truthfully, some my perspectives actively reinforced racism due to my lack of acknowledgment of the structures of colonial white supremacy and racialization that potentially[11] marginalizes Indigenous, Black and People of Colour (I/B/POC). One example is how I implicitly reinforced "polite racism" by conflating race with ethnicity

[11] I emphasize the potential for marginalization, not to minimize the impact of structural inequalities on marginalized identities, but to offer nuance insofar as we should never assume that because someone is perceived as belonging to a certain identity group that they will inherently be marginalized. No groups are monolithic, and we must ensure there is space to share contradictory life experiences as well as emphasizing resistance, resiliency and survival alongside struggle.

(Dean and Platt, 2016). I held the view that referring to race was offensive, a perspective that is commonplace amongst white Canadians and in governmental discourse, and is linked to problematic post-racial orientations that do not acknowledge racial difference (Dean and Platt, 2016; Gallagher, 2015). Ethnicity relates to the fluid features of groups that contribute to their "subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or of customs or both" (Weber, 1968, 389 in Dean and Platt, 2016). Similarly, Canadian political discourse refers to "visible minorities" rather than people of colour (Woolley, 2013). The common theme around these issues relates to how language shapes our perceptions of reality; the "terms for discussing racial issues shapes our perception and response to these issues" (West, 2001, 6). Although it may seem like semantics or an afterthought compared to broader activist struggles, it is my opinion that we cannot understate the importance of inclusive language that affirms the identities of marginalized peoples. For this reason, I have revised my terminology to use race instead of ethnicity (except when it is accurate), white instead of Caucasian (because white is more accurate and eliminates links to outdated racist "science"), and people of colour instead of visible minorities or racialized non-white (because this decenters whiteness as the norm). I also refer to Indigenous Peoples (or specific identities such as Cree, Métis, Inuk, Anishinaabe, etc.) rather than Aboriginal Peoples or First Nations[12]. I do so to defer to the identities that are expressed as the most appropriate by the people I wish to do ally work with to assist with dismantling oppressive structures.

As a white person, navigating the landscape of meaningful ally work requires the utmost sensitivity to the lived experiences of the people you are working with. I have certainly

[12] I recognize the inherent problems with using generalized terms such as People of Colour or Indigenous Peoples because this homogenizes extremely diverse groups. I absolutely defer to how people identify themselves, and if a different identification becomes more appropriate, I will follow their lead as norms shift.

overstepped, made mistakes and caused harm in my endeavours despite the best of intentions. While not meaning to cause harm to I/B/POC and other people experiencing marginalization, it is important to acknowledge the impact and outcome of mistakes rather than trying to justify problematic behaviour. Put simply, when our actions reinforce oppression, our intentions do not matter, or they matter less than their impact (Utt, 2013).

This Appendix outlines and problematizes the role of white scholars, such as myself, and presents strategies for white anti-racist work based on the experiences and lessons I have learned through my dissertation research. In addition to my journey as a doctoral candidate, I have also engaged in alternative-academic spaces that have heavily influenced my scholarship. Some examples include my limited involvement in solidarity building events such as *Idle No More (2012), Meet me at the Bell Tower (2011), Black Space Winnipeg (2016)* and the *13 Fires Winnipeg (2016)* movements in Winnipeg that have occurred alongside and subsequently to my dissertation fieldwork. As a direct result of my research and activist work, I have deeply reflected upon my role as a white anti-racist scholar. I acknowledge that my white privilege enabled this role. Existing within white-supremacist, colonial and patriarchal academic spaces both facilitated, and yet limited, my work as a critical race and anti-oppression scholar (Bannerji, 2000; Razack, Smith and Thobani, 2010; Thobani, 2015). Put simply, because I am a white person, my perspectives on racism may be viewed with more legitimacy than I/B/POC with the same views. Although this privilege is unearned, I use it to actively leverage my access to spaces to disseminate anti-racist perspectives. I now turn to a brief overview of the anti-racist orientations that facilitate my research program, and I will explicitly define many of the concepts that underpin my understanding of white ally work.

Conceptual Frameworks

Critical Race Theory: Throughout my research, critical race theory (CRT) is a crucial analytical framework for anti-oppression research with the explicit purpose of identifying racism and offering solutions that may break down racial hierarchies. CRT is an interdisciplinary movement that drives anti-racist social change, and therefore, activists and scholars work to address both overt and covert (or inferential) forms of racial discrimination (Alyward, 1999; Delgado and Stefancic, 2001: 2-3; Hall 1981; Yosso, 2005). An explicitly anti-racist approach identifies the role of prejudice within socio-economic statuses, historical conditions, individual or group interactions, personal feelings, and unconscious feelings or perceptions. CRT acknowledges the more "subtle" nature of racism that persists beyond the civil rights movement of the 1960s (Delgado and Stefancic, 2001: 3; Solomos and Back, 2000). It is important for research to approach social issues from an advocacy framework that facilitates identifying the pathways through which a we can develop a truly inclusive society (Hall, 1993). It is not enough to simply be opposed to racism, but activists and scholars must act through various means to build a "post-racist" society (Hall, 1993; Lee and Lutz, 2005).

Anti-Racist Feminism: An intersectional feminist approach is complementary to a CRT perspective insofar as it brings in the analysis of multiple statuses that may limit opportunities for people with multiple marginalized experiences resulting from the intersections of race, class, sex, gender and disability. The work of women and femmes of colour, especially those from the global south, have significantly impacted my politics, academic scholarship and continue to guide my research through intersectionality and transnational feminism (Bannerji, 2000; Case, 2012; Collins, 2000; Crenshaw, 1989; Davis, 2016; hooks, 1982; Lorde 1981; Mohanty 1988,

2003; Razack, Smith and Thobani 2010). Scholars must remain sensitive to the heterogeneity of I/B/POC, and we must take care not to generalize experiences (Mohanty, 1988, 2003). It is important, however, to assert that solidarity building between diverse groups is possible, and necessary, to dismantle oppressive systems and structures. In sum, anti-racist feminist approaches align intersectionality with transnational considerations to ensure that race is assessed in relation to other sites of oppression such as class, sex, gender and disability. When racial analyses do not incorporate intersectionality or transnational considerations, the resulting conclusions may not necessarily identify important experiences of intersecting marginalities. For example, it is important to consider how a middle-class cisgender woman of colour may not be aware of the needs and experiences of a poor transgender woman of colour.

Follow the Turtle: Building on these brief descriptions, I now turn to the philosophical approach that most closely resembles my current ally work. Dr. Lynn Gehl, an Algonquin Anishinaabe-kwe woman, is an Indigenous human rights advocate who has been working in the field for over 25 years. I recently found her two pieces "Follow the Turtle" and "Ally Bill of Responsibilities" and they contributed to a fundamental shift in my orientation to scholarly and personal activism (Gehl, 2011, 2013). Gehl refers to a "continuum of privilege" that exists in Canada based on intersectional forces of oppression which place white, able-bodied, cisgender and heterosexual men at the top of the continuum, followed by white women. Black, Latinx, Asian, Queer, Indigenous, Transgender and Disabled people are situated at different locations on this continuum. Put simply, all things being equal, a white disabled woman will have greater access to support resources than an Indigenous disabled woman. It is important to consider this relative nature of privilege since Gehl's theory of solidarity insists that there is a need to form

coalitions acknowledging these differences. Gehl states "if equality is desired, equity measures are required; we need to follow the turtle. We need to follow the most oppressed in the movement forward" (Gehl, 2013, para. 7). Within the framework of eliminating sexism for an example, following the turtle not only ensures that all women are emancipated, but that more privileged women do not abandon the cause when they have achieved equality at the expense of women experiencing intersectional marginalization due to race, disability, class or sexuality.

Colonial White Supremacy: Racism is a system of oppression whereby the dominant group reinforces "a doctrine of racial supremacy, that one race is superior" (Comeau, 2015; Bonilla-Silva, 2001, 21; Leonardo, 2004). In other words, as a result of colonial oppression from European powers, the structures that developed in Canada situated white racialized people in superordinate positions. Colonial white supremacy privileges those of white racial identity over Indigenous Peoples and people of colour. Moreover, challenging the notion that Canada is an inclusive society is not a novel conclusion. John Porter (1965) identified a hierarchy of privilege in his iconic work *The Vertical Mosaic*, where he demonstrated that Canada was not an egalitarian society built on meritocracy, but rather, advantages for some groups (e.g. British) who occupied higher class positions simply as a result of their ancestry. These racial hierarchies have not shifted despite more people of colour migrating to Canada over the last 30 years (Comeau, 2015; Mullings, Morgan and Quelling, 2016). Moreover, Indigenous People in Canada experience the most significant and enduring disadvantages (Gehl, 2013; Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015). Consequently, along with other critical race scholars, I contend that Porter's analysis needed to go further to explicitly name this privilege as the result of colonial white supremacy.

White Privilege: It is important to understand how colonial white supremacy plays out in contemporary societies through the concept of white privilege. According to Peggy McIntosh (2016), racism creates disadvantages for people of colour, but we must also explicitly identify how "white privilege" provides unearned advantages for racialized white people. Racism and white privilege have also shifted in the post-civil rights era. In the United States for example, white privilege was previously attained through overt means (Jim Crow period), but now involves institutional biases that are justified through post-racial language (Bonilla-Silva, 2001; Comeau, 2015; Delgado and Stefancic, 1997; Leonardo, 2004; McIntosh, 2016). Linking back to critical race theory, acknowledging white privilege accepts that while racism has become less overt, there is persisting racial inequality. Therefore, white privilege refers to how white racialized people receive benefits explicitly linked to our racial identities as the result of white supremacy.

Challenging Whiteness (Anti-Whiteness): Whiteness is a position based on the cultural dominance resulting from European colonial expansion (Comeau, 2015; Dean and Platt, 2016; Delgado and Stefancic, 1997; Hage, 2012, 20; Hitchcock and Flint, 2015). Racism itself is based on whiteness, insofar as it represents "powerful fiction enforced by power and violence. Whiteness is a constantly shifting boundary separating those who are entitled to have certain privileges from those whose exploitation and vulnerability to violence is justified by their not being white" (Kivel, 1996, p. 19). Importantly, whiteness is not the same thing as the white category of race, but rather, refers to whiteness as a powerful, socially-constructed force whereby white culture, norms and values become naturalized and enforced as the standard that all other groups are measured against (Comeau, 2015; Dean and Platt, 2016; Henry and Tator, 2006, 46-

67). In other words, socially-constructed whiteness is the set of privileges granted to white racialized people. It is critical to understand that when people, particularly I/B/POC, express that they adhere to a philosophy of anti-whiteness, this does not mean they support prejudice against white people (or worse, that it is "reverse racism" against white people, which does not exist). Anti-whiteness is a synonym for anti-racism, except that it explicitly names the structures of racialized power as based on white supremacy (Comeau, 2015; Leonardo, 2004; Dean and Platt, 2016). Some activists believe it is important to explicitly express that they work towards anti-whiteness rather than anti-racism. At first, this was jarring to me as a white person, but I have come to realize that this is not an attack on me personally, but rather, is an explicit commitment to the elimination of white supremacy and the emancipation of all people subjugated by the current systems of racism.

Ally-ship: Ally work as a white person is a complicated position because many people do not move beyond passive opposition to racism, and others engage in performative ally work that is for their personal benefit. These are two issues I will return to shortly. It is critical for white people to challenge white supremacy by "articulating [their] life choices through non-white discourses or strategies of anti-whiteness" (Leonardo, 2009, 170). As previously discussed, anti-whiteness is not "racism" or prejudice targeted towards white people, but is the orientation that rejects whiteness as the standard to which all people are judged. To work towards ally-ship requires the explicit acknowledgment of the privileges afforded to us because of our racialization as white people. Starting with Gehl's theory of "follow the turtle" we can also draw from her work based on a sixteen point "Ally Bill of Responsibilities" that identifies what settler-allies need to do. This requires us to: avoid acting because of guilt; acknowledge that allies are

secondary to Indigenous People; ground ourselves in our history and culture; be aware of and openly speak about our privileges; understand that allies can never understand the lived experience of oppression they are fighting against; reflect on intersectionality; ensure critical thought at all times; ensure community consensus guides one's work as allies; ensure the needs of the most oppressed are served; understand lateral oppression[13] and not encourage it; ensure the movement one is supporting meets the needs of the community; understand that allies are sometimes manipulated to serve the agenda of leaders within the community; not take up space and resources of the oppressed group; not take up time at community meetings or events; and accept the responsibility of learning and reading more about being effective allies (Gehl, 2011).

*Post-Race/Colour-bl**d*[14]*:* I utilize the term post-race/post-racial/colour-bl**d to identify the problematic notion that the majority of white people believe we have eliminated overt racist attitudes and behaviours to enter into a post-racial society where race no longer matters, and further, that naming race is no longer important (Comeau, 2015; Delgado and Stefancic, 2001; Gallagher, 2016). This post-racial ideology reinforces white supremacy because the non-recognition of race erases the lived experiences of people who experience racial inequality and discrimination (Annamma, Jackson and Morrison, 2017; Comeau 2015; Springer, 2014). In sum, this perspective reinforces white supremacy because it erases the importance of race and of race-

[13] Lateral oppression is "horizontal violence within oppressed groups and components of the group" (Gehl, 2011). This occurs when oppressed people suppress feelings of anger, shame and rage as well as internalized colonialism/racism (NWAC, 2011). These internalized feelings may manifest as negative behaviours towards other people within the same oppressed group (e.g. when an employee is promoted, or when new employees enter the workplace with more education and training than current employees).

[14] I acknowledge that many scholars currently use the term colour-bl**d to identify how people state they "do not see race". This is an important analogy because as a metaphor it identifies the erasure of racial identity and racism and renders race invisible or "unseen". I am hesitant to use this term, however, because I am increasingly sensitive to eliminating ableism from my written and verbal expression and activists have expressed to me that using blind pejoratively is a form of linguistic ableism. Alternatives include post-racial or colour-evasiveness (See Annamma, Jackson and Morrison, 2017).

based oppression and reifies the problematic belief that racism is no longer an issue in multicultural societies. Moreover, people want their racial identities recognized (Springer, 2014). It would be best to strive towards societies where we live free of racism, where we comfortably discuss and celebrate race.

"I didn't expect you to be white"

One of the most interesting, and unexpected, elements of my PhD program was the expectation from participants that I would be a person of colour. Although I will never know precisely why this expectation existed, I have reflected on this with colleagues and friends who are people of colour, and we have several speculative ideas of why immigrants of colour may be surprised to find a white researcher. I will begin with several examples to illustrate that these were not isolated instances. While my anecdotal experiences should not be taken as systematic evidence, these occurrences encouraged my broader reflections on white supremacy and my role in either unconsciously reinforcing or dismantling structures of white privilege.

In 2010, I was fortunate to receive the Alberta Award for the Study of Canadian Human Rights and Multiculturalism from the Government of Alberta. This award supports graduate students to "explore and support human rights or multicultural questions" and to "promote informed thinking about Canadian human rights" in a way that broadens abilities to do rights-based or multicultural work in the country (Government of Alberta, 2017). I mention this not as a way to bolster my ego, but to provide context that builds my analysis around how my race was often a surprise to the people I interact with in anti-racist and anti-oppression research. It was not the award itself, but the subsequent media attention I received as a recipient of the scholarship.

Shortly after receiving the award, I was contacted by a reporter from OMNI Television news in Edmonton. OMNI Television is a service dedicated to racial and cultural inclusivity in representation and multilingual accessibility in the media with outlets in many large and mid-sized cities across the country (Omni Television, 2016). In other words, it is a primarily multilingual media network that specialized in providing programming that centers newcomers and cultural groups that are underrepresented in the mainstream Canadian media. I met with the reporter to do a short interview regarding the award and my research, and although I may be projecting, I suspected the reporter was surprised and perhaps disappointed, that I was a white person. It was not until much later that I reflected on this further to realize why this may be the case. There I was, a white person, taking up valuable news space that would be better used speaking to people with the lived experience of going through the immigrant journey. Thankfully, the reporter also spoke to a woman of colour who worked in the employment and settlement field to help bring in that representative experience. Reflecting back, I realize this is a primary example of how white people often "take up space" rather than "making space" for people of colour, Indigenous and other marginalized peoples.

Similar to my experience with the OMNI reporter, there are other examples from my fieldwork where my white racialized positionality had a direct impact on my interactions with research participants. Several participants explicitly said that they did not expect me to be white. I did not always probe in detail about why they responded this way, although those who offered further insight mentioned that my first name was popular in their language, or that they did not expect a white person to be researching issues related to immigration. I find this second point to be quite telling. Although I am familiar with the Canadian academic communities linked to

migration research, I realized that white academics in this field are probably not very visible in the everyday lived experiences of most immigrants who are people of colour. I also feel ambivalence regarding white scholars in the field, as we often conduct research "on" rather than "with" people of colour. Furthermore, many white settler Canadians do not acknowledge racism or the difficulties that immigrants experience (Denis, 2015; Matias, 2014; Solomona, Portelli, Daniel and Campbell, 2006). One of the major contemporary features of racism, and a reason why it remains so pervasive, is due to the outright denial of its very existence (Comeau, 2015; Matias, 2014; Nelson, 2013).

Another example is when I gave presentations at conferences and spoke on panels with immigrants and people of colour. While I certainly should conduct research and offer anti-racist education to create awareness, I feel conflicted about taking up a spot that might be better filled by an immigrant of colour. I simply lack the lived experience to fully understand the phenomenon under investigation. I continue to reflect on this dilemma, and these are issues I need to be more mindful of when I design future research projects. I certainly do feel there are roles for white academics to conduct anti-racist research, but we must explicitly unpack our privileges to conduct more inclusive and collaborative projects.

No More White Allies: Holding Space Rather than Taking up Space

I mention these examples experienced during my doctoral program and research fieldwork not to center my lived experience in this dissertation. In fact, I relegated this discussion to an appendix specifically to avoid focus on myself within the broader narrative of my research findings. Although my positionality is important, this is an example of how to hold

space rather than taking up space. Explicitly, I have benefitted from my role as a white ally even though this was not my intention. I have earned scholarships, including the Alberta Human Rights award mentioned previously, from my work with immigrant professionals. Ally-ship is particularly controversial when allies are benefitting socially, financially, politically or in any other ways as a result of their involvement in anti-oppression movements (Murphy, 2010). Ally work is a "consensual" collaborative process that cannot be imposed (Hunt and Holmes, 2015). Therefore, ally-ship is not a status that you can apply to yourself, and it is not something that you should be striving to receive recognition for.

Ally-ship is increasingly seen as problematic by many marginalized people because people who claim to be allies, especially white people, often only do passive work in a way that is mostly performative, in other words, to be seen as an ally rather than to spur meaningful change (McKenzie, 2015). Performative ally-ship, or ally theatre, may involve a demonstration of guilt or apologetics from people for the explicit purpose of a positive response from the marginalized group (Rodriguez, 2015). For example, ally theatre would involve pointing out that something is racist with the expectation of recognition from friends who are I/B/POC. This passive form of ally-ship, or the performance of being an ally for personal benefit, is deeply damaging to solidarity building across differences. Not only must white people take the supporting role behind I/B/POC, but we must take care not to perform ally work with the intention of proving that we are "good and progressive" white people.

Importantly, ally-ship must not be used as a way to reposition whiteness as the reference point for goodness. There is a great need for white people to reflect on how we operate as

"allies" as illustrated with Lisa Comeau's (2015, p. 186) work on "progressive" white people in anti-racist education:

> Demonstrations of progressive knowledge once again re-inscribe Whiteness as goodness and rationality, even if the tolerance that now constitutes goodness and rationality is quite different from the overt White supremacy and patriarchy of Canadian history. The power relations between dominantly positioned White people and marginalized people of colour continue to look a lot like colonial power relations of a century ago. It is still the dominant, authorized by their good intentions and superior rationality and knowledge, who define what – and who – the problems are, and what the solutions might be. Explanations of social inequality still turn on the production of the Other, who is made to contain the problem. In Fellows' and Razack's words, "the containment of the Other is a making of the dominant self" (1998, p. 343). White dominance requires a non-white Other.

As a white person working towards ally-ship, there are two important points to consider based on this passage. The first requires that we do not start to distinguish between ourselves as "good white people" and "those white racists" because this obscures our own privilege and reinforces "progressive white people" as innocent in the reification of white supremacy (Hunt and Holmes, 2015). Secondly, and most importantly, by defining ourselves as "progressive" or "woke"[15] white people, we reinforce the position of Whiteness as good rather than dismantling our privilege and working to center the perspectives of the most marginalized.

With these concepts and examples in mind, I will now broaden this discussion to expand on what I mean by meaningful ally-ship and holding space for the marginalized within the framework of feminist anti-racist work that "follows the turtle." While I have always had meaningful intentions with my activist-scholarship, my whiteness always requires critical

[15] In contemporary social justice circles, there is a concept of being "woke" or a vernacular term that was popularized by Black songwriter Erykah Badu, but gained traction in communities of colour to identify people with awareness to anti-oppression issues. I personally would not feel comfortable describing myself as "woke" because it would be performative ally-ship and is not a status you can really declare for yourself. Additionally, it may not be appropriate for a white person to appropriate this term since it originated within communities of colour within the context of the lived experience of oppression (See Hess, 2016; Pulliam-Moore, 2016).

assessment in order to engage in research or activism without reifying and strengthening white supremacy. In truth, great care is needed as a white person conducting social justice research and activism. Moreover, I have illustrated points in my own learning journey where I was not entirely constructive or helpful. There are times when I have been downright racist and harmful. Put simply, I have and will always continue to make mistakes. It is important to consistently reflect on these moments as a white person, or as a person with privilege, because when you have privilege you lack an understanding of the lived experiences of oppressions. There are several strategies that I have found to be the most transformative for me as an activist-scholar, and I will now review them in detail.

Sensitivity and a Willingness to Feel Uncomfortable

White anti-racist activists and scholars must be prepared to become uncomfortable because it is a necessary part of acknowledging our privilege. This also involves a deference to the experiences of others with "real listening" that creates "vulnerability, about allowing others to affect us in a realm that may not feel safe, about the emotionally, physical and social openness that anti-racism work requires from the most privileged" (Faini, Sun and Tran, 2016, 2). Moreover, white people doing anti-racist work must explicitly learn about race and whiteness in a way where we are "willing to face [our] discomfort, uncertainty, or anger in the process" (Michael and Conger, 2009, 56). In general, there is a need for sensitivity and awareness of the fact that as a white researcher I will never understand what it is like to experience racism. As such, it is important for me, in my work with marginalized people, to defer to their lived experiences rather than to ascribe meaning based on my interpretations of their stories. This is highly aligned to qualitative research methodology that suggests researchers must always let the

data express meaning rather than imposing preconceived understandings of the phenomenon under investigation (Duneier, 1999; Creswell, 2008). While this is good research practice, it is also essential for doing good ally-work because the principles hold true in both contexts, perhaps especially when researchers see their projects as ally-work, as I do.

Avoiding Defensiveness

Building off the previous discussion, it is critical for white people to avoid becoming defensive in anti-oppression work. As a privileged person, this requires embracing that discomfort and making the explicit commitment to defer to those with the lived experiences. Due to the fact that white supremacy centers the experiences and standards of whiteness as the normative framework, the process of decentering whiteness can be deeply disruptive and uncomfortable for all white people (Comeau, 2015; Hitchcock and Flint, 2015; Michael and Conger, 2009). This discomfort certainly creates cognitive dissonance that pushes some white people away from anti-oppression work because they are not willing to allow themselves to experience the distress associated with recognizing privilege and dismantling oppressive assumptions that exist within our consciousness (Matias, 2014; Michael and Conger, 2009; Springer, 2014). In other words, embracing discomfort results from re-evaluating assumptions that we hold as a result of our lived experiences within whiteness which masks the reality of white supremacy. For those with white privilege, these contradictory realities can only be dismantled through uncomfortable work, and further, must also take into account the intersectional ways in which power operates.

Intersectionality

Throughout my journey as a scholar and activist, I was fortunate to interact with colleagues and mentors who were, or who shared with me the work of, Indigenous, black and people of colour. I do not take this labour for granted, as I greatly benefitted from exposure to viewpoints that did not represent my own journey. This helped me to understand why people were excluded from opportunities or were perceived differently based on race, class, gender, disability and other statuses. The work of women of colour, including those from the global south, have had a significant impact on my politics and academic scholarship and continue to guide my research through the lens of intersectional anti-racist feminism (Bannerji, 2000; Case, 2012; Collins, 2000; Crenshaw, 1989; hooks, 1982; Lorde, 1981; Mohanty, 1988, 2003, Razack, Smith and Thobani, 2010). This orientation ensured that I do not examine statuses such as race, class, sex, gender, disability, sexual orientation and age as "mutually exclusive categories of experience and analysis" (Crenshaw, 1989, 139; hooks, 1982, 7). In sum, all characteristics of our identities contribute to the lived experiences of discrimination and exclusion (Crenshaw, 1989, 150-151; hooks, 1982, 12).

Respecting the Need for Non-White Spaces

One of the most frustrating counter-arguments, or rather myths, related to anti-racist work is the notion that white people experience "reverse racism" (Israel and Smith, 2015; Roussell, Henne, Glover and Willits, 2017). When white people are excluded from organizing spaces, this is not reverse racism. Hunt and Holmes (2015) emphasize the necessity for ensuring there are groups and events designated as "safer spaces" for Indigenous people, black and people of colour as well as other people who may be experiencing other forms of marginalization (e.g. gender

identity, sexual orientation, disability, etc.). The exclusion of white people from these spaces is not discriminatory, but rather, avoids derailing conversations in order to explain the experiences of oppression to those with white privilege. It is for survival. It is exhausting to explain to dominant groups why your lived experiences are valid and require attention. In the face of denial and rejection, it becomes another site of oppression because dominant groups are so resistant to acknowledging that privilege and marginalization exists due to the myths of living in a post-racial meritocratic society (Comeau, 2015; Matias, 2014). This also links back to the purpose of avoiding defensiveness, we are not being excluded to harm us, but rather, we are being excluded to protect people within that safe space so they are able to discuss freely without censorship and without opposition from people in dominant groups who do not actively wish to dismantle racist systems.

Decentering Whiteness: Confronting and Dismantling Colonial White Supremacy

Decentering whiteness can be a barrier for white people working towards ally-ship because it requires working through discomfort to really ensure that the lived experiences of marginalized people are at the center of the work that we do. This often means that, as white people, our opinions and lived experiences are less important. Moreover, due to whiteness existing as the standard to which all other groups are judged, the perspectives of white people are already dominant in society. Centering white voices in anti-racist or anti-oppression movements reinforces colonial white supremacy. Anti-racist messages should not be more palatable to dominant groups from the voices of dominant white anti-racists or white activist celebrities (e.g. Tim Wise or Leonardo DiCaprio). The real battle is to ensure that we dismantle colonial white supremacy by centering I/B/POC voices and perspectives. This means that, for the most part,

white people need to be listening and reflecting on our privileges, biases and problematic assumptions.

Cross-Cultural Interaction: Community Building and Media Consumption

More recently, I have been fortunate to receive mentorship from activists in Winnipeg who identify as I/B/POC as well as influences from online spaces such as Everyday Feminism and activists in the "baby wearing" community[16]. I have been fortunate to be able to be present during the *Idle No More (2012), Meet me at the Bell Tower (2011), 13 Fires Winnipeg (2016)*, *Black Space* (2016, the Winnipeg chapter of Black Lives Matter) movements that have greatly influenced my orientation as an activist, and have directly influenced by writing as a white anti-racist scholar. I was not deeply involved with these events, but I am fortunate to know people who are heavily involved in organizing. These movements are influential and effective for promoting anti-racist/anti-colonial education partially as a result of social media literacy. Social media is an excellent tool for building connections between activist communities, disseminating information about events and sharing perspectives that are underrepresented in the mainstream media (Barker, 2014; Lim, 2012; Shirky, 2011). In my experience as an activist and a scholar, one of the most important actions someone can take involves shifting their media consumption to center on I/B/POC, LGBTQ2S+[17] and disabled activists. These perspectives are vastly underrepresented in the media (Bond, 2014; Tukachinsky, Mastro and Yarchi, 2015). I have learned so much in the past year as a result of following scholars and activists who are I/B/POC

[16] After becoming a first-time parent in September 2014, I was invited to take part in learning the caregiving practice of "baby wearing" which involves wrapping your child to your body with woven fabric. This practice originated with, and survived as a result of, Indigenous communities. I mention the influence of the baby wearing community because my high involvement throughout 2014 to 2016 and I have been actively engaged in anti-racist and anti-oppressive education in this community.

[17] I align with Hunt and Holmes (2015) in the use of LGBTQ2S+ acronym which is an umbrella term representing sexual and gender diversity. Like other umbrella terms I have used, I acknowledge the heterogeneity of sexual and gender identities that may be oversimplified and erased by terms such as this.

on social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook and YouTube. These platforms offer scholars space for alternative learning and to discuss not only peer-reviewed publications, but also their other media contributions that are potentially more accessible to the broader activist community as well as the general public.

Final Words: Anti-Racist Education and Research

Throughout my doctoral program I was concerned that I was taking up space that should be saved for immigrants, and particularly immigrants who are people of colour. While I have always had meaningful intentions for my activism and scholarship, there have been times in my life where I have unintentionally participated in the reification of white supremacist colonial oppressions, as well as performative ally-ship. As a white person, I must continually reflect and learn from my mistakes as well constantly challenge my perceptions and complicity with whiteness. I must ensure that I do not take up space or take resources from marginalized communities, but it is also critical that white people take on a greater role in dismantling white supremacy. Fundamentally, this means giving up our privilege to hold space for people who may be marginalized. In this essay, I have outlined both the challenges and successful strategies that have been part of my journey as a white anti-racist ally.

Some of the most fundamental lessons that I have learned is about ensuring that our work as white, or as privileged, scholars requires a commitment to ensuring the most marginalized perspectives are brought to the front and center. Centering multi-marginalized I/B/POC adheres to the philosophy of following the turtle because when the lived experiences of the most oppressed people are improved, all our life circumstances will improve as a result. As a white

person with my own experiences of multi-marginalization, my liberation is contingent on following disabled, neuro diverse and LGBTQ2S+ Indigenous, Black and People of colour. Until we dismantle colonial white supremacy, our struggles are intertwined. I will not wager on my emancipation with the risk of leaving anyone else behind.

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Appendix B: Participant Information

Table 5: Immigrant Participant Characteristics

Edmonton											
Alias	**Age**	**Sex**	**Race or Ethnicity**	**Country of Origin**	**Immigrant Class**	**Year of Arrival**	**Years in Canada**	**Highest Education**	**Country of Education**	**Employment Status**	**Type of Job**
Tpop	28	M	Arab	Egypt	Canadian Experience Class	2009	5	M.A.	Canada	Employed - Full Time Program Coordinator (settlement agency)	Career
Gabby	35	F	White/Latina	Peru	Skilled Worker	2002	11	B.A.	Peru	Employed - Full time counselor (NGO)	Career
Wing	38	F	Asian	China	Skilled Worker	2011	2	B.Sc.	China	Unemployed	-
Em	32	F	White/Latina	Brazil	Work Permit	2012	1	B.A.	Brazil	Employed - Part time in kitchen	Survival
Angie	35	F	Indian	India	TFW -> Skilled Worker	2012	1	Ph.D.	India	Employed - Full time post doc (health post-doc research)	Career
Smash	39	M	Black	Cameroon	Skilled Worker	2012	1	Ph.D.	Belgium and Cameroon	Employed - Full-time Settlement Worker	Transitional
MD	42	M	Persian	Iran	Skilled Worker	2013	0.5	M.D.	Iran	Employed in Iran	N/A

Parisa	37	F	Persian	Iran	Skilled Worker	2013	0.5	Ph.D.	Iran	Employed in Iran - 1 more year in contract	N/A
Babak	43	M	Arab	Iran	Skilled Worker	2011	2	M.D.	Egypt	Employed - Security Guard	Survival
M.J.	38	F	S. Asian	India	Skilled Worker	2013	0.5	Ph.D.	India	Unemployed	-
Tim	33	M	Arab	Syria	Skilled Worker	2013	0.5	Ph.D.	England	Unemployed	-
Mahmoud	36	M	Arab	Palestine, Lebanon and the U.A.E.	Skilled Worker	2012	1	B.Sc.	U.A.E.	Employed - Security Guard	Survival
Aya	35	F	Arab	Egypt	Skilled Worker	2013	0.5	B.A.	Egypt	Unemployed - seeking funded retraining	-
Pnay	44	F	Asian/Filipina	Philippines and the U.A.E.	Skilled Worker	2008	5	M.A.	Philippines, U.A.E., Canada	Employed - real estate	Survival
Sheriff	37	M	Black	Senegal	Family Sponsor	2011	2	M.A.	Senegal	Employed - Part time after school coordinator / Volunteer	Transitional
Salmon	45	M	Arab	Egypt	Skilled Worker	2012	1	M.D.	Egypt	Unemployed	-
Al	47	M	Black	Cameroon	Skilled Worker	2013	0.5	M.A.	Cameroon	Unemployed - Student	-
Baiju	40	M	S. Asian	India	Skilled Worker	2012	1.5	Ph.D.	India	Unemployed	-
Ama	41	M	S. Asian / Nepalese	Nepal	Skilled Worker	2011	0.5	M.A.	Nepal	Employed - Full time - Security Guard	Survival
Priya	30	F	S. Asian / Nepalese	Nepal	Skilled Worker	2012	0.7	Ph.D.	Nepal, Japan	Unemployed -volunteering	-

MR	33	F	Latina	Peru	Family Sponsor	2008	5	B.A.	Peru	Unemployed -volunteering	-

Winnipeg

Alias	Age	Sex	Race or Ethnicity	Country of Origin	Immigrant Class	Year of Arrival	Years in Canada	Highest Education	Country of Education	Employment Status	Type of Job
Emad	29	M	Somalian	Somalia (via Kenya)	Family Sponsor	2013	0.25	B.A.	Kenya	Unemployed - volunteering	-
Omda	38	M	Egyptian	Egypt	Family Sponsor	2010	3	LL.B.	Egypt	Employed - Apartment caretaker, volunteering, taking paralegal course	Survival
Doc	51	M	Black	Trinidad and Tobago	Family Sponsor	2003	10	Carpentry	Trinidad and Tobago	Employed - Carpenter	Career
Hammy	24	M	S. Asian	India	Provincial Nominee	2009	4.5	Electrician	India	Employed - Taxi and volunteer	Survival
Clyde	38	M	Asian	Kyrgyzstan	Provincial Nominee	2013	0.08	B.A.	Kyrgyzstan	Unemployed - Settling	-
Bonnie	31	F	White	Kyrgyzstan	Provincial Nominee	2013	0.08	M.D.	Kyrgyzstan	Unemployed - Settling	-
Giju	38	M	S. Asian	India	Skilled Worker	2010	3	M.D.	England	Employed - Security Guard	Survival
L.C.	38	F	Asian	Philippines	Provincial Nominee	2011	2	M.D.	Philippines	Employed - Casual support St. Amant	Transitional
Jassi	42	M	S. Asian	India	Skilled Worker	2000	13	Civil engineer	India	Unemployed - Seasonal Layoff (Electrical Technician)	-
L.B.	33	F	Black	Nigeria	Provincial Nominee	2013	0.67	M.Sc.	Ireland	Employed - support care	Transitional

										worker	
Bob	40	M	White	USA	Family Sponsor	2003	10	Accountant	USA	Employed - Accountant	Career
Robin	24	M	S. Asian	India	Provincial Nominee	2011	2	B.A.	Canada	Employed - Financial Advisor	Career
Hope	27	F	White	Belarus	Provincial Nominee	2013	0.5	B.A. (Hons.)	Belarus	Unemployed - homemaker	-
Alfred	45	M	White	Argentina	Family Sponsor	2010	3.5	M.A.	Argentina	Employed - full time safety auditor	Career
Gurjaspal	28	M	S. Asian	India -> USA	Provincial Nominee	2013	0.16	M.Sc.	India, U.S.A.	Unemployed - just arrived	-
Manpreet	28	F	S. Asian	India -> UK -> USA	Provincial Nominee	2013	0.16	M.Sc.	India, U.K.	Employed - IT Developer	Career
Singh	31	M	S. Asian	India	Family Sponsor	2013	0.16	Ph.D.	India	Unemployed - just arrived	-
Mean:	**36.13**						**2.52**				

Education:	9 of 38 educated in a "developed nation"
Employment:	8 Career
	4 Transitional
	8 Survival

Table 6: Immigrant-Serving Organization Participants

Edmonton				
Alias	**Role**	**Sex**	**Person of Colour**	**Immigrant**
1	Settlement Worker	F	No	Yes
2	Executive Director	M	Yes	No
3	Program Manager	F	No	Yes
4	Program Manager	F	No	No
5	Executive Director	F	No	No
6	Program Manager	F	No	No
7	Program Manager	F	No	No
8	Settlement Worker	F	No	No
9	Executive Director	M	No	No
10	Settlement Worker	F	Yes	Yes
11	Program Manager	M	Yes	Yes
Winnipeg				
Alias	**Role**	**Sex**	**Person of Colour**	**Immigrant**
1	Settlement Worker	F	Yes	Yes
2	Program Manager	M	Yes	Yes
3	Program Manager	F	Yes	Yes
4	Program Manager	M	Yes	Yes
5	Settlement Worker	F	No	Yes
6	Settlement Worker	F	No	No
7	Settlement Worker	F	No	No
8	Program Manager	F	No	No
9	Settlement Worker	F	No	Yes
10	Executive Director	F	No	No
11	Program Manager	F	Yes	Yes
Total	22 participants			
Sex	76% female			
Racialization	36% people of colour			
Immigrant	50% first-generation			
Role	36% front line workers			
	45% middle management			
	18% executive directors			

Note: Role percentages do not sum to 100 due to rounding

Appendix C: Immigrant-Serving Organizations in Winnipeg and Edmonton

Winnipeg

Immigrant Centre Manitoba Inc.
100 Adelaide Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3B 2M2
Canada
Telephone: 204-943-9158
Web: http://www.icmanitoba.com/

Immigrant Women's Association of Manitoba
Permanently Closed
Web: http://www.iwamanitoba.org/

NEEDS Inc.
251- A Notre Dame Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3B 1N8
Canada
Telephone: 204-940-1260
Web: http://www.needsinc.ca

Entry Program
Unit 400, 259 Portage Ave.
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3B 2AB
Canada
Telephone: 204-944-0133
Web: http://www.entryprogram.ca/

Elmwood Neighbourhood Immigrant Settlement Program
545 Watt Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R2K 2S2
Canada
Telephone: 204-982-1720
Web: http://elmwoodcrc.ca/n-i-s-w/

Employment Projects of Winnipeg
167 Lombard Avenue, Room 990
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3B 0V3
Canada

Telephone: 204-949-5300
Web: http://www.immigranttoolbox.ca/

Enhanced English Skills for Employment
275 Portage Avenue, 15th Floor
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3B 2B3
Canada
Telephone: 204-927-4375
Web: http://www.eese.ca/

Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba
95 Ellen Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3A 1S8
Canada
Telephone: 204-943-8765
Web: http://www.ircom.ca

Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council Inc. (Including Welcome Place)
521 Bannatyne Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3A 0E4
Canada
Telephone: 204-977-1000
Web: http://www.miic.ca

Manitoba START
271 Portage Ave.
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3B 2A8
Canada
Telephone: 204-944-8830
Web: http://manitobastart.com

Mosaic Newcomer Family Resource Network
397 Carlton Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3B 2K9
Canada
Telephone: 204-774-7311
Web: http://www.mosaicnet.ca

Success Skills Centre
12th Floor, 330 Portage Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba

R3C 0C4
Canada
Telephone: 204-975-5111
Web: http://www.successskills.mb.ca

University of Winnipeg Global Welcome Centre
511 Ellice Avenue, Room 1E04
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3B 2S4
Canada
Telephone: 204-258-2946
Web: http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/gwc/

Winnipeg English Language Assessment and Referral Centre (WELARC)
400-275 Portage Ave.
Winnipeg, Manitoba
Canada
R3B 2B3
Telephone: 204-943-5387
Web: http://www.welarc.net/

Accueil francophone
420, rue Des Meurons, unité 104
Saint-Boniface (Winnipeg, Manitoba)
R2H 2N9
Telephone: 204-975-4250
Web: http://www.accueilfrancophonemb.com/

Canadian Muslim Women's Institute Inc.
201-61 Juno St.
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3A 1T1
Telephone: 204-943-8539
Web: http://www.cmwi.ca/

Manitoba Association of Newcomer Serving Organizations (MANSO)
NOTE: MANSO is an umbrella organization for ISOs
#610 - 275 Portage Ave.
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3B 2B3
Telephone: (204) 272-0872
Email: info@mansomanitoba.ca
Web: http://mansomanitoba.ca/

Neighbourhood Immigrant Settlement Program (Contact info changes frequently)

Elmwood – Elmwood Community Resource Centre
545 Watt Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R2K 2S2
Telephone: 204-982-1720
Website: http://elmwoodcrc.ca/n-i-s-w/
Email: nisw@elmwoodcrc.com

Fort Garry/Fort Richmond
Telephone: 204-894-8421
Email: nisw.fortgarry@familydynamics.ca

Inkster – NorWest Co-op Community Health
1880 Alexander Avenue
Winnipeg, MB
Telephone: 204-940-2662
Email: nisw.inkster@norwestcoop.ca
Web: https://norwestcoop.ca/program_category/new-to-canada/
Immigrant Women's Counselling: 204-940-6624

River East/ Transcona – John Pritchard School
1490 Henderson Hwy.
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R2G 1N5
Telephone: 204-661-9505
Email: vschroeder@retsd.mb.ca
Web: http://www.retsd.mb.ca/community/retis/Pages/default.aspx

St. James – Assiniboia – Jameswood Alternative School
1 Braintree Crescent
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3J 1C7
Telephone: 204-831-7405
Email: st.james-diversity@hotmail.com

St. Vital – René Delurme Centre
511 St. Anne's Road
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R2M 3E5
Telephone: 204-257-7308 ext. 417
Web: https://www.lrsd.net/What-We-Offer/EAL/Pages/default.aspx

Seven Oaks – Seven Oaks Adult Learning & Settlement Services
950 Jefferson Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R2P 1W1

Telephone: 204-632-1716
Email: settlement@7oaks.org
Web: http://www.7oaks.org/programs/settlement/pages/default.aspx

Fort Rouge/River Heights/ Tuxedo – Tuxedo Family Resource Centre

#1-225 Doncaster Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3N 1X7
Telephone: 204-489-9141
Cell: 204-771-7475
Email: nisw.tuxedo@hotmail.com

West Central – West Central Women's Resource Centre

640 Ellice Ave
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3G 0A7
Telephone: 204-774-8975
Email: info@wcwrc.ca
Web: http://wcwrc.ca/programs/west-central-neighbourhood-immigrant-settlement-services/

William Whyte – William Whyte Residents Association

295 Pritchard Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R2W 2J2
Telephone: 204-582-0988
Email: info@wwra.ca
Web: http://williamwhyteresi-public.sharepoint.com/

Edmonton

ASSIST Community Services Centre (Head Office)

9649-105A Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
T5H 0M3
Telephone: 780-429-3111
Email: info@assistcsc.org
Web: http://assistcsc.org/en/

Catholic Social Services

10709-105 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
T5H 2X3
Telephone: 780-424-3545
Web: https://www.cssalberta.ca/Our-Ministries/Immigrant-Refugee-Support

Edmonton Immigrant Services Association
Suite 201, 10720-113 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
T5H 3H8
Telephone: 780-474-8445
Email: info@eisa-edmonton.org
Web: http://www.eisa-edmonton.org/

Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers (Main Office)
11713-82 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
T5B 2V9
Telephone: 780-424-7709
Email: info@emcn.ab.ca
Web: http://emcn.ab.ca/

Bredin Institute – Centre for Learning (Head Office)
10045-111 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
T5K 2M5
Telephone: 780-425-3730
Email: bredin@bredin.ca
Web: http://www.bredin.ca/immigrants-newcomers

Acces Emploi
202-8627 rue Marie-Anne-Gaboury (91 ST)
Edmonton, Alberta
T6C 3N1
Telephone: 780-490-6975
Email: ae@accesemploi.net
Website (French and English): http://www.accesemploi.net/

Centre d'accueil et d'établissement (CAE) du Nord de l'Alberta
108, 8627 rue Marie-Anne Gaboury (91 Street)
Edmonton, Alberta
T6C 3N1
Telephone: 780-669-6004
Email: info@lecae.ca
Web: http://www.lecae.ca/

Changing Together: A Centre for Immigrant Women
Mc Cauley School Building, 3rd Floor
9538-107 Avenue NW
T5H 0T7
Edmonton, Alberta

Telephone: 780-421-0175
Email: info@changingtogether.com
Web: www.changingtogether.com/

Edmonton Region Immigrant Employment Council (ERIEC)
Suite 304, 10209-97 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
T5J 0L6
Telephone: 780-497-8866
Email: info@eriec.ca
Web: www.eriec.ca

The Immigrant Access Fund
45, 9912-106 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
T5K 1C5
Phone: 780-756-3023
Email: info@iafcanada.org
Web: www.iafcanada.org

Millwoods Welcome Centre for Immigrants
7609–38 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
T6K 3L6
Telephone: 780-462-6924
Web: http://wciedmonton.ca/

Indo-Canadian Women's Association
9342-34 Avenue NW
Edmonton, Alberta
T6E 5X8
Telephone: 780-490-0477
Email: info@icwaedmonton.org
Web: http://www.icwaedmonton.org/

Multicultural Family Resource Society
9538-107 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
T5H 0T7
Phone: 780-938-1771
Email: info@mfrsedmonton.org
Web: http://www.mfrsedmonton.org/

Action for Healthy Communities
10578-113 St NW #200,
Edmonton, Alberta

T5H 3H5
Telephone: 780-944-4687
Email: communications@a4hc.ca
Web: http://a4hc.ca/programs/settlement/

Appendix D: Interview Schedules

Interview Questions – Immigrants

1. Provide an introduction to the study
2. Ask them if they would like to start off the meeting with any comments about their employment or settlement experiences in Canada
3. (Probe) Please tell me about your experiences finding employment in Canada?

1. Tell me about your experiences while settling in Canada. *Probes:* • What was your greatest concern? • Did you experience any challenges? • Who did you ask for help with these issues? • What positive experiences occurred during this process?
2. Please tell me about your employment search. *Probes:* • What challenges do/did you face? • Who did you ask for help with this issue? • What educational credentials do you have? • What job experience do you have? • Is your education/experience recognized? • When you found a job, what was it like getting used to a new work environment? • What positive experiences occurred during this process?
3. Are you aware of services that exist to help you find employment? *Probes:* • For what reasons have to gone to agencies for support? • What sorts of services have you utilized since you arrived in [Wpg/Edm]? • What was your experience with the agency? • Were the services helpful? • Did the agency understand sort of help you needed? • Did the agency ask you for any feedback regarding your experience with their services?
4. How could services in your community be improved?
5. What changes would make getting settled in [Wpg/Edm] easier?
6. What changes would make getting a job easier?
7. If you could say something to local service providers, what would it be?
8. If you could say something to the local government, what would it be?

9. If you could say something to local employers, what would it be?
10. Is there anything else you would like to say?

Demographics Questions for Immigrants (if not answered in previous questions)

1. What is your age?
2. What is your gender?
3. What is your race?
4. In what country were you born?
5. In what immigrant class did you enter Canada? (Skilled worker, Provincial Nominee, Canadian experience class, business class)
    a. Do you think your entry class has had an impact on your experiences in Canada?
6. When did you arrive in Canada?
7. Why did you choose Canada?
8. What is your highest level of education?
9. Where did you obtain these credentials?
10. What is your previous job experience?
11. What languages do you speak?

Do you have a specific nickname or pseudonym that you would like me to use for the project?

Interview Questions – Settlement Workers

[Provide an introduction to the project] **Q: Based on this very brief introduction, is there anything that you would like to say to begin our discussion today?**

Direct Questions

1. Introduction of the organization / program
2. What are some of the experiences of immigrants when they arrive in Canada?
3. How are newcomers doing when they're looking for jobs?
4. Do you think services like yours help to build newcomers' social network?
5. Do you think the government or employers prefer certain types of immigrants?
6. Are employers reluctant to hire immigrants?
7. Is credential recognition a problem?
8. What other sorts of challenges / barriers exist?
9. Can immigrants gain access to "meaningful" jobs that use their experiences and/or credentials?
10. Is empowerment (or confidence building) an issue for immigrants while they're searching for work?
11. What advantages do immigrants have when they're searching for work?
12. Are immigrants concentrated in particular industries or types of jobs?
13. Does your organization consult with the community?
14. Do you think it's better or worse in Alberta for immigrants in terms of accessing the labour market?
15. Can you share any success stories with me?
16. Anything else you would like to share?

Probes and Questions Related to Possibly Research Themes:

Types of Capital

- What is the experience of newcomers when they arrive in Canada?
- How are newcomers faring in the local labour market?
- Do you think settlement services help to build newcomers social networks?
-

If/When Racism Comes Up (Critical Race Theory)

- Do you think that there are certain types of immigrants that are preferred by the government? By employers?
- Are employers reluctant to hire immigrants? Why or why not?
- Do you think credential recognition remains a significant barrier? Why or why not?
- Does your organization have the ability to help non-professional immigrant groups? Why or why not? (This links to neoliberalism)
-

Labour Market Segmentation (Link from discussion about barriers)

- Do you think there are different spheres of the labour market? If yes, what does this look like?
- Are newcomers concentrated in particular jobs?
- Can they access the best jobs in AB/MB? What if they obtain Canadian credentials?
-

Empowerment (This links to the empowerment literature, but also to neoliberalism)

- Does empowerment play a role in service provision? If yes, in what ways?
    - Probe: Individual empowerment or the empowerment of the community?
- Does community consultation occur? Why or why not? How?
-

Ethnospecificity

- Does it help that your agency does/does not focus upon a specific racial or ethnic group? Why or why not?
    - Probe: What are the pros/cons of ethno-specific service provision?
    -

Neoliberalism

- We live in an era of fiscal austerity, does your organization experience this pressure? If so, how? How do you cope with this?
- Do your funders demand a lot of reporting? Research?
- Do you feel that your organization has autonomy in terms of program development? (Directors only?)
- Does your organization collaborate with other agencies in the city? Cross-provincially? Why or why not?
    - Probe: Is this effective?
- Does your organization focus specialize in one area?
    - Probe: is there any overlapping of services available for immigrants in the city?
    - Probe: Are there any gaps in services in Edm/Wpg? (policy suggestions)
    -

Final Questions

- What, if any, is a primary challenge that your organization faces?
- Can you think of a major success story of the organization that you could share with me?
- Is there anything specific about Alberta/Manitoba and the local economy that plays a role for your organization?
    - Probe: for immigrants searching for employment?
- Is there anything else you would like to discuss?
- Would you allow me to post a flyer in your organization to recruit newcomer participants for interviews and focus groups?
- Would you be able to help me connect with adult immigrants searching for work in Edmonton/Winnipeg for face-to-face interviews and focus groups?
-

Would you be able to help me find or provide space where I could conduct focus groups with immigrants in Edmonton/Winnipeg?

Appendix E: Other Recruitment and Interview Documents

Jasmine Thomas
Department of Sociology
5-21 HM Tory Building
University of Alberta
Edmonton, Alberta
Canada T6G 2H4

[Date]

Dear [**Recipient Name**]:

I am writing to express my interest in your organization and the important work you do with newcomer communities in **[Winnipeg/Edmonton].** I am currently working on a research project that examines immigrant-serving organizations in the city. This work is significant because there is not a considerable amount of research examining immigrant integration in smaller Canadian cities.

I am hoping to interview you in your capacity as **[executive director/employment advisor]** of **[AGENCY NAME]**. I anticipate that an interview would take about one hour. I have also included a consent form for the project that provides additional information. This study has been approved by the Department of Sociology at the University of Alberta, and the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board (REB).

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions you might have by phone (1-780-999-1390) or by email (jthomas@ualberta.ca). Dr. Harvey Krahn of the Department of Sociology at the University of Alberta is supervising my research. He can be contacted at hkrahn@ualberta.ca if you have any questions or concerns.

It is important to include the perspective of your organization in this project. I will follow-up this letter with a telephone call within a week or two. I do hope that you will be able to participate in my study.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Jasmine Thomas
PhD Candidate
University of Alberta
Email: jthomas@ualberta.ca
Phone: 1-780-999-1390

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

PARTICIPANTS REQUIRED FOR A RESEARCH STUDY

We are conducting a study about settlement services and employment experiences of immigrants in **[Winnipeg/Edmonton]**. This information will be useful to help us design better programs to assist newcomers in finding employment. The information gathered will be compared with similar groups in **[Winnipeg/Edmonton]**.

I am looking for immigrants between the ages of 18 and 45 years old, who migrated to Canada in a skilled worker category.

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to attend a face-to-face interview with, Jasmine Thomas, the principal investigator and PhD Candidate in Sociology at the University of Alberta. It will take about an hour to an hour and half and will be audio-taped. You will be asked questions about your interactions with settlement agencies, and your employment experiences. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to sign a consent form that will be provided at the meeting. You will receive $20 for your time and as thanks for your help with my research. All the information you provide is anonymous and confidential.

If you are interested, please contact before **December 15, 2013**:

Jasmine Thomas
jthomas@ualberta.ca
204.218.7068

For any further concerns or questions, please feel free to contact my supervisor, Dr. Harvey Krahn at the sociology department, University of Alberta. (Tel: 780.492.0472 Email: harvey.krahn@ualberta.ca)

NEWCOMER SETTLEMENT SERVICES IN MID-SIZED CANADIAN CITIES

Information and Consent Form

A. Purpose and Background

Provincial governments increasingly develop strategies to attract immigrants away from the major immigration destination cities of Canada (Such as Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver) to settle in mid-sized cities. Alberta and Manitoba plan to increase immigration to cities like Winnipeg and Edmonton. Unfortunately, some immigrants experience difficulties during their settlement process, and one of the most significant challenges relates to obtaining meaningful career-related employment.

As a representative of a settlement or community organization that assists newcomers during their settlement process and employment search, I invite you to participate in my study examining the labour market experience of immigrants in Edmonton and Winnipeg.

This interview is a component of my PhD dissertation project with the Department of Sociology at the University of Alberta.

Participation in this research is strictly voluntary. You may choose not to answer any questions or discontinue the study at any time with no penalty.

B. Procedures

This face-to-face interview will take approximately 1 hour, and I request your permission to audio record our discussion. During this interview, I will ask questions about how your organization assists newcomers during their employment search and broader settlement experience. I am also curious about the types of supports you offer in your agency.

Following the interview, I will consult you through email to provide transcripts in order to ensure that your responses clearly reflect your viewpoints. I ask your permission to contact you again in the coming months for clarification purposes. This interview is anonymous, although I acknowledge that individuals familiar with immigrant-supporting agencies in your community may recognize your agency in my PhD dissertation even if I do not name it. To protect your personal privacy, information collected will be securely stored at the University of Alberta.

C. Consent

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood the information regarding participation in this research project. In no way does this waive your legal rights and you are free to withdraw at any time, and you may refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit without prejudice or consequence. Feel free to ask questions or for clarification at any point during the interview.

If you have any concerns about the project itself, I welcome you to contact me by phone (204.218.7068) or through email (jthomas@ualberta.ca). You may also contact my supervisor Dr. Harvey Krahn at 780-492-0472 or harvey.krahn@ualberta.ca for more information.

The University of Alberta Research Ethics Office approved this research project. If you have any concerns that cannot be addressed by my supervisor or me, you may contact the REO at 780-492-0459 or through email at reoffice@ualberta.ca.

I _____ consent to participate in this research project, and that I have read and understood the above information.

_____	_____	_____
Interviewee's Name	Interviewee's Signature	Date

Please initial to give permission to be contacted within the next month to clarify any issues from the interview. _____

Please initial to consent to having this interview audio-recorded _____

Signature of Researcher _____ Date _____

NEWCOMER SETTLEMENT SERVICES IN MID-SIZED CANADIAN CITIES

Information and Consent Form

Part A: Information

Investigator
Jasmine Thomas, PhD Candidate, Department of Sociology, University of Alberta

Background
Alberta and Manitoba hope to increase immigration to cities like Winnipeg and Edmonton. Immigrants sometimes have trouble finding jobs once they arrive. Services can help immigrants find meaningful employment.

Purpose
This interview is a part of my PhD project with the University of Alberta.

In this research, I want to learn about your experiences searching for work. I also want to talk to you about your work history, and hear about if and how you have accessed services since arriving in the country. This study will help me to understand your process of searching for a career, if and how you access services in the city, and how you feel about Canada.

Procedures
This interview will take about 1 hour, and I ask if I may audio record our talk. I will ask questions about how you search for work and if you have used services. I will also ask about what challenges and advantages you have looking for work as an immigrant to Canada.

This interview is anonymous and to protect your privacy, information collected will be stored securely on my encrypted hard drive.

Benefits
I will provide you with twenty-dollars to thank you for participating and to help with expenses. This project may help the government to provide more services for immigrants.

Risks
There is no risk for this interview, but you will talk about how you found work in Canada. If you feel stressed out about your work experiences please let me know so I can provide you with contacts that may be able to help you.

Confidentiality
To protect your privacy I will not keep any contact or personal information. Your interview and consent form will be stored securely where only I have access. The study data is anonymous.

Freedom to Withdraw
Participation in this research is strictly voluntary. You may choose not to answer any questions or stop the study at any time with no penalty.

If you decline to continue or you wish to withdraw from the study, your information will be removed from the study upon your request

Additional Contacts
If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a participant, or how this study is being conducted, you may contact the Research Ethics Office at 780-492-2615. This office has no affiliation with the study investigators.

Part B: Consent

Your signature on this form means that you have understood the information for taking part in this project. You are free to stop the interview at any time, and you may decide not to answer any questions. Feel free to ask questions at any point during the interview.

If you have any concerns about the project itself, I welcome you to contact me by phone (780-999-1390) or through email (jthomas@ualberta.ca). You may also contact my supervisor Dr. Harvey Krahn at 780-492-0472 or harvey.krahn@ualberta.ca for more information.

I _____ consent to participate in this research project, and that I have read and understood the above information.

_____	_____	_____
Interviewee's Name	Interviewee's Signature	Date

Please initial to consent to having this interview audio-recorded _____

Signature of Researcher _____ Date _____

Receipt

I, _____, have participated in an interview for the project "Newcomer Settlement Services in Mid-Sized Canadian Cities". In return, I have received $20 as an honorarium for my time.

Participant Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher Signature: _____ Date: _____