The Construction of the Skilled and Healthy Immigrant

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to explore how skilled racialized immigrants (SRIs) make sense of their well-being when they immigrate to Canada under the Federal Skilled Workers Program (FSWP). To fulfill this purpose, I used an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to conduct 12 qualitative semi-structured interviews with individuals who self-identified as skilled racialized immigrants. IPA is a useful research method to explore the interpretations and meanings that participants give to the phenomena of well-being. IPA fits with my epistemological and ontological perspective that skilled racialized immigrants are the true experts of their lives. Since knowledge is socially constructed, governed by power relations, and contextually bound, a decolonizing theoretical orientation is well suited to explore this topic area. The findings reveal that the participants are forced to start from scratch in Canada, since they struggled to have their credentials recognized here. An intersectional lens is particularly useful for this study, as it uncovers the different experiences of the participants. The participants do not perceive themselves as passive victims of intersectional oppression, colonial racism, and othering practices. Rather, they are active agents of social change, as they disrupt and resist the oppression they encounter in society. Furthermore, the participants were critical of the FSWP, since for most their dream of working in their field in Canada turned out to be a nightmare. The thesis findings contribute to the field of mental health, immigration, and employment, for there is a scarcity of literature that discusses the impact of social and structural determinants of health on skilled racialized immigrants in Canada. The thesis concludes with recommendations and implications for social work education, practice, and policy.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

While there is already extensive literature on the health of immigrants in Canada, there is a scarcity of scholarship on how skilled racialized immigrants made sense of their mental health and well-being when they immigrated to Canada under the Federal Skilled Workers Program (FSWP). This thesis seeks to build on previous research on immigration, employment, and mental health by exploring how skilled racialized immigrants made sense of their well-being when they immigrated to Canada under the FSWP. How does workplace discrimination, intersectional oppression, and othering practices impact the well-being of skilled racialized immigrants and their families? Considering that skilled racialized immigrants have unique lived experiences when they arrived in Canada, it is important to explore how they made sense of their well-being in the context of structural and systemic oppression.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to explore how skilled racialized immigrants (SRIs) made sense of their well-being when they immigrated to Canada under the Federal Skilled Workers Program (FSWP). To fulfill this purpose, I used an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to conduct 12 qualitative semi-structured interviews with individuals who self-identified as skilled racialized immigrants. I have selected IPA, as it provided a useful research method to explore the interpretations and meanings that participants give to the various phenomena contributing to well-being. In addition, IPA fits with my epistemological and ontological perspective and the conceptual framework of the study.

This study used a phenomenological approach, guided by a post-colonial feminist and intersectional lens. My epistemological and ontological perspective is that skilled racialized immigrants are the true experts of their lives, as knowledge is socially constructed, governed by power relations, and contextually bound. Thus, I adopted a critical social science paradigm,

since the purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore two research questions:

1) How do skilled racialized immigrants (SRIs) who immigrated and work in Canada under the Federal Skilled Workers Program (FSWP) make sense of wellbeing?
2) How do SRIs perceive the influence of social structures (i.e., employment settings) in Canada on their well-being?

This study contributed to research on immigration, employment, and mental health. While there has been some research on the experiences of skilled foreign workers in Canada (e.g. Boyd & Grieco, 2003; Fleras, 2014; Hou, Lu, & Schimmele, 2020; Picot, Hou, & Coulombe, 2008; Simmons, 2010), there is little research in the literature that explored how skilled racialized immigrants experienced and understood well-being when they were told their skills and knowledge were not acceptable for successful entry into the Canadian labor market. In addition, this research presents a counter-narrative to mainstream notions of well-being. It critically explores how the concept of well-being goes well beyond a fodcus on the individual and a bio-medical framework. The participants in this study interpretated well-being as situated within the social and structural systems that create health and life challenges for skilled racialized immigrants. These structures were associated with the unfair working conditions and the policies and practices of a neoliberal capitalistic society that treat immigrant workers as incompetent and illegitimate knowers. This research also fills a gap in the research on the lives of skilled immigrants, by using a post-colonial feminist approach to explore skilled racialized immigrants' perceptions and interpretations of well-being based on their own experiences.

While the term 'well-being' is generally used in relation to an individual's state of being healthy, for this study well-being relates to both individual and collective efforts and experiences. Meaning, individuals who were interviewed for this study had some control of how they interpreted and made sense of their environments. However, their overall wellness was

contextually bound, and impacted by the political, social, and economic environments that shaped their experience.

In addition, it is critical to use gendered analysis when exploring the experiences of skilled racialized immigrants, as professional immigrant women experienced discrimination in patriarchal structures that treated their knowledge and skills as less valuable (Premji et al., 2014). By gaining a deeper understanding of the participants' understanding of well-being, social workers will be better equipped to contextualize skilled racialized immigrants' experiences and provide a trauma-informed lens to their practice.

Study Rationale and Researcher's Position

My interest in studying the well-being of skilled racialized immigrants who immigrated to Canada under the FSWP is rooted in my family's experiences. During the Iran-Iraq war in the early 1980s, my family immigrated to Canada and settled in Vancouver. I was young at the time, but I recalled significant changes in my family. Similar to the experiences of many highly educated and skilled racialized immigrants, employers in Canada did not recognize my parents' foreign education credentials. Due to the precarious position that our family was in, my father worked abroad for most of my life to support our family. My mother was in the challenging position of raising two young sons in Vancouver while working full-time as a secretary. Therefore, this issue is both professional and personal, both deeply rooted in principles of social justice.

My family's experiences of immigrating to Canada have made me reflect on my social locations as a social worker, educator, and scholar. These experiences make me more cognizant of the struggles and stories of resiliency of racialized immigrants. As a result, I am a stronger advocate for racialized immigrants who experienced oppression and discrimination within social structures. This thesis was an attempt to help uncover the oppressive structures in the immigration and labour markets, and to help transform them.

This study was a social justice project that sought to uncover the complexities of being a skilled racialized immigrant coming to Canada under the FSWP. How does this experience influence racialized immigrants' understanding of well-being? How does it affect their identity and sense of purpose? How does it influence family relations and broader society? What can social workers do to help transform and challenge oppressive social structures that discriminate against racialized immigrants? This thesis seeks to build on previous research on this topic area to help address these complex questions.

Immigration and the Federal Skilled Worker Program (FSWP)

The total population of immigrants in Canada is approximately 21.9% (Statistics Canada, 2018), with about 250,000 immigrants making Canada their home each year (CIC, 2016). Most reside in urban areas in Canada (i.e., Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver) (Statistics Canada, 2018). In the City of Toronto, immigrants represented 51.2% of the total population (Toronto.ca, 2020). Between the period of 2011 and 2016, 350,895 immigrants came to Canada under the economic category (Statistics Canada, 2018). The economic category has various immigration programs that included the Federal Skilled Workers Program (CIC, 2020). In 2017, 22,550 skilled worker immigrants immigrated to Canada under the Federal Skilled Workers Program (FSWP) (CIC, 2018). Canada has several distinct immigration programs to which people can apply (e.g., economic immigration programs).

While there was no shortage of research on immigration and employment in Canada (e.g., Reitz et al., 2014; Rezazadeh & Hoover, 2018; Wilkinson et al., 2016), very little is known about the well-being of immigrants who worked in Canada under the FSWP. To build on the existing research on immigration and employment, this section aimed to provide a brief historical context of immigration in Canada, the FSWP, and the political and economic questions associated with the program.

Throughout Canada's history, immigration policy has endorsed racist, gendered, and class-based ideologies as it recruited immigrants to take on "less desirable" jobs (Neiterman, Salmonsson & Bourgeault, 2015). Abu-Laban (1997) noted that immigration policy in Canada has always been hierarchical based on race, gender, and class. Historically, immigration policy and practice in Canada has socially excluded certain immigrants from fully participating in Canadian society due to their birthplaces (i.e., Chinese Head Tax in BC 1885, 1930's antiSemitism and German Jewish refugees, internment Japanese Canadians in concentration camps in WW2, etc.) (Henry & Tator, 2006).

Until the changes to Canadian immigration policy in 1967, the Immigration Act was explicitly racist and based on a "nationality" preference system (Abu-Laban, 1998). However, in the 1960s, the points system came into effect. Under the points systems, applicants received points based on their education, employment history, abilities, age, and knowledge of English and/or French.

Anwar (2014) questioned the reliability and validity of the points system by pointing out "its inability to assess intangible qualities such as social adaptability or emotional intelligence", and questions how accurately the points system reflected the hiring needs and practices of the Canadian economy (p. 176).

While the points system was not explicitly racist, it had biases in terms of class, race, gender, age, and abilities (Abu-Laban, 1998). As Canada continued to face a shortage of professional and technical labor, the government promoted an immigration policy to allow for the entry of formally educated and skilled immigrants from certain countries. The points system placed emphasis on the education, savings, and qualifications of immigrants and helped to set the stage for the FSWP, but similar problems associated with the points system remained. For example, the points system was sexist, ageist and class-based (Anwar, 2014; Boyd and Grieco

2003); since points were rewarded to younger immigrants who would demonstrate sufficient funds, education, and official language skills to migrate to Canada (CIC, 2018).

With the introduction of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA) in 2002, the Federal Skilled Worker Program developed as a part of Canada's economic strategy to recruit "skilled workers" in response to a competitive global market (CIC, 2010). The program addressed labor shortages by recruiting the most educated and skilled workers from abroad (Citizenship and Immigration Canada [CIC], 2016). Currently, immigration categories under which applicants would apply include: i) Skilled worker (FSWP); ii) Quebec-selected skilled workers (FSWP); iii) Start-up visa; iv) Immigrant Investors; v) Self-employed; vi) Family sponsorship; vii) Provincial nominees; viii) Atlantic Immigration Pilot; ix) Caregivers; and x) Refugees (CIC, 2018). Determining one's eligibility to apply through the FSWP is ever changing and complicated. Applicants must apply online through a system called "Express Entry" (CIC, 2018). In addition, Quebec has its own criteria for FSWP and has almost full discretion over the program (CIC 2018). All applicants must meet federally mandated health and security requirements (CIC, 2020). Quebec has a special agreement on immigration with the Federal government and has its own rules for choosing immigrants who will immigrate to Canada under the Federal Skilled Workers Program (FSWP) (CIC, 2020).

The review process for individuals applying under the FSWP involved several steps. An applicant must satisfy one of the following three conditions:

(a) Have an offer of arranged employment

(b) Have been living in Canada for one year as a temporary foreign worker or an International student, or

(c) Have at least one year of full-time work experience in one of the National Occupation Categories listed in the Express Entry system (CIC, 2018).

If an applicant, meets one of these minimum requirements, suitability is assessed (CIC, 2018). The FSWP assessed applicants based on a points system that included education, official languages, age, work experience, adaptability, and potential employment in Canada (CIC, 2018). Applicants were required to show that they have sufficient funds for themselves and their family before they immigrated to Canada, and they were required to undergo a medical screening (CIC, 2018). Also, applicants were required to complete an Educational Credential Assessment (ECA) to verify whether their foreign degree, diploma, certificate (or other proof of credentials) was valid and equal to a Canadian one (CIC, 2018). Bauder (2003) highlighted that "[m]any immigrants feel that they have been tricked into this situation by Canadian immigration policies and labour-market regulations that do not disclose to immigrants prior to their arrival in Canada that their human capital will be devaluated" (p. 713).

Over the past decade, the FSWP has undergone several changes, which included Bill C- 50 and the current Express Entry system. In 2008, the Conservative government passed the controversial Bill C-50 (Cohen, 2012; Crompton, 2008). Bill C-50 gives the Federal government the authority to eliminate the pre-2008 backlog of FSWP applications. Also, the FSWP was further reformed with the introduction of Ministerial Instructions giving the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration the power to change the selection criteria at any time to meet the economic demands of Canada (Jantzen, 2015).

In addition to Bill C-50, the Conservative government introduced the Express Entry immigration system in January 2015 (Canadian Citizenship & Immigration Resource Centre, 2016). This new online Express Entry system gives FSWP applicants 347 eligible occupations to choose from, and the highest scored applicants have the best chance to be accepted (Canadian Citizenship & Immigration Resource Centre, 2016). However, the new online Express Entry system of FSWP has inherited similar biases associated with the points system. For example, FSWP excludes older applicants, as the maximum points are for individuals between the ages of

21 and 49 (Anwar, 2014). The ageist assumption behind the FSWP is that older applicants were more of a burden when it comes to social welfare in Canada (Anwar, 2014). Furthermore, FSWP was ablest, as applicants were required to take a medical examination (CIC, 2018) that could deem them ineligible if they have a medical condition that is "serious", and therefore would presumably "burden" taxpayers with higher health care costs. Aiken (2007) noted that immigration officers have the discretion to deny applicants based on "personal suitability", which raises the question whether there are personal biases (i.e., racial biases) that influenced the assessment process.

In addition to the biases associated with the points system, Canadian studies illustrated that economic immigration programs assumed that immigrants with financial and social capital contributed to the local economy by bringing resources that would boost the economy and make Canada globally competitive (Chen, Smith, & Mustard, 2010; Guo, 2009; Mojab, 1999). However, there are structural challenges such as racism, sexism, ageism, ableism, and classbased inequities that made the migration and settlement journey challenging for skilled racialized immigrants who come under the FSWP. This makes it important to know what policy changes have been in place to address the inequities that skilled racialized immigrants experienced under the FSWP.

As an example of the policy changes associated with skilled racialized immigrants in Canada, Augustine (2015) noted that in 2006, Ontario passed fair access legislation to address the challenges that skilled professional immigrants experienced in Ontario. The Fair Access to Regulated Professions and Compulsory Trades Act (FARPACTA) made it mandatory for "regulators to ensure that their registration practices are transparent, objective, impartial, and fair." (p. 14). Augustine reported the following:

> Immigrant professionals face significant challenges meeting academic and experience requirements to be licensed in Canada. In some cases, these challenges are related to crossjurisdictional differences in scope of practice and associated requirements. In others, the difficulty lies in demonstrating equivalent knowledge and skills. (p. 22)

Another example of the policy changes associated with skilled racialized immigrants happened in 2013, when the Ontario Human Rights Commission ruled that it is a form of discrimination if employers prioritize Canadian work experience over foreign work experience (CBC, 2016). This was the first legal decision under the Ontario Human Rights Code to acknowledge that prioritizing Canadian work experience over foreign work credentials was discriminatory. However, there was evidence in the literature to suggest that discriminatory practices in employment placed skilled racialized immigrants at a disadvantage when it comes to having their skills and qualifications recognized in Canada (Oreopoulos, 2011).

Along with not having foreign-trained credentials recognized in Canada, Reitz et al. (2014) pointed out that "low value of immigrant skills leads immigrants to be paid less than equally qualified native-born Canadians even when they work in occupations at the same skill level" (p. 19). Reitz et al. (2014)'s findings confirm the persistence of the employment hardships faced by skilled workers.[1] In a study assessing international adult literacy, Bonikowska, Green, and Riddell (2008) concluded that the poorer results of immigrants' literacy tests explained their lower earnings compared to Canadian-born citizens. However, Reitz et al. (2014) argued that literacy test results are culturally and racially biased and do not provide a full account as to why immigrants experienced employment hardships. Rather, employers and professional bodies perpetuate systematic racism when they treated foreign credentials as being less valuable (Reitz et al., 2014). Despite the policy changes surrounding credential assessments and fairer access to employment (Augustine, 2015; Reitz et al., 2014), there is little research that explores the wellbeing of skilled racialized immigrants in Canada who experience employment hardships. A theme in the literature on the FSWP was that immigration policy and employment

[1] For further reading on the employment hardships faced by skilled workers, see the works of Boyd & Grieco, 2003; Fleras, 2014; Hou, Lu, & Schimmele, 2020; Picot, Hou, & Coulombe, 2008; Simmons, 2010.

practices were associated with one another, since immigrants went through an assessment process to determine economic and social "adaptability" (CIC, 2018). However, once skilled racialized immigrants settled in Canada, they experienced workplace discrimination and financial hardships (Premji et al., 2014). Qualitative studies on immigration and employment demonstrated barriers to employment for SRIs who arrived in Canada under the FSWP (Bauder, 2003; Dean & Wilson, 20010; Premji et al., 2014; Rezazadeh & Hoover, 2018; Wilkinson et al., 2016). Similarly, quantitative studies on immigration and employment in Canada demonstrated that skilled racialized immigrants experienced stress related to the non-recognition of their credentials and as a result their health declined (Chen, Smith, & Mustard, 2010; Hyman & Jackson, 2010). Currently, there is limited research on the well-being of immigrants admitted through the FSWP. It is within this context that the present study emerged.

This thesis consists of seven chapters. Chapter 1 sets the stage for readers and introduces the topic. Chapter 2 reviews existing scholarship and provides a detailed overview of why PostColonial Feminism (PCF) aligns well with an intersectional lens to address the research questions in this study. Chapter 3 discusses the methodology. The methodology chapter explains why Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was a helpful research design to study how participants made sense of their experiences in immigrating to Canada under the Federal Skilled Workers Program (FSWP). Chapter's 4 and 5 analyze the study's findings, while Chapter 6 presents a discussion of those findings. The thesis concludes in Chapter 7 by examining the study's implications for social work and providing recommendations for future research and practice.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews the literature on the areas of employment, immigration, and mental health that related to colonization, othering, intersectional oppression, and the Healthy Immigrant Effect. The literature was examined in the context of changes to immigration policy since 1967 (i.e., the points system) and the emergence of neo-liberal ideologies since the 1980s. Prior to reviewing the literature, I outlined the key terms used in this thesis and identified the four themes that emerged. I then organized the rest of this chapter by using these four themes, as follows:

(i) decolonizing immigration, employment, and well-being

(ii) othering and representations

(iii) the well-being of skilled racialized immigrants

(iv) theoretical orientation

Key Terms

Skilled racialized immigrants (SRIs) have a unique understanding of mental health and/or well-being, racialization, and the implications of "othering". As discussed in the previous chapters of this thesis, "mental health" and "well-being" were concepts, not predetermined phenomena. They were socially constructed concepts shaped by capitalism, patriarchy, racism, colonialism, ableism, and ageism. However, it was important to understand how these concepts were defined, as it provided clarity concerning how they were conceptualized and operationalized in the study.

Mental Health and Well-Being

The World Health Organization (WHO) defined mental health as "a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community" (WHO, 2016). The WHO's definition of well-being is an example of dominant

power structures that used a bio-psycho-social model to define mental health. This study is critical of bio-psycho-social models, since they primarily look at association between biology, psychology, and socio-environmental factors when assessing mental health. While this study acknowledges the importance to examine how bio-psycho-social factors influence mental health and well-being, the approach falls short in considering the structural inequities that place certain populations at risk for health concerns.

I argue in this study that mental health and well-being are not separate units of analysis from the social, economic, historical, and political conditions that shape relations. Being emotionally, psychologically, financially, physically, and spiritually well does not necessarily mean one is absent from an "illness". Rather, being "healthy" and "well" means that an individual is emotionally, socially, spiritually, physically, and economically secure and connected (Dossa, 2002; Premji et al., 2014). The concepts of well-being and mental health influence one another, and by social structures and economic conditions. In addition, they are situated within the context of unequal power relations (i.e., skilled racialized immigrants and Canadian employers), epistemic violence, and how these relationships are associated with colonization, Eurocentrism, neoliberalism, capitalism, globalization, and imperialism (Martinez and FleckHenderson, 2014). In order to avoid individualizing mental health and well-being, which fails to reach the root causes, I took a critical social constructivist lens to well-being and mental health that took into account the political and economic systems of capitalism and colonialism, which constructed race, gender, class, age, and abilities.

A social constructivist understanding of mental health and well-being helped to reveal how the participants understood and made sense of well-being. The participants in this study were born and raised in countries other than Canada. They had various understandings of what made them "well". Galderisi and colleagues (2015) illustrated that the term mental health was defined and controlled by cultures that have power over its meaning.

It is critical to unpack the meaning of mental health and well-being since the terms are rooted in a medicalized understanding of health. Also, the terms are dominated by Eurocentric conceptualizations of what it means to be "well'. This study critically explores the various meanings of mental health and well-being since there is no universal truth as to what makes one "well'. In addition, the concepts of mental health and well-being were further explored in this thesis.

Racialization

To understand the meaning of the term racialization, we must first explore terms such as race and racism. Lopes and Thomas (2006) defined race as "a social category used to classify humankind by physical features such as skin color, hair texture, facial characteristics, or stature" (p. 269). They illustrated that the concepts of race and racism harmed racialized communities, since they "overtly and covertly attribute value and normality to White people and "Whiteness" and…devalue, stereotype, and label racialized communities as the other, different, less than, or render them invisible" (p. 270). Another key aspect for understanding the terms is captured by mixed methods research with Black Canadians in Toronto, Calgary, and Halifax. James, Este, Bernard, Benjamin, Lloyd, and Turner (2010) argued, "There are probably as many definitions and descriptions of racism as there are people who experience the phenomenon" (p. 64). Considering the theoretical orientation of this study (i.e., Post-Colonial Feminism and intersectionality), I found the concept of "colonial racism" to be useful for understanding how the well-being of skilled racialized immigrants is associated with capitalism, colonialism, racialization, patriarchy, and discrimination of skilled racialized immigrants.

The existing literature illustrated discrimination based on someone's name, accent, language,skin color, or place of birth were examples of "colonial racism". In particular, I found Franz Fanon's (2008) conceptualization of colonial racism useful for deeper appreciation of the participants' collective traumas when they experienced the effects of colonization, capitalism,

and racism in society. For example, skilled racialized immigrants experienced colonial racism when their knowledge and skills were invisible in certain employment settings due to their birthplace, name, and appearance. It can also include when employers do not make the best use of racialized immigrant's skills or restrict their mobility via promotion. This form of social exclusion had serious effects on the mental health and well-being of the skilled racialized immigrants, since social structures and systems in the West are controlled by the social construction of "Whiteness", patriarchy, and capitalism. Thus, it is important to discuss how the term racialized is understood in literature.

In *Race, Racialization, and Antiracism in Canada and Beyond*, Johnson and Enomoto (2007) illustrated that racialization is associated with:

> …historical acts through which people's bodies are inscribed with symbolic meaning and, on that basis, people are assigned social places…racism is a set of contingent processes through which the meanings and experiences of the racialized are not only constantly reinscribed and reinforced, but also transformed…it is both the cause and result of racialization. (p. 6)

In addition to Johnson and Enomoto's (2007) understanding of racialization, I used their definition to illustrate the historical acts by employment and immigration systems that excluded skilled racialized immigrants from having their credentials recognized due to colonization, capitalism, privileges, and various oppressions. This understanding of racialization provided a good grounding for the conceptualization of othering of racialized bodies and spaces.

Othering

Johnson, Bottorff, Browne, Grewal, Hilton, and Clarke (2004) conducted focus group sessions and interviews with health care professionals who were "othered", noting that "othering is a process that identifies those that are thought to be different from oneself or the mainstream and it can reinforce and reproduce positions of domination and subordination" (p. 253). Moreover, post-colonial feminist theorist Sara Ahmed (2000) argued that "it is the recognition of others that is central to the constitution of the subject…the subject is not, then, simply

differentiated from the other but comes into being by learning how to differentiate between others" (p. 22). Ahmed's (2000) conceptualization of the "other" is critical to this study, as Canadian employers imposed the label of the "other" onto skilled racialized immigrants that they considered less worthy, inferior, and less valuable. It also speaks to the inherent paradox of the Canadian Federal Skilled Workers Program. Many skilled racialized immigrants are successful applicants for their skills and then are de-skilled in the employment sector.

Skilled racialized immigrants are treated as the inferior "other", as there are negative representations of immigrants from "third-world countries" where skills and knowledge are deemed inferior due to epistemic violence. Epistemic violence is rooted in the daily microaggressions, macro conditions, and practices that deem skilled racialized immigrant as illegitimate knowers. The practice of epistemic violence erased skilled racialized immigrants' strengths, and it is a colonialist/racist practice of dehumanization (Liegghio, 2013; Spivak, 1994). As discussed later in this chapter, epistemic violence is the practice of socially constructing the "third-world other" by making them believe that their professional identities from their birth countries are not worthy or acceptable in Western society (Spivak, 1988). The practice of othering and epistemic violence helps to label racialized immigrants as less knowledgeable and skilled, as racist and colonialist discourses silence their existence in certain spaces.

Background

Since the 1980s, Canada and the rest of the world have embraced a neoliberal framework. Neoliberalism is an ideology and practice that promotes the movement and growth of capital, deregulation of the public sphere, and the reorganizing and shrinking of the public sector with the aim of hollowing out the social welfare state (Moreno, Shields, & Drolet, 2018; Pupo,

Glenday & Duffy, 2011). Neoliberalism perpetuates a racialized, gendered, and classbased practice and downloads the responsibility of social welfare from governments to individuals and families (Root, Gates-Gasse, Shields, & Bauder, 2014). Similarly, Harvey (2010) defined neoliberalism as:

> Theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve. (p. 2)

Under neoliberal capitalism, people are seen, first and foremost, as units of human capital, mostly valued only for their ability to be productive in the paid workforce. Under this regime, immigrants are seen as "untapped" human capital, and immigration policy is a tool for tapping into this reserve. The reality is that neoliberalism has helped to create a social and economic environment where immigrants are forced to take on jobs that Canadian-born workers did not want (Moreno, Shields, & Drolet, 2018). Immigration policy and employment practices are hotly debated topics in Canada. Neoliberal and neoconservative ideologies and practices have fueled the fear of skilled racialized immigrants taking jobs away from Canadian-born citizens. Many Canadians worry that their job security is contingent on how many immigrants are accepted into Canada. There is a myth that "immigrants will take our jobs". The racist narrative of "us vs. them" impacts how Canadian employers view skilled racialized immigrants as public fear contributes to discriminatory practices in the labor market. It contributes to skilled racialized immigrants taking on jobs that were unsafe, precarious, low-paid, and lack benefits and security. As an example of the structural and systemic inequities that skilled racialized immigrants experienced, Arat-Koc (1999) made it clear that, due to neoliberalism, skilled racialized immigrants experienced discrimination (i.e., racism, sexism, etc.) that limited their ability to gain- meaningful employment. Many of them were stuck in survival jobs and forced to compete in a labor market that did not value their knowledge, skills, and realities (Premji et al., 2014).

Similarly, Shields (2004) argued that this form of social exclusion explained the disproportionate number of skilled racialized immigrants who lived in poverty and worked in precarious employment. The neoliberal shifts in policy and practice left skilled racialized immigrants and their families with a minimal buffer to protect themselves when they were experiencing social inequalities and intersectional oppression.

Research on immigration policy illustrated several employment barriers for skilled immigrants who arrived in Canada under economic immigration programs. Some of these barriers included: the lack of recognition of foreign-trained credentials, inequities with assessment by provincial regulatory bodies, a lack of "Canadian" work experience, and intersectional forms of oppression in the workplace and society at large (Premji et al., 2014; Reitz, Curtis & Elrick, 2014; Shan, 2009; Wilkinson et al., 2016). Similarly, the report *A Fair Way to Go: Access to Ontario's Regulated Professions and the Need to Embrace Newcomers in the Global Economy* concluded that internationally trained professional immigrants experienced under-valuing of foreign credentials by licensing bodies; an over-focus on Canadian and academic experience; and the privileging of English-speaking Commonwealth countries over racialized countries (Office of Fairness Commissioner, 2013). Reitz, Curtis and Elrick (2014) illustrated that there were billions of dollars of earnings lost due to devaluing of foreign credentials and underutilization of the skills of Canada's immigrants.

Like many skilled racialized immigrant men (Banerjee & Phan, 2014), many skilled racialized immigrant women ended up in part-time work or jobs that were far less skilled than their qualifications and educational level (Chui, 2011). Canadian feminists illustrated that even highly educated professional immigrant women experienced various forms of inequity when they arrived in Canada as a result of intersectional forms of discrimination related to gender, race, and class (Das Gupta, Man, Mirchandani, & Ng, 2014; Man, 2004; Mirchandani et al., 2011; Premji et al., 2014; Rezazadeh & Hoover, 2018; Sangha, Slade, Mirchandani, Maitra, & Shan, H, 2012).

There was strong evidence in the literature to suggest that migration and post-migration stressors had an immense emotional cost on immigrants, and that skilled racialized immigrants, in particular, were vulnerable due to discrimination in employment and society at large (Reitz et al., 2014; Rezazadeh & Hoover, 2018; Wilkinson et al., 2016). All of this suggested the need to understand the complexities of the day-to-day experiences of skilled racialized immigrants through a decolonizing lens.

Decolonizing Immigration, Employment, and Well-Being

This section of the chapter argues that it is critical to move beyond analyses that makes the individual the unit of analysis. Rather, we need analysis of mental health and well-being that takes account of social, cultural, economic, historical, and political contexts. Dossa (2002) and Premji et al. (2014) assert that future research must examine the colonial dimensions of skilled racialized immigrants' mental health and well-being to create sustainable systemic changes. The colonial dimensions included othering practices, systemic discrimination, and negative representations of "third-world immigrants" (Dossa, 2002; Oreopoulos, 2011; Premji et al., 2014; Wilkinson et al., 2016). This study builds on previous research to address the hidden power inequities, intersectional oppressions, and colonial dimensions within social structures in Canada that impact SRIs' well-being.

Within the extensive literature (e.g., 2014; Reitz, Curtis & Elrick, 2014; Shan, 2009; Wilkinson et al., 2016) on the systemic barriers that skilled racialized immigrants experienced, the work by Dossa (2002) and Premji et al. (2014) stood out for several reasons. Their work provided a helpful decolonizing and intersectional theoretical framework to investigate the link between immigration, employment, and mental health. The critical decolonizing approach viewed skilled racialized immigrants as experts in naming how their well-being was affected by structural intersectional inequalities such as racism, sexism, classism, ageism, and ableism. Their work advanced a decolonizing/intersectional framework by moving beyond the biomedical approach to understand well-being through the social, economic, historical, geographical, and

political conditions that governed and shape people's experiences (e.g., immigration, employment, etc.). This approach is helpful to this thesis since one of the aims of this study is to reveal the hidden and unequal power structures that contribute to intersectional oppression and othering practices that marginalize immigrants in Canada.

Furthermore, their studies uncovered how skilled racialized immigrants sacrifice their careers for the betterment of their families in Canada. For example, many skilled racialized immigrants worked multiple jobs and volunteered in Canada (Dossa, 2002; Premji et al., 2014). Premji et al., (2014) applied a Post-Colonial Feminist and intersectional theoretical lens and demonstrated that it was colonialist and racist to treat racialized immigrants' skills as inferior due to birthplace, appearance, or name. This thesis builds on Pemji et al. (2014) and Dossa (2002) research to demonstrate that a decolonizing approach aligns well with a critical intersectional perspective as it helped to analyze individual experiences within the complexity of colonialism, racialization, patriarchy, ageism, ableism, and classist discourses.

There is research that takes a decolonizing approach to mental health and well-being. For example, Afuape and Hughes (2015) and Linklater (2015) interviewed Indigenous, racialized mental health professionals, and found that it is problematic to view well-being solely under a biomedical and illness lens. Reason being mental health and well-being need to be placed in the context of power relations, colonialism, capitalism, oppression, privileges, and sociopolitical structures. In addition, Kirmayer (2006) and Swartz (2012) argued that there was not a onesizefits-all approach to conceptualizing and operationalizing mental health and well-being. Rather, by applying a de-colonizing approach they found that it is important to consider the local knowledge of cultures when it comes to conceptualizing and operationalizing mental health and well-being (Kirmayer, 2006; Swartz, 2012). These studies indicated that a decolonizing approach provided a lens as to why the participants' skills and work experiences were deemed

inferior and helped to illustrate how the othering practices and negative representations had harmful effects on the well-being of skilled racialized immigrants.

Othering and Negative Representations

According to Dossa (2002) and Johnson, Bottorff, Browne, Grewal, Hilton, and Clarke (2004), othering is the process where one group treated another group as inferior through the practice of domination and subordination. The othering practice upholds the domination of White supremacy, since colonial racism has created negative representations of skilled racialized immigrants from "third world" nations. This definition fits well for this thesis, since othering is a colonialist and imperialist practice. For example, skilled racialized immigrants experience being othered when their knowledge and skills are considered the "other" because of their birthplace (i.e., "third world"), name, accent, and/or skin color and assessed as "not competent" (Dossa, 2002; Oreopoulos, 2011; Premji et al., 2014).

The othering process is directly tied to the negative representations of skilled racialized immigrants spread through public discourses (Dossa, 2002), since othering practices are rooted in colonialism, intersectional oppressions, and power relations. Franz Fanon (2008) illuminated that, "[t]o be 'othered' is to always feel in an uncomfortable position, to be on one's guard, to be prepared to be rejected and…unconsciously do everything that's needed to bring about the anticipated catastrophe" (p. 57). This was an important point, and studies demonstrated that the "othering" process and negative representations of racialized peoples were linked to collective trauma, alienation, colonial racism, and capitalism (Ahmed, 2000; Fanon, 2008). This thesis builds on previous research to demonstrate that othering and negative representations of skilled racialized immigrants is a colonialist practice, since their existence is erased in certain spaces due to epistemic violence.

As an example of the erasure of skilled racialized immigrants in employment structures,

Neiterman, Salmonsson and Bourgeault (2015) interviewed 67 Canadian immigrant physicians and 15 Swedish doctors to explore the othering and negative representation process that impacted the mental health of immigrant medical graduates (IMGs) who practice in Canada and Sweden. The authors noted that "professional identity" of the immigrant medical graduates were developed through the "constant comparison between the differences and similarities among 'us' – immigrant physicians, and 'them' – local doctors" (p. 773). Neiterman, et al. (2015) found that "one's ethnicity, gender, and professional status are intertwined with the experience of being seen as 'the Other'" (p. 773). Similarly, Oreopoulos (2011) sent out thousands of randomly manipulated resumes to online job postings in Toronto, uncovering systemic discrimination (in this case, no employer responses) across a variety of occupations towards visible minority applicants with "foreign-sounding" names (Oreopoulos, 2011). These studies demonstrated that the othering process and negative representations had negative consequences for skilled racialized immigrants in the workplace and was a form of colonialism, since it subordinated them in the labour market.

There was a growing body of research corroborating that the othering process and negative representations of "third-world" countries created barriers for skilled racialized immigrants who wanted to fully participate in Canadian society and gain access to employment that matched their credentials (Dossa, 2002; Oreopoulos, 2011; Premji et al., 2014; Wilkinson et al., 2016). This was an important finding, since previous research did not account for why skilled racialized immigrant professional identities were deemed inferior and "othered" by certain employers due to their ethnicity, gender, class position, and place of birth. This study addresses the gaps in previous research to discuss how the othering process and representations are associated with assumptions about age, abilities, and other social locations. The findings of these studies (Dossa, 2002; Oreopoulos, 2011; Premji et al., 2014; Wilkinson et al., 2016) provide an alternative lens compared to the findings of the pilot study by the federal government that found

there were no signs of bias against government job applicants with ‘ethnic sounding’ names (CBC, 2018).

Another example of the erasure of skilled racialized immigrants in employment structures was when Dossa (2002) used an ethnographic approach to examine how Iranian immigrant women preferred to use the language of emotional well-being to contextualize how they were being othered and represented in Canada due to their gender, race, nationality, religion, abilities, and class. The Iranian women discussed that emotional well-being was not based on a medicalized understanding of an individual’s mental health and disorder, but on the daily social interactions, power structures, and spaces where they worked and lived to stay “emotionally well” (Dossa, 2002). This is especially important, as the finding uncovered that the concept of well-being is relational, interactive, and rooted in power relations within socials structures. For example, Iranian women are socially constructed as the dangerous “other” in Canada, as there are negative representations of Islam and the Middle East. The social construction of the dangerous “third-world immigrant other” are rooted in Islamophobic, colonialist, imperialist, xenophobic, sexist, racist, and class-based assumptions and representations about racialized immigrants and runs the risk of creating a single story that treats them as invisible and inferior in employment settings.

Additional studies that found immigration and employment systems were gendered (Kim et al., 2014; Premji et al., 2014), racialized (Wilkinson et al., 2016), and class based (Das Gupta et al., 2014). A core theme in the literature on othering and negative representation was that social exclusion and discrimination affected the well-being of skilled racialized immigrants (Dossa, 2002; Premji et al., 2014). However, there was a paucity of research that examined how skilled racialized immigrants’ experiences were shaped by ageism, ableism, and the ability to access services and resources that make up the structural determinants of health. This study sought to fill that gap.

The field of mental health and well-being is increasingly moving past an individualizing framework of care that focuses solely on the biomedical model. Rather than viewing health disparities in terms of individuals, Indigenous scholars have long discussed the importance of viewing health from a holistic and collectivistic framework (Jardine & Lines, 2018). Therefore, it is critical that policy makers and social workers consider both the social determinants of health (i.e., access to good housing, income, education, food security, conditions of work, community conditions, etc.), and structural determinants of health (with respect to economics, politics, history, etc.) (Jardine & Lines, 2018). Future research, policy, and practice should critically explore how immigration, employment, and mental health systems challenge colonial racism and othering practices in their structures.

Research suggested that skilled racialized immigrants were discriminated against in employment due to intersectional forms of oppression, negative representations, and othering practices (Dossa, 2002; Oreopoulos, 2011; Premji et al., 2014; Wilkinson et al., 2016). Since the othering process and negative representations treat the foreign credentials of racialized immigrants as being inferior due to place of birth, it is critical to understand how they experience health struggles.

The Well-Being of SRIs

This study rejects mainstream approaches that treat mental health as a separate unit of analysis from the social structures that govern power relations in society. Rather, this study is a counternarrative to mainstream mental health approaches that reproduce epistemic violence by ignoring how unequal power relationships (i.e., racialized immigrants and Canadian employers) impact skilled racialized immigrants' well-being, and how these relationships are associated with discrimination, othering practices, and negative orientations of immigrants (i.e., "third-world immigrants"). Rather, mental health and well-being should be situated within the social, economic, political, historical, and power structures that govern immigrants' lives.

The literature on immigration, employment, and mental health illustrated that discrimination, social exclusion, and job insecurity acted as significant stressors and that underemployment had harmful effects on the well-being of racialized immigrants (Dean & Wilson, 2010; Premji et al., 2014; Rezazadeh & Hoover, 2018; Salami et al., 2017; Wilkinson et al., 2016). Skilled racialized immigrants come to Canada with an expectation that they will find a job in their trained field. They experienced high levels of stress when they find out that their skills and knowledge were not valued. Many of them experience discrimination in the labour market and end up in precarious and insecure forms of employment.

Being in a precarious and insecure employment position means not having social buffers, such as savings, health insurance, benefits, or a living wage, all of which typically protect workers (Jackson, 2010; Pupo, Glenday, & Duffy, 2011). An association between underemployment and its harmful effects on the mental health of immigrants was demonstrated by international studies (e.g., Rivera et al., 2016; Vives et al., 2011) and Canadian studies (e.g., Agyekum & Newbold, 2016; Dean & Wilson, 2010; Maio & Kemp, 2010; Rezazadeh & Hoover, 2018; Salami et al., 2017; Wilkinson et al., 2016). For example, Clarke, Lewchuk, Wolff, and King (2007) interviewed workers from a range of workplaces in Canada and introduce the concept of "employment strain" to explain increased stress levels and impacts on the health and well-being of workers. The characteristics of employment strain included "uncertainty associated with access to future employment; the effort associated with finding and keeping employment; and the support one obtains as the result of being employed" (Clarke et al., 2007, p. 312). Furthermore, George, Thomson, Chaze and Guruge (2015) discussed "acculturative stress" by noting that:

> Acculturative stress differs among immigrant groups based on ethnicity, immigration status, gender, and generational status. Immigrant mental health is impacted by their negative employment experiences in the settlement period and resultant economic hardships. Ethnic discrimination can also contribute to depression and psychological distress. It can also lead to barriers in the utilization of mental health services. (p. 13,632)

As highlighted above, financial stability, stress, and job security was a primary condition of well-being for many immigrants in Canada. However, it is incorrect to associate positive mental health outcomes with how well immigrants assimilate, when this narrative overlooks how othering and colonialist discourses render skilled racialized immigrants invisible in certain spaces. Skilled racialized immigrants understand what well-being means in the context of their immigration and employment. Thus, this study sought to build on previous research by listening to their perspectives and situate them within their structural conditions that discriminated against them and treat their knowledge as inferior.

There are countless studies that examine the structural conditions that devalued skilled racialized immigrants' credentials and knowledge. For example, international studies (Lane, Tribe, & Hui, 2010; Pernice, Trlin, Henderson, North, & Skinner, 2009; Rivera, Casal, & Currais, 2016), and Canadian studies (Esses et al., 2007; Grant & Nadin, 2007; Man, 2004; Mojab, 1999; Premji et al., 2014; Shan, 2009) found that racial and gender discrimination played a critical role in the devaluation of racialized immigrants' skills and education, which can lead to mental health struggles. Similarly, Agyekum and Newbold (2016) and Shishehgar and colleagues (2015) conducted interviews with skilled racialized immigrants in Canada and found that the devaluation of their credentials went beyond simply not recognizing the credentials. Rather, when participants experienced downward social mobility in Canada, they experienced discrimination due to their birthplace (Agyekum and Newbold, 2016; Shishehgar et al., 2015). This violent experience affected their overall health and well-being since they were forced to start over in Canada.

The studies above were helpful in uncovering social factors that affected skilled racialized immigrants' mental health and well-being. However, they did not provide an intersectional lens to analyze how their well-being was shaped by discrimination and oppression. This study addresses the gap in previous research, since an intersectional approach helps to move beyond an individual analysis that primarily focuses on disorders, illnesses, and individual

deficiencies. Studies were emerging that examined the well-being and mental health of racialized immigrants in the context of intersectionality and social structures (Holtmann & Trathemonte, 2014; Zaman, 2010).

As an example of a study that situates the well-being of skilled racialized immigrants within the context of intersectionality and social structures Zaman (2010) used a critical intersectional approach to illustrate that Pakistani skilled racialized immigrant women experienced intersectional forms of oppression related to their nationality/race, religion, class, and gender. Holtmann and Tramonte (2014) added to the discussion on intersectionality by demonstrating that the oppression of ethnicity, religion, and gender have varying effects on the mental health outcomes of racialized immigrant women in Canada, and that racialized Muslim women were not a homogenous group with the same life experiences.

An intersectional lens is critical to this research, since there is a gendered, class-based, and racialized process of social exclusion that marginalizes racialized immigrants in employment settings. In addition, they direct us to another important finding that not all immigrants have the same access to financial and social capital to protect themselves against intersectional oppression in the workplace.

The literature demonstrated that there are socioeconomic differences that influenced the social positions of racialized immigrants (Das Gupta et al., 2014). Das Gupta et al. (2014) explained that not all racialized immigrants have the same level of socioeconomic security when they arrived in Canada. Rather, some racialized immigrants have class privileges affording them the opportunity to avoid precarious employment (i.e., they may return to school or leave Canada to work abroad). These studies were helpful in exploring how work stressors were associated with intersectional oppression and were an excellent foundation to explore how skilled immigrants' well-being was associated with the "Healthy Immigrant Effect" (HIE).

The "Healthy Immigrant Effect" (HIE) illustrated that although immigrants were often healthier than native-born people when they arrived, their health often declined as they lived in a new country (Agyekum & Newbold, 2016; Kennedy et al., 2015; Subedi & Rosenberg, 2014; Vang et al, 2015). As discussed previously, studies illustrated that the health of skilled racialized immigrants were impacted by othering practices, negative representations, and discrimination in Canada (Dossa, 2002; Premji et al., 2014). The phenomenon of the HIE was found in other Commonwealth countries, such as Australia and the UK (Kennedy et al., 2015). Most recently, there was evidence of the HIE in Spain (Rivera et al., 2016; Vives et al., 2011). Canadian studies demonstrated that it was important to consider how intersecting social locations and identities influenced the HIE (Kobayashi & Prus, 2012; Puyat, 2013). In addition, there was evidence to suggest that recent immigrants often experienced post-migration stressors related to socioeconomics, since immigrants with younger children were more likely to live in poverty (Beiser, 2005).

There were various explanations as to why the HIE exists and remains relevant to this research study. The HIE results from a self-selection process (Hyman, 2004). Hyman (2004) noted that the HIE included:

> …people who are able and motivated to move and excludes those who are sick, disabled, and in institutions. It also is the result of immigration procedures that select the 'best' immigrants on the basis of education, language ability, and job skills – characteristics that facilitate social and economic integration and go hand-in-hand with healthy lifestyles and exclude immigrants with serious medical conditions. However, migration to new social and cultural environments may be stressful for some individuals, and stress coupled with inadequate social support may be, in turn, risk factors for ill health. (p. 1)

Another explanation for why HIE exists was the social and financial hardship that immigrants experienced when they settled in Canada. Galabuzi (2006) illustrated that underemployment is high for recent racialized immigrants with a university education, and that immigrants experienced stressors related to language barriers, access to health services, and discrimination (Simich, Beiser, Stewart, & Mwakarimba, 2005). The exact causes of health

deterioration amongst immigrants were not fully known, as pre-migration, migration, and postmigration stressors were complex (Vang et al., 2015). However, research on mental health, immigration, and employment illustrated that skilled racialized immigrants experienced discrimination when their education and skills were deemed inferior due to their birthplace (Dean & Wilson, 2010; Premji et al., 2014; Rezazadeh & Hoover, 2018; Salami et al., 2017; Wilkinson et al., 2016). A decolonizing approach helped to situate participants' work experiences within the social, political, economic, and historical contexts that dominated and governed their experiences in Canada. When it comes to the well-being of skilled racialized immigrants, an intersectional analysis and a decolonizing framework were helpful for analyzing how complexities related to social markers of differences created unique health experiences and outcomes (Hankivsky, 2012).

The decline in the health of immigrants can be attributed to many variables, including barriers in health care services, gender roles, trust of Western medicine, and language and cultural differences (McDonald & Kennedy, 2004). Individual, community, and structural determinants of health can also affect the well-being of racialized immigrants. Immigrants in a new social setting often experienced loneliness and poverty; they faced discrimination and resided in neighborhoods with poor resources (Agyekum & Newbold, 2016; Kobayashi & Prus, 2013; Puyat, 2013; Setia et al., 2012). All these factors can influence the well-being of skilled racialized immigrants.

At the same time, there was a strong focus on physical health outcomes in the literature on HIE (Kennedy et al., 2015; Macdonald & Kennedy, 2004). Khanlou (2010) highlighted that physical and mental health were interconnected, as they shared similar social determinants. Similarly, Chadwick and Collins (2015) illustrated that "immigrating individuals are particularly at risk of developing poor mental health outcomes because they face multiple psychological stressors upon settlement, including living within a new home and community, adopting to

different cultural norms, learning a new language, and obtaining employment" (p. 221). Research on skilled racialized immigrants highlighted that immigrants were not a homogenous group, and that there was more work to be done to learn about the various stressors that affect immigrants' health as they settled in Canada (Vang et al., 2015). There were various possible explanations as to why and how immigrants experienced the HIE (e.g., discrimination, othering, social exclusion, etc.). However, there were limited studies that use a decolonizing and intersectional lens to critically explore phenomena related to skilled racialized immigrant's well-being. As this chapter has demonstrated, skilled racialized immigrants were more likely to experience health related problems, since there are social and structural determinants of health that place them at a disadvantage. Moreover, the next section of this chapter discusses the theoretical orientation of this study.

Theoretical Orientation

This section discusses the theoretical basis of the study. More specifically, this section provides a historical account of post-colonialism, post-colonial feminism (PCF), intersectionality and Black feminism, and introduces key theorists. By providing an overview of the theoretical basis of the study, the section demonstrates that PCF is a helpful theoretical lens to explore the well-being of skilled racialized immigrants. The chapter concludes with a figure that represents the key components of the conceptual framework employed for this research.

Post-Colonial Feminism

According to recognized and leading post-colonial theorists, Homi K. Bhabha (1994), Franz Fanon (2008), and Edward Said (1978), "post-colonialism" did not refer to a period "after" colonialism but was rather about analyzing the harmful effects of colonization and imperialism. These theorists discussed how colonial practices were tied to the migratory experiences of racialized immigrants, and how their movement needed to be placed within the context of imperialist, racist, and colonialist legacies that have impacted their displacement. As a field of

contemporary field of study, Ato Quayson (2000) provided the following comprehensive definition of post-colonial inquiry:

> Post-colonialism involves a studied engagement with the experience of colonialism, its past and present effects, both at the local level of ex-colonial societies and the level of more general global development thought to be in the after-effects of empire. (p. 2)

The term "ex-colonial societies" refers to nations that have gained their independence from colonial rule.

Post-colonial theory challenges the objectivity of Western scientific thought by uncovering how colonialism and imperialism impact the representation of non-Western nations (commonly referred to as the "third world" or the "Rest" part of "the West and the Rest") (Bhabha, 1994; Racine, 2003; Said, 1979; Quayson, 2000). It is an error to assume that all postcolonial inquiry has a gendered analysis component. As argued by post-colonial feminist theorists, Uma Narayan (1998) and Louise Racine (2003), one of the limitations of post-colonial inquiry was the assumption that all women who belonged to a racialized group shared the same experiences. The lack of gender analysis in post-colonial theorizing contributed to the development of post- colonial feminism (Mohanty, 1988; Mishra, 2013; Narayan, 1998; Racine, 2003; Spivak, 1988).

Raj Kumar Mishra (2013) showed that PCF (also referred to as "third-world" feminism) was created as a response to the "White-washing" of history by Western feminists located in North America and Europe, where history was told from a "white" worldview and perspective (i.e., creating the binary of "the West and the Rest"). PCF theorists were informed by the theorizing of Black feminists that used an intersectional approach (e.g., Collins, 2000; Crenshaw, 1990; Davis, 1998; Hook, 2000), since they explored how social relations were shaped by the various historical contexts associated with race, gender, class, and other social markers of difference (Mishra, 2013). Post-colonial feminists and Black feminists share a common goal of dismantling intersectional oppression in society, as they critically explore how gender and racial

differences are associated with colonialism, imperialism, history, global power relations, capitalism, patriarchy, ethnocentrism, and political/economic domination.

Post-colonial feminists are critical of Western and liberal feminism, as they are concerned about the representation of "third-world" nations and peoples in Western scientific discourse (Mohanty, 1988; Narayan, 1998; Schwartz & Ray, 2008; Spivak, 1988). PCF is concerned with how colonialism and imperialism have created a monolithic and universal image of the "thirdworld woman", which is marked by "passiveness", "backwardness", and in "need of saving" from the West (Mohanty, 1988; Narayan, 1998; Schwartz and Ray, 2008; Spivak, 1988). This sexist, racist, and class-based representation of the "third-world woman" is rooted in patriarchal, class-based, racist, and ethnocentric narratives of the "other".

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1988) illustrated that knowledge was never innocent, and that the representation of the "third world" subaltern was used in Western discourses to justify Western superiority over the "third-world other". Similarly, Ayotte and Husain (2005) argued that the representation of "third-world woman" has been used to justify war, global atrocities, cultural genocide, labor exploitation, and displacement. For instance, post 9-11, the West used the misrepresentation of Muslim women in Afghanistan to justify war, as the Western narrative was on "liberating" the Muslim woman from the oppressive burqa (Ayotte & Husain, 2005). This is an example of how post-colonial feminist theorizing helped to make sense of real-world events associated with the representation of "third-world" peoples and spaces. Considering all the contributions of PCF, it is important to be aware of some of its limitations.

Uma Narayan (1998) and Sara Suleri (1992) claimed that post-colonial feminists needed to be careful not to reproduce racial essentialism by creating binaries between the "West" and the "third world" (Non-West). Suleri (1992) critiqued PCF texts that romanticized differences to create a false narrative of the "authentic" non-Western identities that had clear boundaries.

Narayan (1998) provided a similar critique when she explained how "[s]eemingly universal essentialist generalizations about 'all women' are replaced by racial-specific essentialist generalizations that depend on totalizing categories such as 'Western culture', 'Non-Western culture', 'Western women', 'third-world women', and so forth" (p. 88). In other words, there is a danger in reproducing a single story of all racialized women, by assuming they all had the same lived experiences. The problem with a single-story is that it fails to consider differences, and agency (Adichie, 2009).

The importance or significance of post-colonial feminism to this study is its critique of the limitations of post-colonial theories. The strength of PCF epistemology and ontology is its ability to analyze the relationships among the othering process, colonialism, unequal power relations, intersectional oppression, and epistemic violence. The following sections discuss these key concepts.

Othering Process

Johnson, Bottorff, Browne, Grewal, Hilton, and Clarke (2004) noted that "othering is a process that identifies those that are thought to be different from oneself or the mainstream and it can reinforce and reproduce positions of domination and subordination" (p. 253). Mohanty (1988) and Spivak (1988) corroborated that 'third-world' subjects were othered through colonialist, gendered, and imperialist misrepresentations in the "West". Mohanty (1988) described this othering process as: "It is only insofar as "Woman/Women" and the "East" are defined as Others, or as peripheral, that "Western" Man/Human can represent himself/itself at the center" (p. 73).

Another example of the dangers of creating a single-story was when Rajan and Park (2008) emphasized that the othering process created harmful representations of "third-world women", as they were "objectified and exoticized, or utilized for the convenient and quick

edification of Western readers" (cited in Schwartz & Ray, 2008, p. 56). Post-colonial feminists maintained that it was dangerous to essentialize and categorize the racialized third world "other", since there were differences that impacted their everyday experiences (Mohanty, 1988; Narayan, 1998); furthermore, the othering process hurts men and women differently (Swartz & Ray, 2005). Women experience colonized oppression and patriarchy simultaneously. The othering process is linked to intersectional oppression and unequal power structures in social relations and institutions. Just as men can "other" women in society, Western feminists can other "thirdworld" women through sexist, racist, and colonialist practices that are linked to intersectional oppression and hidden power dynamics in society (Mohanty, 1988).

As noted above, the othering process is linked to domination and subordination. It is linked to colonial racism since there are harmful representations of skilled racialized immigrants in the "West". Third-world immigrants are othered, dominated, and subordinated when they are told that their knowledge, worldviews, and skills are inferior. The othering practice are upheld by intersecting and interlocking systems, such as when skilled racialized immigrants are told by the immigration system that their knowledge is legitimate but come to find out through the employment system that it is not legitimate.

Intersectional Oppression and Unequal Power Relations

Valentine (2007) defined intersectionality by drawing on Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller, and Thomas's (1995) analogy of a road junction: the site where class, gender, and race intersect. Valentine (2007) further stated that "we may think of race, class and gender as different social structures, individual people experience simultaneously" (p. 13). Moreover, Racine (2003) explained that intersectionality is a useful concept for PCF theorizing, as "cross-cultural comparisons need to be carefully made since the cultural, economic, political, religious, and

social contexts within which health problems related to gender, race, and class inequities vary according to geopolitical areas" (p. 96).

Post-colonial feminists called upon scholars in the "West" to recognize ethnic and gender differences, as they helped to shape "third-world" people's experiences over time and space (Mohanty, 1988; Narayan, 1998; Swartz and Ray, 2005; Spivak, 1988). Instead of viewing the "third-world" subject as inferior, it is important to uncover the unequal power structures that sustain intersectional oppression and othering practices (O'Mahony & Donnelly, 2010). In addition, the well-being of skilled racialized immigrants is connected to social locations, colonialism, patriarchy, unequal power relations, and social structures. Correspondingly, Mohanty (1988) emphasized that it was important to "recognize and analytically explore the links among the histories and struggles of third-world women against racism, sexism, colonialism, imperialism, and monopoly of capital" (p. 4).

By reviewing the relevant literature on the well-being of the participants in this thesis, it is clear that the effects of othering, colonialism, feminism, intersectionality, and unequal power relations in society are important to gain critical understanding of mental health and well-being among skilled racialized immigrants. When skilled racialized immigrants experience de-skilling and denial of their credentials, their existence is invisible in the workplace and impacts their overall well-being. *Epistemic Violence*

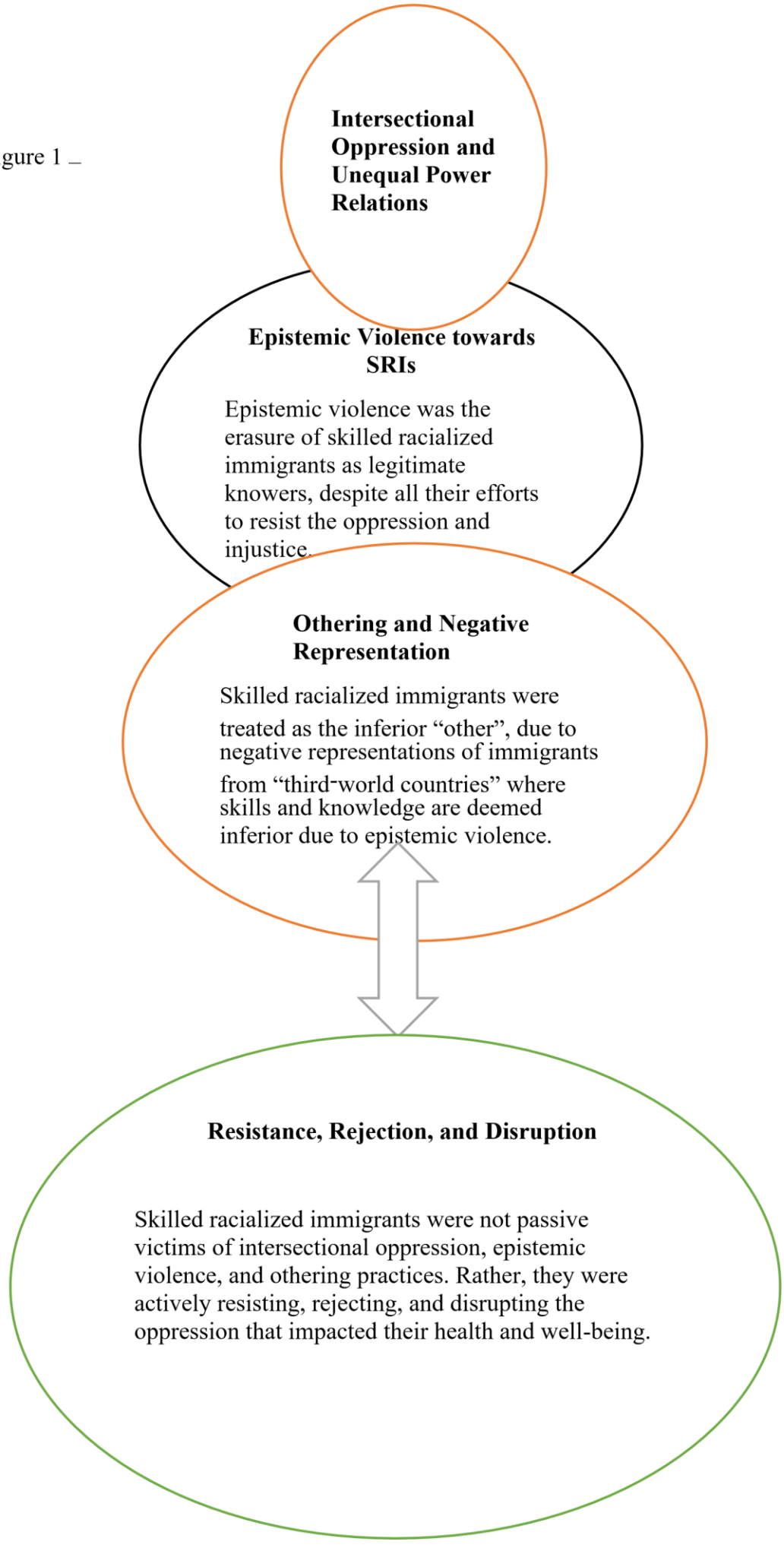
Spivak (1994) illustrated that "third-world" subjects are othered and misrepresented in certain spaces in the "West" due to epistemic violence. Liegghio (2013) explains Spivak's (1994) description of "epistemic violence" by noting "it is the ways in which certain persons or groups within society are disqualified as legitimate knowers at a structural level through various institutional processes and practices" (p. 123). For example, the "West" situates itself as being the objective knower (hence, superior to the "third-world other") through othering practices,

unequal power relations, and intersectional oppression (O'Mahony & Donnelly, 2010; Racine, 2003).

This study held on to the core principle of decolonizing feminist practices that people were the experts of their own lives (Mohanty, 1988; Mishra, 2013; Narayan, 1998; Racine, 2003; Spivak, 1988). It is critical to explore how and why various forms of social exclusion take place, how they are connected, and how they are not limited to racism, sexism, classism, ageism, and ableism. Post-colonial feminist, decolonizing, and intersectional analyses helps to gain an understanding of the complexities of the day-to-day experiences, mental health, and well-being of skilled racialized immigrants. Their knowledge and competencies are rendered invisible in certain spaces due to unequal power relations, intersectional forms of oppression, colonial racism, othering, and representation practices in the "West".

Colonialism has created a monolithic and universal image of the "third-world" immigrant. It is gravely problematic to assume there is one definition of mental health and wellbeing, as skilled racialized immigrants have unique and different experiences. To assume that all skilled racialized immigrants understand and make sense of well-being the same is problematic, since they have different experiences which shape their understanding of mental health. Considering complexities in social relations, power structures, and processes where experiences take place, the principal approach to decolonizing is having the participants describe and make sense of the realities when it comes to their mental health and well-being. Thus far, I have described the key components of the theoretical orientation for this study. Below, I present the key components of theoretical orientation and their connection to post-colonial feminism.

Figure 1 _


Intersectional Oppression and Unequal Power Relations
Epistemic Violence towards SRIs
Epistemic violence was the erasure of skilled racialized immigrants as legitimate knowers, despite all their efforts to resist the oppression and injustice.
Othering and Negative Representation
Skilled racialized immigrants were treated as the inferior "other", due to negative representations of immigrants from "third-world countries" where skills and knowledge are deemed inferior due to epistemic violence.
Resistance, Rejection, and Disruption
Skilled racialized immigrants were not passive victims of intersectional oppression, epistemic violence, and othering practices. Rather, they were actively resisting, rejecting, and disrupting the oppression that impacted their health and well-being.

The conceptual framework diagram illustrates how the definitions and understandings of the key concepts are associated with PCF and intersectional theorizing. I used the relevant concepts of PCF to come up with the conceptual framework for this study. The circles in the conceptual framework diagram represent the relational and interactive aspect of skilled racialized immigrant's well-being. Skilled racialized immigrants actively resist, disrupt, and reject the oppression they experience (i.e., epistemic violence and intersectional oppression). These key concepts help to understand how participants make sense of well-being, and how they assert their resiliency and agency when they recognize how their everyday experiences shaped by unequal power relations, epistemic violence, othering practices, feminism, intersectionality, and discrimination in society.

Conclusion

The existing literature indicated that, in Canada, the well-being of skilled racialized immigrants is negatively impacted by discrimination, intersectional oppression, othering practices, and negative representations. However, there was limited research exploring the colonial dimensions that impact the well-being of racialized immigrants. Nor was there any research that combined decolonization, feminist, and intersectional approaches to examine the well-being of skilled racialized immigrants who immigrated and settled in Canada under the FSWP. This study sought to fill that gap.

Existing studies showed that a decolonizing approach aligned well with an intersectional feminist perspective, allowing for analysis of the complexity of colonialism, racialization, patriarchy, ageism, ableism, and classist discourses. Thus, first-person accounts from participants were a good starting point to further our understanding of how they made sense of the notion of well-being and the FSWP. Moreover, such an approach could be a promising way to gain knowledge to transform social work practice to address social structures and systems in Canada to support the well-being of immigrants.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This chapter began with a discussion on the epistemological and ontological positions that guided this phenomenological research study, followed by a restatement of the research questions. The chapter continued with a description of the history of phenomenology, and then discussed why Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) fits well for this research. The next sections provided a description of the sampling, recruitment, data collection procedures, ethical consideration, and procedures for data analysis. The chapter concluded with a brief description of the steps taken to ensure trustworthiness and rigour in the study.

Epistemological and Ontological Positions

This study is critical of positivistic narratives that treat knowledge and reality as universal truth. The research design fits well with my epistemological and ontological paradigm, which is rooted in critical realism (Harvey, 2005). Critical Realism (CR) was a branch of philosophy that distinguished between what is perceived as being “real’ and what is “observable” in our environments (Harvey, 2005). The 'real' world cannot be fully understood nor interpreted outside of perceptions, thoughts, and social constructions, which in turn, cannot exist independent from human perceptions, theories, and constructions.

My epistemological and ontological standpoint views objective reality in social science research as imperfect, since it is my opinion that all knowledge is relative, spatial, time limited, selective, and based on subjective experience. In addition, IPA aligns well with the theoretical orientation of study, since Post-Colonialism Feminism (PCF) and intersectionality argues against the goal of objectivity, since this is not possible. Rather, the research goal of this study is to take a self-reflexive approach in research.

As discussed in the previous chapters, I view knowledge and reality as socially constructed but governed by power relations and contextually bound. Therefore, I utilized the post-colonial feminist and intersectional framework as my theoretical basis for this study and

incorporated a social constructionist perspective. Based on these epistemological and ontological insights, I conducted this study to explore how the various understandings of wellbeing and mental health were shaped by different experiences of the participants. In other words, in this study, I was interested in how skilled racialized immigrants interpreted the meaning of their experiences, and how the researcher made sense of these individuals' interpretations. This study was not concerned with trying to explain the phenomena around wellbeing, but rather sought to explore how interviewees made sense of well-being in the context of immigrating to

Canada under the Federal Skilled Workers Program (FSWP).

Research Questions

A qualitative approach is best suited for exploring the two research questions posed in this study. Researchers use a qualitative research design when they want to explore an issue and gain a deeper understanding of phenomena in society (Creswell, 2008). The following research questions are in response to the literature review and my own lived experiences, as there are limited studies that explored how skilled racialized immigrants made sense of well-being. Consistent with phenomenology, the focus of this study was organized around the following overarching questions:

(1) How do skilled racialized immigrants (SRIs) who immigrated and worked in Canada under the Federal Skilled Workers Program (FSWP) make sense of well-being?

(2) How do SRIs perceive the influence of social structures (i.e., employment structure) in Canada on their well-being?

Phenomenology

Phenomenology is a heuristic discipline that is both a philosophy and a research method practiced in social sciences (Gallagher, 2012; Munhall, 1994). A heuristic approach allows individuals to discover and learn something new for themselves (Gallagher, 2012). The German

philosopher Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) was the principal founder of phenomenology. In his seminal work, Husserl asserted that phenomenologists should "give a certain epistemological primacy to consciousness" and argued that consciousness is our "window to the world" (as cited in Gallagher, 2012, p. 9). Munhall (1994) defined consciousness as the "sensory awareness of and response to environment" (p. 14). Consciousness is the connection between the body and mind, which makes it possible to become a "being" in the world (Gallagher, 2012; Munhall, 1994). Moustakas (1994) explained that phenomenology sought to uncover the essence of what exists in the consciousness. Phenomenology is a useful research design for this study since it helps to explore the complexity of participants' well-being and the meaning they made of the phenomena under study.

As a scientific method, phenomenology has had numerous definitions over time, since there were various epistemological and ontological frameworks that guided its practice (Gallagher, 2012). The primary aim of phenomenology as a method was to investigate the role of consciousness in shaping the subject's perception of reality, and "uncover the meaning of lived experience within the everyday lifeworld" (Bentz & Rehorick, 2008, p. 3). Gallagher (2012) noted that phenomenology should not be mistaken for introspective psychology since "it is a way of seeing, not a set doctrine" (p. 7). As a broad scientific method of inquiry, phenomenology was suitable for this study, as the research questions investigated how participants perceived and made sense of the phenomenon of well-being in the context of FSWP, and explored their personal and social world (Munhall, 1994). Since one of the objectives of this study was to gain a deeper understanding of skilled racialized immigrants' interpretations of how social structures impacted their well-being, I considered a particular phenomenological approach, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), was a helpful method that investigated both the individual and structural levels of perceptions and lived experiences.

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

IPA is a specific qualitative approach that was developed in the mid-1990s in health psychology (Smith, 1996). IPA fits with the philosophical traditions of phenomenology, since the aim of IPA is to uncover how individuals make sense and interpret a phenomenon (Eatough & Smith, 2008; Larkin & Thompson, 2012; Smith, 2011; Smith et al., 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2008). IPA sought to understand the particulars of the various phenomena that an individual experienced (Smith et al., 2009). The focus on the particulars of a phenomenon is consistent with Post-Colonial Feminism (PCF), since meaning is bound by social and historical context (Eatough & Smith, 2008; Smith et al., 2009).

Eatough and Smith (2008) asserted that experience is a complex concept, and that IPA researchers payed close attention to how participants gave meaning to their experiences. IPA helps researchers to carefully make interpretations of the participants' perceptions, interpretations, and experiences (Larkin & Thompson, 2012; Smith & Osborn, 2004). Smith (2011) called this interpretative process a "double hermeneutic", where "the researcher is trying to make sense of the participant trying to make sense of what is happening to them" (pp. 9-10). IPA has a clear goal of trying to understand the individual's perceptions of a situation or event, as opposed to generalizing a universal truth (Eatough & Smith, 2008; Larkin & Thompson, 2012; Smith et al., 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2008).

Larkin and Thompson (2012) discussed that the central features of IPA are: idiographic, hermeneutic circle, and phenomenological. Idiographic implied that IPA researchers should focus on the specific, not the overall general (Larkin and Thompson, 2012). Similarly, phenomenological analysis required the IPA researcher to explore the first-person account of the participant understanding the phenomena (Eatough & Smith, 2008). Furthermore, Eatough and Smith (2008) stated:

> The hermeneutic circle encourages researchers to work with their data in a dynamic, iterative, and non-linear manner, examining the whole in light of its parts, the parts in light of the whole, and the contexts in which the whole and parts are embedded and doing so from a stance of being open to shifting ways of thinking what the data might mean. (p. 12)

Thus, it is critical to situate the phenomena around participants' well-being within their social and historical contexts. Based on this understanding, I designed this study using IPA.

Sampling, Participants, Recruitment, and Ethics

This study used a purposeful sampling method. One of the characteristics of IPA studies was utilization of smaller sample sizes (i.e., 3-6 subjects/participants) since it required detailed and in-depth analysis (Smith & Osborne, 2008). The authors added, "[t]here is no right answer to the question of the sample size. It partly depends on several factors: the degree of commitment to the case study level of analysis and reporting, the richness of the individual cases, and the constraints one is operating under" (p. 56). Smith (2011) described that a sample size with more than one case needed to consider convergence and divergence of themes.

Also, a purposeful sampling technique was used to select participants in this study, additionally the participants played an active role in recruiting individuals through the snowball effect of word of mouth and referral. This is consistent with IPA and decolonizing theoretical approach, as the participants were active members in the study, as they helped guide/shape the study (i.e., referral).

The selection criteria for the participants were as follows:

1. Be 18+ years of age,
2. Self-identify as a racialized immigrant,
3. Have lived in Canada for at least four years,
4. Have immigrated to Canada under the Federal Skilled Workers Program (since 2002),
5. Have worked in jobs where their credentials were not recognized,
6. Preferably, have professional qualifications from birth country and in a regulated field.

The rationale for selecting participants in a regulated field was to explore how internationally trained professional immigrants experienced under-valuing of foreign credentials by licensing bodies.

Participants were recruited through the help of several networks and agencies that were all immigration-related employment agencies in Toronto. An email recruitment poster (see Appendix A) was sent to agencies and networks and circulated among potential participants. This email recruitment poster explained the nature of this study and the selection criteria for potential participants and included my contact information. At the time of initial contact, questions about the study were answered in more detail and I made sure that participants fit the selection criteria. Those who showed interest in the study were given the participation information and consent forms (see Appendix C).

Ethical Consideration

Respecting the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants and the voluntary nature of their participation was especially important. Some participants feared job loss if the information they shared became public and associated to their names. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality, I removed all identifying information from the data when the interviews were transcribed. In addition, the participants were given pseudonyms to ensure confidentiality to the highest extent possible.

When the audio-recorded data was transcribed, all identifying information about the participants, situations, and organizations was removed. The transcriptions were stored on a password-protected computer (and USB stick) in a locked file cabinet at my home. All data were completely anonymized. Furthermore, I ensured that no one would know the identities of the participants in the study or the agencies they worked for, and I took utmost care that there were no negative consequences for participants (i.e., checking-in during the interview, providing a list of resources, etc.). There were no foreseeable risks to the study. However, to ensure their

wellbeing, the participants were given a list of community supports at the completion of the interviews (Appendix D). A research ethics approval was granted through the Office of Research Ethics at York University on March 31st, 2017 (Appendix E).

Data Collection Procedures

To explore phenomena around the well-being of skilled racialized immigrants, 12 semistructured interviews were conducted for this study. I chose a semi-structured one-on-one interview method for data collection because it was the most common form of data collection method for IPA and because it reflects my epistemological view, as I noted earlier in this chapter. Since IPA researchers view the participants as being the experiential experts of their lives, semistructured interviews create an apparatus to capture the convergence and divergence of themes in the data analysis phase. The interview questions in this study were open-ended and provided space for the participants to share their experiences of immigrating to Canada under the Federal Skilled Workers Program (FSWP) and their interpretations of them.

The interviews were held in a mutually agreed-upon, quiet, and private location in Toronto (i.e., reserved library room, etc.). Before the informed consent form was signed, I explained the nature of their participation for the second time (the first time being upon initial contact over the phone during the recruitment). Also, I responded to any questions they had. The participants were reminded that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time. At the beginning of the interviews, I provided CAD $30 to those who required child-care.

The length of the interviews ranged between 60-90 minutes. I interviewed participants from May to August 2017. The interviews were audio-recorded with the participants' consent. Eleven of the twelve participants consented to the audio recording. The audio-recorded interviews were transcribed by a professional transcriber who signed a confidentiality agreement.

For the one interviewee who did not consent to be audio-recorded, with permission I took notes after each question I asked in the interview. I relied on the interview guide to assist me in my note taking.

To guide the interviews, an interview schedule was used (see Appendix B) in accordance with IPA inquiry (Eatough & Smith, 2008; Larkin & Thompson, 2012; Smith et al., 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2008). Smith and Osborn (2008) stated that:

> with semi-structured interviews, the investigator will have a set of questions on an interview schedule, but the interview will be guided by the schedule rather than be dictated by it. Here then: attempt to establish rapport with the respondent…ordering of questions is less important…interviewer is freer to probe interesting areas that arise…interview can follow the respondent's interests or concerns. (p. 58)

The interview questions/schedule were created in a manner that allowed for a flow in conversation. The interviews were semi-structured, so that there was flexibility in the moments when the participants would take the interview in the directions of their perceived importance. I familiarized myself with the interview questions prior to the interviews so that I could be attentive during the sessions: I listened and paid close attention to the participants' stories. In accordance with IPA approach, I used probes and follow-up questions to gain clarity regarding a participant's interpretation of an event or situation (Smith & Osborne, 2008).

Procedures for Data Analysis

Once the 12 interviews were completed, I went through the step-by-step process of data analysis. First, I hired a professional transcriber to transcribe 11 of the 12 interviews. As noted earlier, one interview was not audio-recorded, so I used my interview-guide and notes to analyze the data from the interview. Following the transcription of the interviews, I read each transcript in its entirety.

By following an IPA approach (Smith, 2011), I read each transcript to check for accuracy. Subsequently, I used the Atlas.ti program to analyze the transcripts through the process of "free coding". Larkin and Thompson (2012) illustrated that IPA researchers use free coding to get

their initial ideas down and begin the reflection process of thinking about what matters to the participants in the study. During the first step of data analysis, I developed 210 codes based on the participants' direct words, experiences, and quotes. Throughout each step/phase of the data analysis, I paid close attention to the concept of idiographic, by focusing on the details of data (i.e., journaling by assumptions/beliefs), and not on the overall general (Larkin and Thompson, 2012).

In accordance with the philosophy of IPA and hermeneutic circle, the next step of the data analysis included going back to the transcripts and reorganizing the 210 codes that were initially developed. This process entailed the step of deciding whether to keep the codes or combine them based on the attributes they shared. It was important that I was mindful when identifying quotes, words, and phrases that were significant to the participants' perceptions, interpretations, and experiences. After re-reading the transcripts and codes several times, I reduced the code count from 210 to 62. Throughout the data analysis process, I was mindful of the tenants of phenomenological analysis, as I looked "for possible meanings which allow the phenomenon of interest to shine forth" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 35).

Once I re-organized and reduced the code count to 62, I moved on to step three. This step included the process of re-reading the quotes under the codes and categorizing them under broader categories. I used cue cards to help me sort out the codes and categories. During this step, I made sure that the categories were capturing the codes that were developed. The categories were based on the participants' interpretations of experiences, and include descriptors related to their feelings, observations, knowledge, interactions, and behaviour.

As I continued with my data analysis, I moved on to step four of the data analysis procedure, where I began looking for patterns of meaning within the codes. I re-read the data many times to understand how the participants made sense of the phenomena around well-being.

I looked at each participant's stories and quotes, and carefully considered the differences and similarities of their interpretations. At this stage of analysis, I reflected on the patterns of meaning that the codes illustrate (Larkin & Thompson, 2012). The broader categories included reflections on the similarities and differences between the phenomena of well-being and provided insights on the convergence and divergence of possible themes (Smith, 2011).

Once the inductive coding stage was completed, I moved on to step five of the data analysis process, where I used my conceptual framework and key concepts to analyze the data through the process of deductive analysis (i.e., analysing data using my theoretical lens). I paid careful attention to how the categories play out for each participant, as there was some variance related to the participants' interpretations of the phenomena under study (Smith, 2011). At this level of analysis, I made interpretations of the participants' interpretations of experiences and events. This process is called "double hermeneutic" (Smith, 2011). During step five of the analysis, themes were developed and clustered (Smith et al., 2009; Smith & Osborne, 2008), so that I could draw on my interpretative and critical analysis "to make sense of what the person is saying, but at the same time one is constantly checking one's own sense-making against what the person actually said" (p. 72).

As I continued to the sixth and final stage of data analysis, themes and subthemes emerged and were developed from the coding, categorization, and analysis. In accordance with IPA, this step in the analysis stage is called polarization (Smith et al., 2009). I paid close attention to how many times a theme was repeated and "how participants manifest the same theme in particular and different ways" (Smith, 2011, p. 24).

Smith and Osborne (2008) described that IPA researchers need to be reflective and mindful during that data analysis stage, to "allow theoretical connections within and across cases but which are still grounded in the particularity of the specific thing said" (p. 68). Similarly,

Brocki and Wearden (2006) noted that IPA researchers should carefully check to make sure that the themes they create are clearly connected to the interpretations and words of the participants. Adhering to an IPA approach, I organized and made sense of the themes that were created by grouping them together based on similar qualities in a word document (Smith & Osborn, 2008). I took a very rigorous, detailed, and careful approach to reviewing the transcripts several times to ensure that the theoretical connections, cluster themes, and subthemes were directly associated with the words and interpretations of the participants in the study. In terms of member-checking, I phoned the interviewees following the interviews and shared my interpretation of their stories and themes. I discussed the primary themes that stuck out for me in the interviews. The participants confirmed that my interpretation of their experiences was accurate, and that the major themes resonated with their experiences. It is important to note that I did not speak to all the participants, as not everyone responded to my attempt to do member-checking. However, the 6 participants that did respond agreed with my interpretation of the themes.

Techniques for Trustworthiness and Rigour

IPA scholars highlighted that it is crucial that researchers take thoughtful consideration and strategies to ensure that the researcher's interpretations provided an accurate picture of the participants' thoughts, interpretations, and stories (Eatough & Smith, 2008; Larkin & Thompson, 2012; Smith et al., 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2008). To ensure trustworthiness and rigour, I took Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Patton's (2015) suggestions to use the techniques of critical reflection, research journaling, theoretical triangulation, member checking. I was reflexive throughout the research process, as I adhered to Smith's (2011) and Larkin and Thompson's (2012) recommendation that good IPA work draws upon themes from multiple participants in the interviews. I was mindful during the analysis stage to include data that represented a variance of perspectives and are associated with each theme.

To strengthen the rigour and trustworthiness of the research, I took a reflexive approach concerning preconceived thoughts and assumptions about the phenomena under study. This is the process sometimes referred to as "bracketing". Chan, Fung, and Chien (2013) explained that the bracketing process involves reflexivity throughout the interpretation process, as it helped to provide quality to the study. To strengthen quality in the study, I kept a reflective journal that I used throughout the research process, so that I was aware of my own pre-conceived notions of "truth" as I analyzed the data.

Chan, Fung, and Chien (2013) noted that it is critical as a phenomenological researcher to try "putting aside one's own belief about the phenomenon under investigation" (p. 2) when analyzing the interview data, since the data analysis process entails curiosity and appreciation that participants were the experts of their lives and stories. However, in adherence to a decolonizing and feminist intersectional approach, it was also important to make explicit my own subject positions/intersections, as it strengthened the transparency in the research. For this reason, I used a theoretical triangulation strategy to draw on theories such as decolonizing, intersectionality, post-colonial feminism, to analyze the data (Patton, 2015). By using these theoretical orientations, I was able to analyze how the participants had various understandings of the phenomena of well-being based on the unique social positions they occupied and how the participants' social positions, privileges, and power impacted their interpretations of well-being. Also, I was mindful of the questions I used in the interviews, and how they influenced the collection and analysis of the participants' stories. Additionally, I considered my own social positions and beliefs throughout the research/interpretation process and journaled my assumptions, perceptions, thoughts, and experiences.

Furthermore, the analysis of the data in this study was not just descriptive but is interpretative as well (Smith, 2011). I took careful consideration to illustrate the divergence and convergence of themes, and the various perspectives in the interviews. I also presented how I

analyzed the data above in detail so that the audit trail of the analysis stage was transparent, which I believed enhances the trustworthiness of the findings. Lastly, I listened to the participants' stories with an open heart and mind. In other words, I was open to the idea that some of the participants' perceptions, thoughts, and stories did not align with my own preconceived thoughts, assumptions, and worldviews. To further strengthen the trustworthiness of the study, I followed up with the participants in a phone interview through the process of member-checking.

Conclusion

As this chapter illustrated, an IPA approach is very well suited for this study, as it focuses on how participants make sense of their experiences and realities. In addition, IPA aligns well with the theoretical orientation and research questions of this study, since it provides a detailed account as to how participants interpret events in their social worlds. Finally, IPA is an especially useful approach for this study, as it provides steps to ensure trustworthiness and rigour in the research.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS "STARTING FROM SCRATCH"

Introduction

As discussed in the previous chapter, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) helps researchers to make interpretations of participants' perceptions of experiences. Adhering to an IPA approach, this chapter along with chapter 5 use the 12 research participants' own words from individual interviews to illustrate how immigrants' experience and understand well-being in the context of immigrating to Canada under the Federal Skilled Workers Program (FSWP). This chapter also pays close attention to how participants describe in their own words how they actively resist, disrupt, and reject oppression in society. These two chapters present the two overarching emergent themes accompanied by sub-themes.

This chapter begins with snapshot profiles of the research participants, as it provides context for the themes and sub-themes. The participants were identified by pseudonyms to ensure confidentiality and anonymity. This chapter provides an analysis of how skilled racialized immigrants make sense of well-being in the context of immigration and employment (i.e., Theme1: starting from scratch). Chapter 5 will illustrate that the oppressions skilled racialized immigrants experience is embedded within social structures, social processes, and power relations in society (i.e., Theme 2: big propaganda campaign).

Snapshot Profiles of Research Participants

Of the 12 participants in this study, there was an equal representation of six males and six females. Two participants were born and raised in India, one was from Sri Lanka, four were from Bangladesh, and five were from Iran. They all identified as being immigrants and were born in the 'Global South' or 'Middle East'. The participants' ages ranged from mid-thirties to early sixties. All participants identified as being university-educated professionals who received their education and training in country of origin. Their education levels ranged from that of a

Bachelor's degree to PhD completion. Table 2 presents a profile of the participants, categorized by their country of origin, age, pseudo name, gender, work, and education.

Table 2. Snapshot of Participants

Name, age, gender	**Country of origin, year landed in Canada, Family**	**Education**	**Work**
Sana Early 50s, Female	Bangladesh, 2008: with husband and 2 children	BSW, and Diploma in Food Services	Her credentials were not recognized in Canada, she now works as a laundry worker.
Sadia, Early 50's, Female	Bangladesh;1998: alone	Master's degree in Public Health	She immigrated to Canada under the points system and worked as a settlement and domestic violence counsellor. She served many clients who came to Canada under the FWSP
Amelia, Mid 50's, Female	Bangladesh; 2008: with husband and daughter	Bachelor's degree in Nursing and Master's degree in Child and Family Health	She worked as a nursing assistant.
Kwan, Late 40's, Male	Bangladesh; 2006: with wife and two kids	Master's degree in Social Services	He went back to school in Canada and taught foreign trained skilled immigrants.
Anna, Early 60's, Female	India; 2002: alone	PhD in Environmental Studies	Worked at Tim Hortons for seven years.
Amita, Early 50's, Female	India; 2001: alone	BSW and two Master's degrees in Sociology (one from the US and one from the UK)	She has worked countless jobs that were lowpaid, lacked benefits, and were considered precarious

Nadia, Early 40's, Female	Iran; 2002: with husband and two sons	BSc and teacher's training	She worked precarious, low-paying jobs without employment benefits, while her husband returned to Iran to work as an engineer after an unsuccessful two-month search for employment in engineering
Rumi, Early 40's, Male	Iran; 2014: with wife and two sons	PhD in Pharmacy and training as a Professor	It took him over two years to complete the timeconsuming and costly eleven steps to become a licensed pharmacist in Ontario. Upon completion, he found employment as a part-time pharmacist in Toronto.
Ervin, Early 40's, male	Iran; 2013: with wife	Bachelor's degree in Engineering and a Master's degree in Communication Technology in Iran	After 14 months of living in Canada, he found secure employment in his field.
Hamid, Early 40's, Male	Iran; 2013: with wife and two kids	Law degree from Iran	He has been unable to find employment in his field. He eventually started his own business as an immigration consultant.
Hafiz, Mid 30's, Male	Iran; 2012: alone	MD (Medical Doctor)	His credentials were not recognized.
Malki, Mid,40's, Male	Sri Lanka; 2006: with wife and two children	Master's degree in International Relations	He struggled to find work in his field, eventually taking a job at a pizza shop and makes minimum wage with no benefits.

Starting from Scratch

I started this study by asking "How do skilled racialized immigrants (SRIs) who immigrated and worked in Canada under the Federal Skilled Workers Program (FSWP) make sense of well-being?" As the study progressed, a central theme of "starting from scratch" emerged. The participants describe that they are forced to start over in Canada, as their professional identities from their country of origin are no longer valued and recognized by employers in Canada.

During the interviews, the participants discuss that their understanding of well-being includes having their professional identities valued and recognized by Canadian employers. When they are told by employers that they need 'Canadian experience' to work in their professional fields, many of the participants describe feeling "hopeless" and "depressed". This response and expectation took a toll on their mental health and well-being, as the participants were underemployed and were unable to provide for their family members.

The participants describe that the process of 'starting from scratch' in Canada is complex and goes beyond the denial of their professional identities. Rather, the denial of qualification impacts their understanding of what it means to be a father, mother, husband, wife, partner, and family member in their communities. Their mental health has been challenged, and this is associated with the erasure of who they believe they are (i.e., professionals in their families). However, the participants do not see themselves as passive victims in Canada. Rather, their stories uncover that they are extremely resourceful, and take active steps to counter the effects of colonial racism in society.

The five sub-themes listed below shed light on how the skilled racialized immigrants (SRIs) in this study make sense of "starting from scratch". The participants' stories uncover how and why their understanding of well-being evolved over time, post-immigration.

Subthemes

- Lack of Canadian Experience
- Discriminated Against
- Being Underemployed
- Family Strain
- Spiritual Support System

Lack of Canadian Experience

The interviews began with open-ended questions that asked the participants about their expectations and experiences of immigrating to Canada under the FSWP. Eleven of the twelve participants express disappointment with the FSWP, since, prior to arriving in Canada, it gave them false hope that their credentials would be recognized and valued. Malki states, "I don't think it's fair, because the Federal Skilled Workers Program gives high expectations for the candidates, so under this marking system, they think so you have experience you will get job."

Malki worked as an immigration officer before he immigrated to Canada in 2006 with his wife and two children. Malki's understanding of FSWP is that if you have good qualifications, you will get a good job in Canada. But when he arrived in Canada and started looking for work, he realized that his understanding was false since employers were not giving him an opportunity to work in his trained field. He ended up working in a pizza shop making minimum wage.

Similarly, Hafiz worked as a medical doctor in Iran before he immigrated to Canada by himself in 2012. He comments: "It's not fair, because if it was[sic.] fair, it should be, you know, easier [to land a job I am qualified for]." After being unable to find an opportunity in his trained profession, he went back to school to become a medical doctor and was studying and working as an Uber driver. Comparably, Amelia is puzzled as to why she is forced to start over in Canada.

Amelia was a trained registered nurse in Bangladesh and immigrated with her husband and daughter in 2008. When referring to the idea of "Canadian experience", Amelia notes "But

one thing they [Canadian employers] told me, 'You have your experience back home, you are more qualified, but you have no Canadian experience." Similarly, Nadia illustrates:

> I was a teacher back home. I didn't feel good being a cashier here.... Somebody told me what kind of job you want? I am a teacher. He said 'you cannot find any job because you do not have any experience here...in Canada'

Nadia was a teacher back in her birth country and believed she should continue being a teacher in Canada. Nadia soon realizes this was not the case and is disappointed. Amelia, Nadia, and Malki's quotes uncover that their experiences of needing more 'Canadian experience' have deeper meaning. It uncovers that well-being is not only associated with the traumatic experience of being told one's credentials are not sufficient for successful entry to the workplace, but that well-being is relational and based on the interactions that skilled racialized immigrants have with employers in Canada.

Hafiz discusses the challenges of acquiring "Canadian experience" when he states:

> Do you think if it fair that there are many doctors that they cannot even take the blood pressure of patients, they cannot be assistant of like physicians…I'm not saying that just seeing patients or, you know, prescribing drugs or those things…. Just be like an assistant for like a physician and doing the exams…I feel like it's so nonsense because, you know, how can you get a job when you don't have Canadian experience…. How can you get a job? You just build experience, you know.

Hafiz questions the lack of opportunities for immigrants to gain Canadian experience in their fields. As a response to the idea of needing more "Canadian experience", Kwan, Rumi and Hafiz went back to school in Canada to gain it in their fields. However, not all the participants had the financial and social privilege to go back to school and "upgrade".

Hamid immigrated to Canada with his wife and two children. He practiced as a lawyer in Iran before he immigrated. He considered going back to school to gain experience in his field. After reflecting on the idea, he concluded that it would be too financially and socially costly. He states:

> I practiced law as a lawyer in almost every field of law and I was prepared to come here and continue my study in PhD or get another master and practice again in the field

> of law. But I very shortly found out it's not possibly in short-term actually because of expenses that we have to spend here, and I didn't have enough support and because of family.

Hamid's understanding of well-being is interactive and relational, as he needs to immediately work to provide for his family. Similarly, Nadia is the primary child-care provider to her two young sons when she immigrated and settled in Canada. She had plans to go back to school. Nadia wanted to become an accountant and find a secure job. However, Nadia put her plans on hold, as she worked several contract jobs to support her family.

Discriminated Against

Regardless of country of origin, age, or gender, all the participants mentioned in the interviews that they experienced, or heard from a friend, that Canadian employers discriminated immigrants due their physical appearance, gender, age, accent, language, and birth country. Sadia states that, "Clearly racism is a big factor here…Being a doctor but driving cab. Engineers driving cab. Security. Lot of PhD people doing security job." Sadia mentions that the discrimination racialized immigrants experience is very stressful, and they are "getting addicted to things and going to that casino and drinking alcohol." Likewise, Amita laments "They have to listen to us and say, 'She's not stupid just because she came from, you know, a developing country.' It doesn't mean that she doesn't know what she's talking about." Similarly, Ervin states that he experienced discrimination in Canada, since "I'm not a White guy, I'm no European guy, definitely I should be something from Pakistan, India or Middle East."

All the participants in this study identified as immigrants coming from nations in the Global South, or Middle East. Malki, Ervin, and Sadia mentioned that the unfair treatment they experienced was related to immigrating from "third world country", "not being from Europe", or "not looking white." These quotes represent a larger public narrative that speaks to a continuation of colonialist and racialized discourse in Canada.

Prior to immigrating to Canada, Hamid, Hafiz, and Rumi believed that Canada was a world leader in human rights. Hamid notes "Generally, when you talk about Iran or other countries that [are] recognized as a third world country, you can't find anything that we have in Canada such as Charter of Right and Freedom." He goes on to state:

> I am surprised why Canada with high level of legal system, they have Charter of Right and Freedom, these things that we can rely on that, but they invite you, they let you come here as a skilled worker, they have eight years your file and when you come here, they don't pay attention to none of them, and you have to start from the scratch. (Hamid)

Similarly, Hafiz and Rumi note that Canada is advanced when it comes to 'freedoms and rights' compared to other "third world countries". Their interpretation and understanding of Canada prior to immigrating under the FSWP aligned well with the image that the Canadian government has created of the country (i.e., Multiculturalism, Charter Rights and Freedoms, etc.). The participants soon realized that they had false hope of finding employment in their fields, as they were misled by the immigration and employment structures (i.e., needing 'Canadian experience'). In addition, when the participants immigrated to Canada under the FSWP, they experienced underemployment.

Being Underemployed

Eleven of the twelve participants were forced to work insecure jobs (i.e., contract-based, low paid, lacked benefits, etc.) after they immigrated to Canada under the FSWP. Sadia was the only participant who found work in her field when she first settled in Canada. She points out that, "most of the people, you know, I see among my clients and they are so frustrated regarding underemployment, unemployment and these, you know, most of them are suffering."

Malki was an Immigration Officer in Sri Lanka and had a Master's degree before he immigrated with his wife and two children to Canada. He expresses concern about his children's future, as he makes minimum wage, and his workplace does not provide benefits. He comments:

> I talked with some people from our community, so they had very good jobs, private sector, they had good education, but they never get that benefits and jobs related to their previous professions in Canada…. I know some people who worked in Bangladesh of Sri Lankan origin. They took around $10,000 per month, but here nothing. They are doing factory jobs.

As Malki's quote illustrates, it is not uncommon for many immigrants to leave their well-paid and secure jobs back in their country of origin to immigrate to Canada and be underemployed.

Amita was a social worker in India before she immigrated to Canada. Amita describes being unemployed and homeless for a period of time. She states:

> …totally no income for six years. Sold my condo, used up all my RRSPs, went broke. I cannot file for bankruptcy also because they told me I couldn't file for bankruptcy. There is OSAP…. $20,000 worth of OSAP loans. They said, 'No, you cannot file for bankruptcy. These are federal loans. You have to pay. You cannot get out of these sorts of loans.' But I need a job, you know? I went to all the agencies.

Amita's understanding of well-being is rooted in the concept that having a 'good' job in Canada means high income, benefits, and financial independence. This dominant narrative is shared by the participants in the study and is rooted in capitalist/neo-liberal ideologies that treat well-being as being directly associated with economic success: wealth, status, and financial security.

However, not all the participants were forced to work multiple contract jobs, as some of the male participants described they had savings and financial resources at the point of immigrating to Canada under the FSWP. This finding uncovered the gendered nature of capitalism, and how class, race, and gender intersect when defining one's financial wellness. For example, Ervin described "We just had a good saving in bank account…Initially I had 30-grand when I came here. I believe it was enough for one year". However, not all the men in this study had savings when they immigrated to Canada.

Kwan notes that he felt isolated while he searched for stable and affordable housing for his family when they immigrated to Canada. He states:

> I did not have a single friend and single relative in this city. I came here to the Pearson Airport; from there I went to the guest house. Two weeks I was living in a guest house…. So now see the anxiety. I'm not from a rich family. I don't have that much savings, so I have little savings and now I have two young kids and my wife we are in a guest house, one bedroom…and then I started looking for apartment…. First priority, because I need to settle myself. (Kwan)

Kwan's understanding of well-being is relational and interactive since he understands well-being in the context of safe/secure housing and environment.

As noted earlier, not all the participants were in the same social class position when they immigrated to Canada under the FSWP. Primarily, the men had higher socioeconomic status than their wives before they immigrated to Canada. It provided them the opportunity to go back to school to gain Canadian experience or search for employment in their trained profession. This finding reveals the FSWP reinforces sexism and patriarchal ideology for skilled racialized women and men, since they left one patriarchal space in their birth country, to arrive to a new society (i.e., Canada) that holds on to similar patriarchal ideologies' (i.e., that women should not make the same salary as men). The financial cushion protected some of the men from being underemployed and trapped in contract jobs for a lengthy period. However, Sana, Amita, Nadia, Amelia, and Anna discuss being underemployed as soon as they arrived and settled in Canada.

Five of the six women in the study were underemployed and worked at low-paid contract jobs. Conversely, Kwan, Ervin, and Rumi found employment in their fields in Canada. None of the women had savings when they immigrated to Canada under FSWP. In addition, it was primarily the women who mentioned in the interviews the "dual" role of being underemployed and sacrificing for their children. Kwan is the only male participant that shared his role as a childcare provider at home. The gendered notion of 'care' is evident in the study, and reveals that well-being is associated with gendered-based assumptions of care in society. Also, it uncovers how patriarchy operates in society, since childcare is still gendered and not considered paid work.

Sana worked as a social worker in Bangladesh before she immigrated with her husband and two children in 2008. During the interview, she worked as a laundry worker. Sana mentions, "I didn't get job in my field, but I stayed here...I am staying for the betterment of my daughters…I have expectation to lead here a better life and I have two daughters. For their better life and my family life." Similarly, Amelia illustrates that "my husband, my daughter –they're really supportive… I was so depressed. They took me out…for a walk or they used to buy the food I like most. Yeah. Or a small gift or sitting with me, watching television, eating together."

Sadia and Amelia's quotes uncover that the participants are not passive victims of the oppression they experience in Canada, but rather, actively resist the oppression they encounter by leaning on their supports and connections. This impacts their understanding of well-being, as their social supports positively impact their well-being during difficult times.

Similarly, several of the participants in the study were regular members at the Women's Centre in their community. Anna immigrated by herself to Canada. She had a PhD from India. While her credentials were not recognized, Anna took active steps to develop peer supports through networking and connecting with racialized immigrant women that she identified with.

The Women's Centre advocates for social, economic, and political change in society, and as such, it is a place of both mutual support for racialized immigrant women and empowerment through their involvement in social and political issues and advocacy for equity. . Anna mentions that the Women's Centre has been a great source of support in Canada, as "It helps always. For safety, for my support." Similarly, Amita describes that the Women's Centre provided her a computer when her home flooded. She stated, "After I came back from England, I have put all my things in storage and then after that the storage got flooded and I didn't have a computer."

Sadia, Anna and Amita's quotes uncover that the participants are very resourceful. They connect with peer supports and drew upon their resources. This finding reveals that the participants are active agents in social change, as they use their supportive relations and

interactions to try and stay well. However, not all the participants in the study had strong social supports to lean on.

Nadia worked as a teacher in Iran before she immigrated with her husband and two sons in 2002. She was the sole care-provider of her two young sons, as her husband returned to Iran to support the family. He tried to find employment in Canada but was unable to secure work in his field.

Nadia explains that the reason why she stayed with her two young sons in Canada was due to safety concern for their futures in Iran. She mentions that there is "no future for them in Iran…We felt Iran was not safe anymore…maybe war happens…there is no work for them." Nadia appears to understand well-being in the context of survival for her two sons. Her interpretation of well-being includes living in a society, without the fear of war, death, and chaos. As Nadia's husband continued to work in Iran, the Iranian currency went down due to the sanctions that were imposed on Iran by the US. Out of financial necessity, Nadia was forced to work insecure contract jobs, since her husband's sole income was not enough to support the family.

Nadia's contract jobs limit her flexibility to meet her family's expectations. She states: "I had to go to work earlier than them (sons)...so I just made everything ready for them …Before they come home from school, I ask them on the phone 'Is everything ok?'" Nadia mentions that she struggled, as she felt isolated, and lacked supports. She described struggling as a 'mother', as her son was 'getting into trouble' and is angry. The denial of her credentials was not just a denial of her identity. It was a denial of her social supports. Her sons' father was absent due to financial necessity, and this was taking a toll on the family's well-being. Structural systems such as employment, education, and child support are not meeting her family's needs, as they are financially and emotionally costly. In addition, Nadia experienced a horrific work-related event.

During one of her survival jobs, Nadia was sexually assaulted by a male co-worker. She was scared to report it to the police but disclosed it to her supervisor. Nadia felt isolated and alone during the incident, as her female supervisor was not supportive when she reported the incident. Nadia stated: "I didn't expect this from supervisor." Due to safety concerns, she resigned from the job.

The horrific event that Nadia experienced was not isolated. Nadia's story uncovered power imbalances in the workplace that sustained inequitable hierarchies and behaviors (i.e., hierarchies related to patriarchy, racialization, and class exploitation). Nadia's story uncovers how the denial of credentials impacts men and women differently. Nadia experienced gendered violence, as she was placed in an unsafe working environment due to colonial racism and patriarchy in the workspace. Also, it reveals how well-being is relational and interactive, as Nadia's interactions with her co-worker and supervisor placed her in a very unsafe environment.

Family Strain

When the participants immigrated and settled in Canada, many of them questioned their new identities and roles. This impacted their understanding of well-being, as their identities were denied, and they were forced to "start from scratch". The denial of their identities created family strain in the home since epistemic violence was a form of trauma.

Sadia works as a domestic violence and settlement counsellor with families who come to Canada under the FSWP. She describes that her male clients who were unable to find employment in their professions express sorrow for not living up to the expectation of being the primary breadwinners in their families. Sadia states:

> Men should be the head of the family and everybody should listen to him and he had that role…. Wife is earning money and sometimes he's not and he's in a stress, so he cannot work, he cannot put attention to work or lot of, you know, lot of things and factors and disturbing spaces.

Sadia's observation of the "disturbing spaces" uncovers the complexities associated with gender relations in a capitalist society.

Sadia discusses that the men in the households felt insecure about their social status in their families and communities; since they were not living up to the image of what it means to be a 'man'. So, when the men discussed that they were making less than their wives, they interpreted this experience as failing their families. Kwan describes that there are "cultural and social expectations" that men are the "head of household." Similarly, Malki comments: "I can't fully fulfill the needs of my family as the head of family.... I don't think right now I am fulfilling that responsibility."

Kwan and Malki confess that they went through an "identity crisis" when they were forced to start over in Canada. Their self-esteem and confidence are hurt. They discuss being failures as fathers and husbands. Some of the comments include:

> At that time, I was questioning myself, so who I am…. I have nothing to say about myself. So now see the pressure, dynamics of the pressure. Okay siblings calling from home country. 'Brother, you are in the best country in the world. What you are doing?' I can't say that I'm looking for job…when I'm meeting with the neighbour even here, okay, 'What about your job?' Everybody is like…all these questions creating a huge unspoken pain for me…not only embarrassment, shy, it makes me introvert so at one stage I was thinking, 'Oh better not to go to my community event because people will ask this question'…. Some kind of isolation …career uncertainty, your emotional stress... I call it 'identity crises.' I had some kind of identity, 'Oh I am this profession. I am working with this and this.' From the second day of my landing, I am nowhere. I cannot introduce myself. (Kwan)

> So last week my elder son asked, 'Oh, Dad, when you are going to work, what did you bring, your laptop...?' So no one knows in my community I'm making pizzas…. I don't tell…. I had good education…. So, I can't tell them that I am making pizzas…. I have some fear that because we have connections with our own community, even my brothers and other relations in back home so they might say, 'Oh my Dad is making pizzas'…. I can't fully fulfill the needs of my family. (Malki)

Before Kwan and Malki immigrated to Canada under the FSWP, they had well-paid and secure jobs in their birth countries. They were the primary breadwinners for their families.

However, their roles and, in turn, identities changed when their qualifications, knowledge, and skills were ignored by employers in Canada. The denial of their credentials is not just a denial of their qualifications, but rather also a denial of their interpretation of what it means to be a husband, father, and man.

The male participants' stories reveal that their understanding of well-being is directly associated with gendered assumptions of what it means to be a 'successful immigrant'. The image of being the 'head of the household' is ingrained with heterosexist, capitalistic, and patriarchal ideologies of what it means to be a skilled racialized man. It uncovers that their understanding of well-being is relational and tied to the class-based assumptions of 'success' rooted in a neo-liberal and capitalist society. The participants' stories uncover that there are patriarchal, heterosexist, and class-based ideologies of what it means to be a 'man' both locally in Canada, and globally. Interestingly, the women in the study did not appear as shocked when they encountered gender inequalities. One contributing factor is that they were aware of how patriarchy impacted their experiences in their birth country and were not surprised when they encountered it in Canada.

Amelia immigrated with her husband and two children to Canada. She discusses her role within the family by saying: "I was the person to earn money in the family.… He [her husband] was so upset off and on… Sometimes he expresses, yeah, that 'as a man, I am not doing nothing.'" Amelia's comment corroborates the stories shared by some of the men in the study that they felt 'useless' for not being the breadwinner of their families.

Hamid immigrated to Canada with his wife and kids. He discusses the family strain that he went through with his wife when they were forced to start over in Canada. He states, "My wife…nagging about the financial situation: 'Why we don't have a big house?' Back home, I had a big house. Here, it's a small condominium. We can't invite friends. We can't have

a party. Back home, we had…extra activity for kids." As Hamid's comment illustrates, it is not only the men who had patriarchal and class-based assumptions about what it means to be an immigrant in Canada. The family strain that Hamid and his wife experienced was a response to the financial and social hardships they experienced in Canada, and the ideologies they had of what it means to be a 'successful immigrant' in a capitalist society.

Malki immigrated to Canada with his wife and children. He shared his plans to go back to school and gain Canadian work experience in his field. However, his wife challenged the plan, since she perceived the process of upgrading in Canada as being costly, time-consuming, and useless. Malki discussed the family tension by illustrating:

> We have some problem.… I had long-term plans. Long-term plans mean I still wanted to upgrade my skills…. She [his wife] said that 'No, it's useless. Studying here useless…even though you complete this, I don't think you will get any opportunity here.' So, she always discourages, so she wanted me to do something and earn some money for living…. She wanted short-term benefits. I mean with money, you know, short-term for kids, something for kids.

Malki's wife believed that going back to school in Canada was "useless", since they had to work to provide for their children. This leads to family strain, as Malki did not feel supported by his wife, who was mainly focused on the short-term for the betterment of their children. Malki's interaction with his wife impacted his understanding of well-being, as he did not feel supported and understood by his partner.

Sana, Kwan, Amelia, Nadia, Rumi, Hamid, and Malki had children when they immigrated to Canada under the FSWP. They discussed the stressors of having to worry about their children's futures, as many of them were forced to work low paid and insecure jobs to provide for their family members. Similarly, Hafiz states: "Right now, I can name like four or five families that was, like…they were, like, breakups in the families." He continues: "It's probably super hard for them…. Positive things are that they have somebody to care about

them…. for example, they have some enjoyment in their lives, but at the other side, they have to support them." Similarly, Ervin mentions that once he found employment in his field in Canada, the arguments with his wife lessened. He notes: "Fortunately, we didn't have any children or baby at home…because see, in that moment, we didn't have enough money to eat well."

The participants who came to Canada with children had the pressure and strain to provide for their children as well as for themselves. Their family dynamics impacted their well-being, as they were also responsible for the needs of their children. As Sadia's story uncovered, there was an association between not having credentials recognized by Canadian employers, domestic violence, addictions, poverty, and well-being.

As noted earlier, Sadia works as a domestic violence and settlement counsellor for many skilled racialized immigrants who came to Canada under the FSWP. During her interview, she described witnessing and observing clients go through serious domestic disputes and family strain due to underemployment and unemployment. Sadia explains, "[The] wife is like teasing that, 'You brought us here [to Canada] ...and some [men] are not doing job and getting addicted to things and going to that casino and drinking alcohol.... Domestic violence including children and women."

When Sadia was asked in the interview whether there was an association between the denial of foreign trained credentials and trauma, she responds: "Mm-hm, underemployment, stress, yeah." Currently, she works as an interpreter in the courts, and heard testimonies from husbands and wives about the conflicts they experience when they immigrated and settled in Canada. Many of the men expressed mental health struggles and pain for not fulfilling their traditional roles in their families. Their identities have been denied, and it impacts their wellbeing. Some of them used liquor and casinos as outlets to manage and cope with their distress. This impacts the family unit, as it led to domestic violence and family strain.

Spiritual Support System

Amelia describes that at times, it is exceedingly difficult to hold on to hope. Amelia states:

> I am not able to have a good job. That means job in my field. In that way I was feeling so hopeless…. It is frustrating…. I spent my time, my energy, my money, my social life –everything I gave up to have my [nursing license in Canada] … apply so many places, but they don't respond.

By not being recognized as what Amelia believes she is and could be, i.e., a registered nurse, her qualification and skills were being denied in Canada. Her identity is erased. This impacts Amelia's understanding of well-being, as she feels "hopeless".

While some of the participants allude to the idea of feeling 'hopeless', several participants mention that spiritual social supports play an active role in enhancing their wellbeing. Anna mentions "I am very spiritual. Like with spirituality with God…I never feel defeated." Sana stated, "when I get time and every weekend I try to go in my temple." Similarly, Amelia stated that "God was with us…, I go to the church close to my house… I go every Sunday." Interestingly, it was the women in the study that openly discuss their spirituality and connection to a 'higher power'. One factor could be how heterosexism and patriarchy operate amongst men in society (e.g., not speaking about emotions and feelings, etc.).

Anna, Sana, and Amelia's direct quotes uncover that spirituality and faith play an important role in their lives. They discuss that life in Canada has been difficult. They have experienced colonial racism and discrimination by employers. However, they resist and disrupt the effects of colonial racism by having a strong spiritual support system.

When discussing the importance of social supports, Anna states that she speaks with and visits her family in India on a regular basis. She said, "they are my everything: my brother, mother, they are closest." Similarly, Hafiz says "I have my brother here…many friends here… emotionally…so helpful." Hafiz goes on to mention that he is part of a peer support group of

International Medical Graduates (IMG) that he meets with regularly. When describing the IMG support group, Hafiz states:

> It's so helpful because you see the other people at your stage and you're going to be encouraged to just keep going…we are like 20-30 people that just have like a gathering every Tuesdays and we go through all the experience we had from the basic things to even like doing some mock tests, those things…And it's so encouraging for me. It's so good...It's a group that they are all like medical IMGs that they're just gathering…. they're so honest about everything which is very good.

Hafiz describes that the IMG group is emotionally and spiritually supportive, as they lean on one another for supports.

Conclusion

The research findings in this chapter illustrate how participants make sense of their wellbeing, in the context of having to start from scratch in Canada. They describe the struggles of starting over, but as they say in their own words, they hold on to hope by being spiritually connected and reach out for supports.

This chapter uses the participants' quotes and phrases, since they provide the clearest perspective as to how and why they are sold a very rosy picture of what life would look like for them and their families when they immigrated to Canada under the FSWP. The rosy picture of living in Canada was sold to them by the FSWP and turned out to be a nightmare for the participants, as their understanding of well-being is negatively impacted by having their various identities denied. As the following chapter describes, the denial of identities is rooted in capitalistic structures and systems that holds on to racist, patriarchal, heterosexist, class-based, and colonialist views of immigrants.

CHAPTER 5 -FINDINGS

"BIG PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN"

Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the challenges of starting over in Canada, and the emotional, psychological, and financial toll it took on the participants and their family members. As their stories illustrated, the process of "starting from scratch" impacted their understanding and/or experience of well-being. In response to the colonial racism in the workplace, many of the participants relied on their spirituality and support systems to counter the effects of social injustice.

This chapter continues to explore how the participants made sense of their experiences when they immigrated to Canada under the Federal Skilled Workers Program (FSWP). The findings in this chapter reveal that the oppression that skilled racialized immigrants experienced are embedded within social structures, systems, and power relations in society (i.e., Theme 2: big propaganda campaign). As a result of the oppressive social structures, several participants took active steps to resist and disrupt the erasure of their experience. The subthemes are listed below.

Subthemes

- Misled
- Betrayed
- Immigration Programs are Generic and Self-Serving
- Being Resourceful

Misled

During the interviews, the participants are asked whether they believe that the FSWP is fair. Most of the participants said the program is "not fair". For example, Malki comments that the "Federal Skilled Workers Program gives high expectation for the candidates so under this marking system they think so you have experience you will get job. If you have good qualifications, you will get jobs in Canada" and that "I had very confidence I would get (job in

field) because the government propaganda campaign." Several participants mention that the FSWP is misleading applicants by giving the impression that they would be employed in their respective fields. Hamid described being 'misled' by the Canadian government and immigration system.

Hamid immigrated with his family in 2013. He is a trained lawyer from Iran but is unable to practice in Canada. He illustrates that immigration and employment systems in Canada are two separate and different things, though this is not clearly explained to immigrants when they apply under the FSWP. He explained this process by saying:

> When you apply as a skilled worker, they (FSWP) look at their NOC (National Occupational Classification) system and if you have the same code, the same qualification, they accept you.... When you come here (Canada), they (employers) don't pay attention to that system.

Hamid's comments reveal the immigration and employment systems operate in silos, and do not have the same standards for assessing the suitability of a skilled racialized immigrant's credential (i.e., matching them to the job demands in the market).

Regardless of the participants' age, gender, or place of birth, they all allude to the idea that their understanding of FSWP has changed since they immigrated to Canada. Initially, they trusted the manufactured narrative that the Canadian government created of its immigration system (i.e., that it is a world leader in human rights, it is fair, etc.). These messages are not only coming from the media and politicians, but from FSWP (i.e., fair points system). However, when the participants found out that their skills and knowledge were not valued by Canadian employers, their understanding of the immigration system in Canada changed (i.e., "Big Propaganda Campaign"). Hamid commented:

> Generally, when you talk about Iran or other countries that recognized as a third world country, you can't find anything that we have in Canada such as Charter of Right and Freedom. From politics, religion – everything are totally, totally change. Women rights, everything. So, you can't compare these parts, but based on the experience, personal life

> that I made for myself, the position in this society as a job, you can't easily find the same situation here (Canada) and it's really tough.

When Hamid mentioned that "you can't easily find the same situation here (in Canada) and it's really tough", he referred to his experience of leaving a well-paid and secure position in his home country, only to be underemployed and working precarious jobs in Canada.

Betrayed

Malki, Hamid, Hafiz, Nadia, and Sadia described being "betrayed" by the immigration and employment systems in Canada. They question why there are different standards when it comes to assessing their skills, and knowledge. For example, Nadia mentioned that she has been betrayed by the employment system in Canada, since she is making "10 dollars hour...four months I worked there (company) and they said we don't need you anymore."

Nadia mentions that networking and connections are especially important in Canada, and that she is betrayed by a new society that is not clear about this when she arrived. She stated "I want to tell you is that connection is important… Why don't they see online resumes?" Nadia questioned the concept of meritocracy, and believes that in Canada, "it is about connections."

Similarly, Hamid questioned why the employment sector and Provincial accreditation bodies for regulated professions their own criteria to establish whether immigrants are qualified to work in their trained professions. Hamid continued to be critical of the FSWP program, particularly the lack of clarity involved in the process of immigrating to Canada under the program. He commented: "You can see and observe some part of the iceberg out of the ocean, but main part is under the sea." He described the "iceberg" as being the hidden forces that immigrants are unaware of before they immigrate to Canada (i.e., different assessment process, discrimination in employment, professional identities denied, etc.). Hamid's story corroborates the stories of the participants in this study, as they describe being "surprised", "frustrated", and "betrayed" when they receive mixed messages about their credentials from the immigration and

employment systems. Ervin mentioned that the information associated with FSWP should be clearer, as it lacked transparency. He mentioned that the FSWP does not have a centralized website where applicants could learn about the experiences of immigrating to Canada under the FSWP and "unfortunately, it (FSWP) wasn't clear."

Throughout the interviews, the participants were critical of the FSWP. They described that the immigration system in Canada lacked clarity and transparency. This impacted their understanding and perception of the FSWP, as they described the stressors related to the process of feeling betrayed when they were forced to start over in Canada. It also illustrates that the FSWP reflects the oppressive systems it represents. The dominant group in Canada (i.e., white people) are considered insiders and thus did not need to worry about how their race is impacted by immigration programs and employment structures that are not fair nor transparent to "outsiders" (i.e., skilled racialized immigrants). A lack of clarity and transparency allows the dominant group to maintain the racial hierarchy and privileges for some, while excluding others (i.e., racialized). This impacts skilled racialized immigrants, as they are unable to practice in their fields and end up in poverty due to unemployment/underemployment.

Also, the FSWP assumes that all applicants under the program will have the same lived experiences when they immigrate to Canada, regardless of whether they immigrated from a country in Africa, Middle East, South Asia, or Europe. Meaning, the FSWP does not take into account how anti-Black racism impacts Black skilled workers differently than immigrants from the Global South or Middle East. The color-blind approach to the FSWP ignores how intersectional oppression, colonialism, and racism impacts skilled racialized immigrants when they settle in Canada.

Ervin describes the negative representations of Iranians and the power imbalance between them, and employers' impact how Iranian skilled immigrants are viewed in Canada. He stated: "Canadian government. They said, 'Okay they [Iranians] are terrorists. They are doing bad things

in Middle East…. We will put sanctions….' [This happened] in Harper time and they didn't consider people of Iran". He continued: "We don't care what Trump is saying, but who knows what's going on in their [Canadian employers] mind and their heart, you know?" Ervin is discussing the phobia of the Middle East, and more specifically the microaggressions and macro conditions thar create Islamophobia in society. Similarly, when referring to the unfair treatment that skilled racialized immigrants experienced, Malki commented:

> Most of the people I talk with and associated with people from Bangladesh, Pakistan…. We had one guy from Afghanistan, one girl from India, one girl from Bangladesh. Still now it's almost two years, still they couldn't find any job…. People from a particular region. For example, South Asian people has this kind of experience (not having credentials recognized) but people from Europe have some different experience. (Malki)

Malki states many South Asian immigrants experience discrimination in the workplace due to their "skin color or names". The participants highlight that racism, white supremacy, and other forms of othering and negative representation impact how they are viewed and treated by Canadian employers. As Sadia commented: "Clearly, racism is a big factor…. By that time, you have to live your life. No money and then they just start survival job."

The participants' stories uncover that they are misled and betrayed by the Canadian government, as they believed the manufactured narrative that they would continue to be professionals in their fields when they immigrated to Canada. When this did not happen, they describe being depressed, anxious, and hopeless. For example, Hafiz states that "I go through phases of depression" and Rumi mentioned "me and my wife went to a psychiatrist and psychotherapist to overcome the stress of living in Canada." As the following section illustrates, it is not only the immigration or employment sectors that treated skilled racialized immigrants unfairly. Several of the participants mention that immigration and newcomer programs in Canada are generic and self-serving.

Immigration Programs are Generic and Self-Serving

As the interviews continued, the participants shared their experiences of accessing services from immigration and newcomer programs in Canada. Malki, Amita, and Kwan mention that they are not happy with the services that they received. The comments included:

> Those services are very generic and very ad hoc and sometimes it is incomplete. They provide a very basic information like, 'Okay you need to do the health card, so here is the form, fill out then go for that'.... But they did not refer me to the employment service…. I mean integration has too many streams. One is the settlement and the other one is the employment… To integrate into the market, the main challenge is the employment here.... I went to the social service provider and the settlements counsellor…. They were very good at documenting and they are very good at taking information. They were very nice, everything, but they are very concerned about their own deliverables but how far that will help me to get involved in the mainstream society, to get involved into my career? So that was the missing part. (Kwan)

> They are newcomer centres, so once you go there, they first sign a contract with the newcomer and organization. So, after signing the contract, they never contact you…. They need newcomers because they have to…they get funding from the government…for the next funding year they have write down proposals, the funding proposals to get money from the federal government. So, they have to how, 'We have this number of newcomers. We are serving this number of newcomers.' (Malki)

> It's a top-down approach (Immigration programs). They do the bare minimum. It's not a bottom-up approach where they will listen to our voices and then make decisions. (Amita)

Malki, Amita, and Kwan's comments uncover that newcomer programs are generic and self-serving (i.e., primary aim is to meet deliverables, not the realities/needs of racialized immigrants).

Amita's description of the "top-down approach" is shared by the participants in the study. They describe feeling used by newcomer programs, as they are unable to have their identities as professionals recognized in Canada. This impacts their overall health, as they are isolated and excluded in a society that does not value their identities and realities. The only participant that is not critical of newcomer and settlement programs is Sadia. Ironically, Sadia is the only participant that had a full-time and secure position with a newcomer and immigration program.

Ervin immigrated with his family to Canada under the FSWP. They soon found out that they were not eligible for newcomer and settlement services since they were waiting to receive permanent residency (PR) status in Canada. Ervin commented:

> None of them [newcomer programs] accepted us because we didn't have PR…. Any work settlement program, I couldn't go there because I didn't have PR.… They weren't helpful…because they were not practical. The most helpful program that I was in was a mentoring program…. So, for seven months we just waited.

Ervin's comment reveal that skilled racialized immigrants who come to Canada under the FSWP are not treated equally. Depending on their citizenship status and precarious status, they are excluded from newcomer and settlement programs. Also, when they experienced social exclusion to newcomer programs, their well-being is impacted by lack of formal supports to settle in a new country. However, not all the participants are critical of social structures in Canada.

Kwan immigrated with his wife and two children in 2006. Initially, his qualifications were not valued by employers in Canada. However, he eventually found employment as an instructor for a program that served skilled racialized immigrants who tried to have their credentials recognized in Canada (i.e., the 'bridge program'). He discussed in the interview that "soft skills" are important for immigrants who want to find employment in their trained professions.

Kwan's interpretation of soft skills includes an understanding of "[h]ow we (skilled immigrants) communicate... how we present, how enthusiastic we are". His understanding of what it takes for skilled racialized immigrants to find a secure job comprises "[h]ow well they communicate with employers (i.e., language, clarity, eye contact, assertiveness, etc.)". However, not all the participants believe that it is only their "soft skills" that led them to precarious employment and financial difficulties.

When describing the challenges that he confronted when immigrating and settling in

Canada, Malki commented:

> We are from different cultures…. We spoke different language. English is our not first language, native language…. It's a challenge and sometimes if we send our resumes, our names. So, by seeing our names, they just guess he's from which country…. Also, our accent…. It's a barrier. And sometimes our colour. Our colour but they don't see our colour when we send resume, but they can just imagine or just guess we are from which part of the world.

Malki's comment is especially important, as it illustrates how colonial racism, epistemic violence, and othering practices operate in the workplace. When he mentions that "by seeing our names…our accent, it's a barrier, and our color", he is referring to how Canadian employers discriminate against racialized immigrants through various microaggressions and macro conditions that sustain the inequities. Malki's interpretation of starting over in Canada is associated with the negative ideologies that employers have of racialized immigrants from developing and third world nations.

Being Resourceful

As the findings have demonstrated, the participants experienced severe challenges when tried to navigate the microaggressions and macro conditions that marginalize them. However, the participants did not quietly accept these unjust social conditions. Rather, they are very resourceful, and advocated for themselves.

Sadia immigrated by herself to Canada and was eventually able to find a full-time position as a domestic violence counsellor. However, Sadia's path to this full-time position was not a simple journey. Rather, Sadia expressed that she had to be resourceful along her journey to build connections and networks in Canada.

Sadia mentions that when she first immigrated to Canada, "I was having a little bit health problem and I went to a community clinic." She goes on to mention that "I was waiting to visit

my doctor and at that time at the reception in the waiting area I heard that one woman, one lady came and asked the receptionist, "Give me interpreter's invoice." Sadia went on to state:

> Then she (receptionist) said, "Okay, you wait here. I will see whether the interpreter coordinator is here. So, you have to write your test and then if you qualify then we can hire you as interpreter." I said, "Okay." Then I went to visit my doctor and then came back. She said that "Interpreter coordinator is here so you can meet her and then see what she say." Then I met that lady…And then she interviewed me and gave a sheet of paper to write something and like interpretation things. Also what you recorded, you know, how far my voice can go and then a lot of test she took and then she was satisfied and she said, "Yes, you qualified so leave your contact number and your address so that when we need Bengali then we can contact you…And then I left and then in the evening I received a call from this centre and they said, "We have a patient that she needs a Bengali interpreter for her doctor visit in the St. Michael Hospital."

As Sadia's story reveals, she was very resourceful, and looked for any opportunity to network and gain experience in her field. This had a positive impact on her well-being and future employment, as she was able to find meaningful employment. This is an example of a participant that actively disrupts and resists colonial racism in society, by refusing to be silenced in spaces that routinely other racialized immigrants.

Another example of participant being resourceful was when Kwan describes his experience of building long-lasting relationships with 'mentors' in his field. Kwan describes that when he first immigrated and settled in Canada, he was actively requesting to meet with professionals in his field to gain a better sense of the steps he needs to take to find employment in his field. Kwan mentions that two situations "changed my life".

When describing one situation, Kwan noted:

> I still am well connected with this person…he changed my whole life…I requested for 20 minutes meeting. He gave me one hour time…As a director of that organization, so I went there in his office and he literally drew a picture for me. Here the whole non-profit sector has three main streams. One is settlement, one is employment, another is special need population service. That's it. This is all about non-profit. Now you decide why you can bring your transferable skill and fit into the three main streams… So, I have two small kids. My wife is from professional background. Now she said, "Well let me take care of kids for at least a couple of months or year. You go to the street and look for your job and you try

> to integrate yourself and then once you're settled then I will come back to the street again." Kwan illustrates that the Director of the program helped him, and his wife develop a plan to navigate the process of settlement in Canada. They developed a plan to take turns providing childcare, while the other worked, and went back to school. When the other was not working, they were on EI, and spent time with their children. This lasted for several years until they both built connections, found employment in their fields.

Kwan described that a Professor at his College became a mentor and helped change his family's life for the better. He stated:

> I decided to go with the George Brown College because only George Brown College in North America they have the employment counselling diploma…. program I decided but at the same time, I was looking for job because settlement they do not need education. So, I kept that door open. I improvised my resume and I tried to connect. I was doing volunteer work with three organization at the same time… At the same time, I was preparing myself going to the education. So, I went for the info session and I met with the professor…She is my mentor, she is my coach, whatever. Everything. She is everything for me.

Kwan explains that the Professor became an especially important mentor in his life and provided guidance during the time he was looking for employment in his field. Kwan reveals that these mentors and social supports directly had an incredibly positive impact on his well-being.

Recommendations from Participants

The participants provided recommendations to make the immigration and employment sectors fairer for skilled racialized immigrants under the FSWP. There was consensus that the information presented to them before they immigrated to Canada was not fully transparent (i.e., FSWP has no website). Furthermore, one participant recommended that skilled racialized immigrants should be required to take a course about settling in Canadian society as a new immigrant, as it would help them make an informed decision about the process (i.e., type of jobs that are in demand in Canada, and the living conditions for new immigrants).

In addition, some of the participants mention that the educational and employment systems lack a standardized process of assessing credentials. One participant suggested that the immigration and employment systems need to do a better job supporting families, not just the primary applicants of the FSWP. There is an assumption behind the program that the primary

applicant would support the family, and this is not true for all skilled racialized immigrants due to the very systemic barriers to employment that they face, such as gaps in services and policy issues that do not adequately address the needs of this population.

Conclusion

As this chapter illustrated, skilled racialized immigrants experience unfair treatment in various levels of society. The subthemes in this chapter illustrate that the participants feel misled and betrayed by the Canadian government and employers when their skills, knowledge, and credentials are not recognized in Canada. In addition, some of the participants express that newcomer programs in Canada are generic and self-serving. However, the participants are not passive victims of oppression. Rather, they are very resourceful, and built strong networks.

The findings in this and the previous chapter reveal that the lived experiences of the participants are complex. The participants share the common experience of being told that their professional identities are no longer visible due to negative representations and othering practices of them as skilled racialized immigrants. In addition, the participants share a collective understanding that their well-being depends on factors that go beyond a biomedical model, namely, the inequitable social structures in society (i.e. discrimination in employment sector) that erase their identiites in certain spaces. However, their stories also reveal that the participants do not all have the same interpretations of well-being and what it means to start from scratch in Canada. As the following discussion chapter reveals, these unfair systems and structures sustain and reproduce inequities that makes it exceedingly difficult for skilled racialized immigrants to live a fulfilling new life in Canada. However, this circumstance is not hopeless. It is possible to help transform immigration, employment, policies, and social practices to make it more equitable, inclusive, and fairer for skilled racialized immigrants and their families.

CHAPTER 6 – DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

Introduction

The Findings chapters demonstrated that the participants' interpretations and experiences of immigrating to Canada under the Federal Skilled Workers Program (FSWP) are complex. The participants shared stories of experiencing health challenges as they started a new life in Canada. The findings illustrated that there are structural and systemic forces (i.e., systemic discrimination in employment) that affect the participants' understanding and/or experience of well-being. Also, the participants stories reveal that they are not passive recipients of oppression. Rather, they actively took steps to counter the effects of colonial racism by reaching out for social supports.

As the previous chapters demonstrated, one of the significant barriers that prevent Canadian employers from fully recognizing skilled racialized immigrants' knowledge and skills are employers' attitudes towards differences (Guo, 2009; Henry & Tator, 2006). In response to the purpose and research questions in this study, the present chapter critically analyzes how skilled racialized immigrants' employment experiences in Canada represent an existential crisis, since the traumatic experience of not having credentials recognized created severe distress and affected their well-being. In addition, the erasure of skilled racialized immigrants being, and existence were associated with epistemological and ontological violence.

Erasure of Existence Is Traumatic

The transition of racialized immigrants' qualifications and skills from country to country is complex. There is no simple explanation as to why skilled racialized immigrants struggle to have their credentials recognized. Rather, several barriers influence this process. Some of these barriers include inequities with assessment by regulatory bodies from province to province, lack of "Canadian" work experience, and intersectional forms of oppression in the workplace and society (Premji et al., 2014; Reitz, Curtis & Elrick, 2014; Shan, 2009; Wilkinson et al., 2016).

Research demonstrates that the financial and social hardships that skilled racialized immigrants experience in Canada impact their identities, sense of self, quality of life, well-being, and overall health (Dean & Wilson, 2010; Premji et al., 2014; Rezazadeh & Hoover, 2018; Salami et al., 2017; Wilkinson et al., 2016). The participants in this study describe that they gave up "everything" to have their knowledge and skills recognized by Canadian employers. While the participants did not name the distress of not having credentials recognized as being a form of "trauma", several participants discuss "going through phases of depression" or "seeing a psychiatrist and psychologist" to deal with the struggles of starting from scratch in Canada. In addition, it is important not to individualize, medicalize, and de-politicize the experiences of the participants whose credentials are not recognized largely because of structural and political inequalities.

As the finding's chapters reveal, colonial racism, othering practices, epistemic violence, and macro conditions in immigration and employment structures negatively impact the wellbeing and mental health of skilled racialized immigrants. Instead of labelling these experiences as being a personal traumatic experience, it is critical that these experiences are situated within the social, political, historical, and economic context that dehumanizes skilled racialized immigrants and their family members. In addition to the structural and systemic violence that skilled racialized immigrants experience, it is important to not assume individualistic remedies (e.g., behavioral therapy) are sufficient to address the trauma that skilled racialized immigrants experience in immigration and employment systems. Rather, their experiences need to be contextualized and politicized.

The findings of this thesis support literature on this topic area (Guo, 2009; Premji et al., 2014), as they reveal that when the participants are silenced and erased in certain spaces, they lose confidence, and their social status and overall health declines. The participants did not feel recognized nor valued when they found out that their knowledge and skills were not transferrable

to their trained profession. This is a critical point, as there is an association between professional status, feeling valued, self-esteem, and overall health. Furthermore, the participants question themselves, as the erasure of their knowledge is an erasure of their professional identities from their birth countries.

The erasure of their professional status uncovers how colonial racism and systemic discrimination operate within the workplace and society. The participants shared stories of their experiences with discrimination in the workplace due to their skin color, name, accent, place of birth, and assumptions about racialized immigrants from "third world" countries. They reveal the fact that certain employers and nations believe that the educational and professional standards of Canada are superior to 'others' (i.e., 'third world' nations). These colonialist and racist stereotypes are rigid and based on myths. According to these myths, the knowledge of racialized immigrants as inferior and incompetent. These colonialist and racist myths exclude skilled racialized immigrants from their trained professions, and sustain racial, gender, and class hierarchies in Canadian employment settings. In response to this erasure of their credentials and identities, the participants asked themselves: "Who am I now? What is my purpose?" More broadly, these questions affect the participants' overall health.

Subedi and Rosenberg (2015) discussed how the mental health and well-being of newly arrived skilled racialized immigrants worsen when they experience stressors related to financial and social hardships. Similarly, many of the participants in this study shared stories of experiencing a deterioration in their overall well-being when their professional competence was not recognized. This also has implications on Canadian society, as its economy and productivity levels are directly affected. Reitz, Curtis and Elrick (2014) estimated that there are billions of dollars of earnings lost due to devaluing of foreign credentials and underutilization of the skills of Canada's immigrants. Thus, the overall health of many skilled racialized immigrants worsens

as they end up in survival jobs and poverty (Premji et al., 2014), the latter becomes a cost to Canada's social welfare system.

Several of the participants shared that their overall health has worsened since they immigrated to Canada. This corroborates research on the "Healthy Immigrant Effect" (HIE), which illustrated that although immigrants were often healthier than native-born people when they arrived, their health often declined as they lived in a new country (Agyekum & Newbold, 2016; Kennedy et al., 2015; Subedi & Rosenberg, 2014; Vang et al, 2015). This has implications on the health care system, as systemic discrimination contributes to health care costs (McKeary & Newbold, 2010).

Additionally, it is critical to point out that mental health and well-being needs to be in the context of not only Western science and knowledge, meaning that the participants made sense of their well-being in the context of their social relations, spirituality, families, communities, and overall quality of life. The skilled racialized immigrants' conceptualization of well-being went beyond an individualistic definition of mental health, as it included a collectivist understanding of what it meant to be "well" within their temples, churches, social supports, families, and communities.

It is critical to consider the social, historical, geographical, and political contexts of skilled racialized immigrants, as many of them experience trauma when they are forced to start from scratch in Canada. Foster (2001) noted that immigrants can experience symptoms associated with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), since there are stereotypes about immigrants that negatively affect their well-being (i.e., workplace discrimination, etc.). Similarly, Carter (2007) described how the effect of racism produced traumatic responses for minority/racialized groups. He stated:

> …the symptom manifestations of race-based traumatic stress include having reactions of intrusion (reexperiencing), avoidance (numbing) of stimuli associated with the trauma,

> and increased arousal or vigilance. In the case of racial discrimination, or racial harassment, the client's subjective appraisal of the experience is valid. (p. 84)

In this study, many of the participants' stories uncover how colonialism, epistemic violence, othering practices, negative representations, and intersectional oppressions produce traumatic responses. Immigration to Canada triggers a crisis for many of the participants, since they begin to question their purpose and the very meaning of life. This form of colonial racism is a type of trauma, as it slowly kills the spirit of those affected and has long-lasting negative effects on their overall health.

Erasure of Existence within Social Structures

During the interviews, the participants shared that they were told by the FSWP that their knowledge, existence, and being were vital for successful entry to Canada. However, they received a vastly different message from Canadian employers when their knowledge and existence were erased in certain employment spaces. Why, in these instances, were there conflicting messages from the immigration and employment systems in Canada regarding the recognition of credentials? It appears that these two systems operate in isolation of one another. In addition, each province has its own accreditation criteria for the transfer of skills in a certain profession.

Zandnia (2017) argued that the non-recognition or devaluation of foreign credentials is influenced by the process of "gatekeeping" from Canadian employers, professional organizations, and occupational licensing bodies. Canadian employers and accreditation bodies have the discretion to grant power, social status, income, and access to certain groups, while excluding others (Zandnia, 2017). The Office of The Fairness Commission in Ontario (2013) concluded that this practice excludes certain members (i.e., skilled racialized immigrants) due to their social status and group membership. Turegun (2011) noted, "professional credentials are more about the monopolization of opportunities than about the requirements of actual work in Western sinecure society" (p. 5).

As the participants illustrated in the Findings chapters, they interpret the experience of not having their credentials recognized as a form of structural and systemic racism against racialized immigrants. Turegun (2011) argued that systemic racism is embedded within the "gatekeepers" of credentials (i.e., accreditation bodies, employers, etc.), as immigration and employment structures used the excuse of not meeting "Canadian standards or experience" as a tool to discriminate against skilled racialized immigrants. The participants' negative response from Canadian employers indicates that there may be some elements of racism, heterosexism, classism, ableism, and ageism embedded in these government organizations that clash with Canada's commitment to democracy and fairness (Guo, 2009; Henry & Tator, 2006).

Canada has a conflicting attitude towards differences and fairness, since the ideologies of democracy, difference, and fairness (i.e., Charter of Rights and Freedoms) co-exist with white supremacist, ablest, heterosexist, ageist, and racist attitudes and behaviors (Guo, 2009; Henry & Tator, 2006). The research findings uncover that the study participants experience "democratic racism", since there is the "inherent conflict between egalitarian values of liberalism, justice and fairness, and the racist ideologies reflected in the collective mass belief system as well as the racist attitudes, perceptions, and assumptions of individuals" (Henry & Tator, 2006, p. 19). Democratic racism is rooted in oppressive ideologies, values, worldviews, assumptions, stereotypes, and narratives about skilled racialized immigrants. The participants in this study provide examples of how colonial racism impact their daily lives and well-being, and how it manifests in family relations.

When the participants in this study found out that their knowledge, existence, and being were vital for successful entry, they believed that Canada was upholding the principles of democracy, inclusivity, and fairness (i.e., The Charter of Rights and Freedoms). The participants felt valued and recognized as successful candidates under the FSWP. However, when the

participants' identities and realities were denied in certain employment spaces, they were the inferior "other" due to various forms of microaggressions.

Microaggressions are defined as the "everyday exchanges that send denigrating messages to certain individuals because of their group membership" (Sue, 2010, p. xvi). All the participants self-identified in the interviews as skilled racialized immigrants. The discriminatory and unfair treatment they experience in employment structures and settings in Canada are an extension of the racial and oppressive microaggressions that exist in Canada in relation to immigrants' birthplace, appearance, accent, language, age, immigration status, gender, and class. These are a form of colonial racism, as the participants are othered and treated as inferior due to where they are born. The discrimination they experience sustains the racial, gender, and class hierarchy in Canada and creates a "concrete ceiling" in terms of the lack of upward social mobility in employment structures.

The research findings corroborate the literature on this topic area, as knowledge is racialized, gendered and class-based, as Canadian employers, operating in a neoliberal economy based on worker competitiveness, keep skilled racialized immigrants from fully participating in employment structures and settings (Guo, 2009; Reitz, 2001; Premji et al., 2014). The majority of the study's participants believed that Canadian employers did not value their knowledge, existence and being, since they assumed that "third-world" and "developing" nations produced inferior knowledge compared to Western/Canadian knowledge. However, a few participants placed the responsibility of being 'successful' on the shoulders of skilled racialized immigrants, and not on the systems that produce inequities. This finding reveals how those immigrants who work and benefit from the system (i.e., settlement workers, etc.) can be co-opted, as they lack a critical analysis on how the system draws people to this country on false promises and blames them when they are not able to find secure employment in their fields (i.e., need to volunteer more, etc.). Also, the participants that put most of the responsibility of 'success' (i.e., "need to

volunteer and network more") on the shoulders of skilled racialized immigrants may have developed personal pride, accomplishment and possibly a sense of personal superiority in that they made it and other racialized skilled immigrants did not. These perspectives affect their interpretation and understanding of what it meant to be 'successful' and 'well' as a skilled racialized immigrant in Canada, while negatively projecting the opposite on those who were unable to attain such achievements.

Since Canada is part of the Global North/West, it has the financial resources and power to control how public discourse on "knowledge" and "skill" is understood both locally and globally. Foucault (1980) highlights that knowledge is power, since all knowledge is historically, socially, geographically, and culturally bound by the exchange of power (Falzon, O'Leary, & Sawicki, 2013). Knowledge is neither objective nor neutral; rather, it is rooted in power dynamics within society (Falzon, O'Leary, & Sawicki, 2013; Foucault, 1980). The idea of "truth" is linked to "a circular relation with systems of power that produce and sustain it, and to effects of power which it induces, and which extend it" (Falzon, O'Leary, & Sawicki, 2013, p. 304). Since power and knowledge are intimately connected, the employment structures in Canada are neither neutral nor objective when they assess the knowledge, being, and existence of skilled racialized immigrants. Instead, hiring practices in Canada are rooted in the colonialist and white supremacist ideologies that govern and control who is included and excluded from the labour market.

Since knowledge is socially constructed, contextually bound, and rooted in power relations, it is important to ask whose knowledge is recognized in Canadian social structures and whose knowledge is erased? While it is important to acknowledge that certain professions (i.e., medical) require certain tools and knowledge to practice in Canada, which may not exist in other countries, there are still open questions about why many employers consider skilled racialized immigrants' knowledge as inferior compared to Western/Canadian knowledge in many contexts,

While there are different provincial standards that assess foreign credentials, it is important to ask why only one-quarter of employed foreign-educated, university-level immigrants end up working in their trained profession in Canada, compared to 62% of their Canadian-born counterparts (Houle & Yssad, 2010). Recent studies have demonstrated that skilled racialized immigrants struggled to end up in professions that matches their credentials (Dean & Wilson, 2010; Premji et al., 2014; Rezazadeh & Hoover, 2018; Salami et al., 2017; Wilkinson et al., 2016).). These studies and statistic are particularly important, as they raise a critical question. Does the Canadian government base 'success' of the FSWP on the number of skilled racialized immigrants that are accepted under the program, or whether they land jobs in their respective fields? As noted in this thesis, many of these skilled racialized immigrants had the privilege to upgrade and find employment in their fields. However, from a systemic-structural perspective not everyone has the class privilege to go back to school and find work in their field.

As discussed in the Findings chapters, the assumption behind the FSWP and employment sector is that the ideal image of a skilled professional in Canada is able-bodied, young, middleclass, white, and male. In addition, it is important to question whether the assessment tools that the FSWP and Canadian employers use to assess skilled racialized immigrant's credentials are racially biased and rooted in a positivistic/colonialist understanding of knowledge. Guo (2009) illustrates that the non-recognition of knowledge and credentials is a racist tactic that the settler colonial state uses to govern and exert power over "third-world" racialized immigrants.

Many of the participants in this study describe that Canadian employers implicitly favored white people's knowledge, whereas the participants' worldviews and existence are considered inferior, since they were from "third-world" and "developing" nations. In general, there is a denial of skilled racialized immigrants' knowledge, existence and being, which is a form of colonial racism. In the present study, we could see how this denial affects the

employment experiences and well-being of the participants, with many of them being in survival jobs that are low-paid, contract-based, insecure, and lacked benefits.

Numerous studies have demonstrated that skilled racialized immigrants who come to Canada from "third-world" and "developing" countries experience downward social mobility, as their knowledge is devalued and erased (Guo, 2009; Reitz, 2001; Premji et al., 2014). This study builds on previous studies on immigration, employment, and mental health, demonstrating that knowledge in Canada is not only racialized, gendered, class-based, ageist and ablest, but also rooted in power dynamics in the neoliberal settler colonial state. The participants' stories illustrate that colonialism, neoliberal capitalism, white supremacy, ethnocentrism, patriarchy; racism, ageism, and ableism have affected their employment and social relations in Canada.

As the Findings chapters illustrated, some of the participants were from a privileged class positions when they immigrated to Canada under the FSWP. However, their class-position changed when they experienced downward social mobility. This finding revealed the ideology, hypocrisy, and contradictions in the immigration system in Canada. As discussed in the Introduction chapter, the Federal Skilled Workers Program (FSWP) developed with the aim to recruit highly educated and skilled immigrants, many of whom are racialized, to boost the economy and make Canada competitive in the global market. Thus, it is important to ask if the FSWP is meeting its target when many skilled racialized immigrants are experiencing downward social mobility. As asked earlier, does the FSWP base its 'success' on how many immigrants come to Canada, or on how many land a position in their field? As noted above, there are potential repercussions for Canada on a global level, as the messaging behind the FSWP will be questioned when skilled racialized immigrants are unable to have their credentials valued and recognized (i.e., FSWP is a tool used to cause a 'brain drain' from "third world and developing nations' and reproduce global inequalities and poverty). This will cause distrust between nations and peoples and can seriously tarnish the reputation and social standing of Canada internationally

(i.e., leader in human rights).

In addition to the deep concerns associated with FSWP, it is important to ask why the FSWP website is difficult to access and navigate? Why are applicants not able to read testimonials from previous applicants? Does the absence of testimonials serve to uphold the false narrative that Canada is a promised land to skilled racialized immigrants to prosper in? It reinforces the perspective that the program lacks transparency. Furthermore, it reinforces the idea that the FSWP and Canadian government are not to be trusted, as many skilled racialized immigrants feel betrayed when their credentials are not recognized. Therefore, it is critical to have an honest and open public conversation concerning the long-term social and economic costs for denying the knowledge and skills of skilled racialized immigrants. In the interviews, the participants claimed they were unaware of the possibility of experiencing downward social mobility when they arrived in Canada. They were surprised that they were not advised before they immigrated that they may experience downward social mobility.

The Findings chapters reveal the contradictory message of the immigration and employment structures, as they gave a false sense of security and hope to many skilled racialized immigrants about the process of having their credentials recognized. The most recent legal case in British Columbia sheds light on the contradictions associated with foreign-trained immigrants, and employment structures in Canada. It was reported in 2020 that a group of foreign-trained doctors submitted a human right claim to the Human Rights Tribunal in British Columbia. In their claim, they argued that their human rights were violated under the Charter Rights and Freedoms, as they argued that they experienced systemic racism when their skills and knowledge was not recognized by employment structures in BC (Global News, 2020). It was noted:

> The 33-page complaint, filed earlier this month, names B.C.'s Ministry of Health, the College of Physicians and Surgeons of B.C. (CPSBC) and the University of British Columbia (UBC). It claims the organizations are working together to restrict international medical graduates and foreign-trained physicians who are Canadian citizens or permanent residents from even being considered for 84 per cent of the resident

> physician positions in the province, which limits their ability to become practicing doctors, in spite of passing the exams (Global News, 2020).

This legal case sheds light on the oppressive social structures and systems that marginalize foreign-trained and skilled racialized immigrants. Also, this legal case is an example of immigrants taking control of their futures and challenging the oppression and racism they experienced.

It is important to ask why the participants were not aware of the pre-existing racial/class/gender hierarchal boxes that existed in Canadian employment settings where their credentials were not recognized? Were they aware that they needed to be a permanent resident to fully access the services and supports that newly arrived immigrants receive in Canadian society? Why was there no FSWP website that specifies these points? Thus, it should not be a surprise then that many of the participants in this study felt misled and betrayed when they were forced to start from scratch. Furthermore, the participants left their previous colonial and patriarchal spaces to enter a new colonial and patriarchal space in Canada. The general devaluation of racialized immigrants' knowledge and skills can be considered a new form of head tax in Canada (Guo, 2009), as the accreditation issue becomes the neoliberal settler colonial state's method of subordinating racialized immigrants while exerting power both locally and globally. It is this state's way of imposing domination of racialized individuals and reminding immigrants that Canada is still a globally competitive "white nation".

Revisiting Intersectionality

As the Literature Review chapter illustrated, intersectionality is a useful approach for Post-Colonial Feminist theorizing, as it helps to situate the participants' experiences within social, economic, geographical, political, and historical contexts. In addition, intersectional approach discusses how race, gender, class, and other social markers of difference intersect and interact to shape experience (Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller, and Thomas, 1995). The Findings chapters help to reveal that identities and social markers of difference go past identities that are

rigid and fixed. Rather, participants reported that their struggles went beyond the discrimination they encountered due to their skin color. Instead, the interviewees provided examples where they experienced othering and discrimination due to their birthplace, name, language, immigration status, and family dynamics. This is an important contribution to intersectionality, since there is limited research on immigration, employment, and mental health that discusses the colonialist and racist hierarchy in Canada.

In addition to the study participants' recommendations (listed in the Findings chapter), it is critical that there be an open, honest, and transparent conversation about how the erasure of participants' knowledge, being, and existence are intimately tied to violence in the neoliberal, settler colonial, state of Canada. In other words, knowledge needs to be treated fairly. As the findings of this study illustrated, skilled racialized immigrants' knowledge, being, and existence are treated as being inferior due to their social locations and birthplace. This form of social exclusion is rooted in microaggressions, macro economic, social, and political conditions contributing to unequal power relations, othering practices, negative representations, epistemic violence, colonial racism, and intersectional oppressions, all of which affected skilled racialized immigrant's well-being. In addition to these important personal effects, the erasure of skilled racialized immigrants' knowledge and humanity influences Canada's multicultural project as well.

The Canadian government has manufactured a narrative that Canadian society is a multicultural, inclusive, welcoming society that celebrates diversity. So, how do the experiences of skilled racialized immigrants play into the rosy narrative that the Canadian government has created? When skilled racialized immigrants experience othering and discrimination in Canadian employment settings, it undermines the credibility of the multicultural project in Canada. When there is a lack of representation of racialized immigrants in all levels of employment, it gives the impression that multiculturalism is lip service and not a reality for workers from diverse

backgrounds. It sends the message that various employment settings are not equitable, inclusive, and welcoming to all individuals, regardless of place of birth, gender, sexuality, class, age, or abilities. Lastly, it undermines human rights in Canada, as it sends contradictory and conflicting messages about social justice in this country.

Before there can be a discussion on public policy and practices in Canada, we need to have an open and honest conversation about how Canada is a neoliberal captialist settler colonial state that still holds onto White supremacist, colonialist, ablest, heterosexist, and ageist ideologies about differences. It is important to examine how immigration and employment systems in Canada implicitly favor white people's knowledge over that of racialized peoples immigrating from "third-world" and "developing" nations. We need to analyze the power imbalances that exist in relationships and social structures. How does the power imbalance in immigration and employment settings favor certain groups, while marginalizing, excluding, and exploiting others? As noted above, the goals and objectives of FSWP and Canadian employers are not aligned. The immigration system tells skilled racialized immigrants that their skills and knowledge matter, but they receive a quite different message from employers. It is important to critically explore how these differences are valued and treated in Canadian society, and question whether it is merely lip service (i.e., language of diversity and cultural competency) or a reality for all individuals, regardless of their social location.

As this chapter illustrated, many skilled racialized immigrants experience distress when they encounter discrimination in the workplace. The participants in this study shared personal accounts of unfair treatment and discrimination. Their distress needs to be understood not only in the context of individual analysis, but also regarding systemic inequities within immigration and employment structures in Canada that treat the skills of skilled racialized immigrants from "third world nations" as inferior.

In this chapter I uncovered that certain employers believe that their educational and professional standards are superior due to colonialist and racist stereotypes about skilled racialized immigrants. This critical point uncovers the contradictions embedded within the FSWP and raises the important question as to how the Canadian government defines 'success' for an immigration program designed to recruit the most educated and skilled immigrants from abroad. Is 'success' based upon how many skilled racialized immigrants are accepted under the FSWP (i.e., deliverables), or whether they find jobs in their fields that give them purpose, meaning, and good health?

As noted throughout this chapter and thesis, many skilled racialized immigrants experience the Healthy Immigrant Effect when their health declines over time in Canada (Agyekum & Newbold, 2016; Kennedy et al., 2015; Subedi & Rosenberg, 2014; Vang et al, 2015). There are serious social, financial, and health costs associated with this, since epistemic violence associated with not having credentials recognized has long lasting effects on relations between individuals and nations. It undermines the multicultural project in Canada, and negatively affects the mental health and well-being of skilled racialized immigrants and their families. It creates mistrust and racial/class divisions in society. Also, it impacts social work education and practice since many social workers serve racialized immigrants. In addition, this study has helped challenge the notion that trauma is traditionally only associated with refugees in Canada, not with skilled racialized immigrants.

This study contributes to the discussion on racialized immigrants and trauma, as there is no existing scholarship examining the traumas that skilled racialized immigrants experienced through the FSWP. This study opens this angle for further research. It is important to ask why trauma is associated with individual traumas/memories, when there are shared collective experiences of social exclusion and othering practices in society that impact the overall wellbeing of skilled racialized immigrants and their families. Lastly, before there can be recommendations about how to make the FSWP more inclusive and fair there needs to be an

open and honest discussion as to how immigration and employment practices are rooted in a neoliberal, White supremacist, heterosexist, ageist, ablest, patriarchal, and colonialist discourses that treats skilled racialized immigrants as the "other". As the stories of the participants revealed, skilled racialized immigrant men and women experience the othering process differently in Canada. For example, several of the women participants were underemployed and took on the dual role of childcare provider at home. The gendered nature of care is evident in the findings and highlights how intersectional oppression impacts the participants' well-being and mental health.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to explore how skilled racialized immigrants (SRIs) make sense of their well-being when they immigrate to Canada under the Federal Skilled Workers Program (FSWP). To fulfill this purpose, I use an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) approach, guided by a post-colonial feminist and intersectional lens to conduct 12 qualitative semi-structured interviews with individuals who self-identify as skilled racialized immigrants. The decolonizing theoretical orientation aligns well with the research method in this thesis, since it views the participants as the true knowers of their well-being.

My epistemological and ontological perspective is that the participants in this study are the real experts when it comes to making sense of well-being. Thus, I adopt a critical scientific approach when exploring the two research questions:

1) How do skilled racialized immigrants (SRIs) who immigrate and work in Canada under the Federal Skilled Workers Program (FSWP) make sense of well-being?
2) How do SRIs perceive the influence of social structures (i.e., employment settings) in Canada on their well-being?

Original Contribution

This study contributes to research on immigration, employment, and mental health, since there is a paucity of qualitative research that critically explores how skilled racialized immigrants make sense of well-being when their foreign-trained credentials are not recognized. Despite a large body of research examining the economic outcomes of foreign skilled workers and immigrants admitted in the economic class generally (Fleras, 2014; Hou, Lu, & Schimmele, 2020; Picot, Hou, & Coulombe, 2008; Simmons, 2010), there is limited research that critically analyzes how colonial racism embedded in in social structures (i.e., immigration and

employment) impacts well-being. As noted throughout this thesis, this form of othering practice affects the mental health and well-being of skilled racialized immigrants and their families.

This study sought to fill in the gap in research by exploring how skilled racialized immigrants' experience and understand well-being when they had to start from scratch in Canada. The study expands on previous research on immigration, employment, and mental health, as it provides context as to how and why many skilled racialized immigrants experience distress when they were told that their knowledge, identities, and existence did not matter in certain Canadian employment spaces. Thus, there are implications for policy.

Implications for Policy

This study demonstrates that policy makers need to consider the participants' interpretations and experiences of immigrating to Canada under the Federal Skilled Workers Program (FSWP). These experiences were quite complex, as the participants did not share the same experiences and interpretations. Yet, there is a collective agreement that the denial of credentials creates distress for skilled racialized immigrants and their family members. There are serious social and health care costs that policy makers need to consider. These health care and social costs need to be placed in the context of the structural inequities and unjust conditions under neoliberal capitalism, and their impact in creating and sustaining the unfair treatment of skilled racialized immigrants and their families.

The findings illustrate that it is critical that the FSWP and employment standards take a more equitable and inclusive approach when assessing the qualifications and skills of racialized immigrants. For example, many of the participants went back to school in Canada to gain knowledge in their fields. However, not all the participants had the privilege to go back to school, as the participant's gender and class impacted this decision, meaning several of the women in the study discussed their role as childcare providers at home. Many of the participants ended up in an unrelated field (i.e., food sector, etc.) as they struggled to survive and make ends

meet in Canada. It is critical that policy makers and social workers do not ignore these realities, since the participants made it clear that they lost faith in the 'system' that was supposed to look out for their interests and well-being.

Implications for Social Work: Moving Beyond Cultural Competency

As this thesis discussed, skilled racialized immigrants experience various forms of oppression and injustice in the micro, meso, and macro levels of society. Many skilled racialized immigrants experience the 'Healthy Immigrant Effect', which means that although immigrants are often healthier than native-born people when they arrive, their health often declines as they live in a new country (Agyekum & Newbold, 2016; Kennedy et al., 2015; Subedi & Rosenberg, 2014; Vang et al, 2015). This thesis uncovers that there are social and economic costs when skilled racialized immigrants are treated unfairly in the workplace, since many of them experience mental health struggles.

The participants in this study discuss that current immigration and newcomer services are inadequate in meeting their needs. This is a particularly important finding, since there are costs associated with accessing services and supports from social workers. Therefore, it is important that social workers take a critical self-reflexive approach in their practice, and question 'culturally competent practices' that treats all racialized immigrants as being the same. Rather, social workers need to go beyond cultural competency models, and critically analyze how their positions of power affect the lives of the people they serve and support.

Social work education on immigration has a long history of training social work students with cultural competency approaches (Padilla, 1997). This approach encourages social work students and practitioners to be sensitive and aware of cultural differences in their interaction with clients (Bhuyan, Park, & Rundle, 2012; Padilla, 1997). Recently, cultural competency approaches have come under scrutiny for not acknowledging structural determinants of health of immigrants, and power dynamics in social work settings (Bhuyan, Park, & Rundle; 2012; Pon,

2009; Sakamoto, 2007). Similarly, the participants in this study question why immigrant and newcomer programs are more concerned with their own deliverables, then meeting the realities and needs of racialized immigrants in their communities. As noted above, it is important that social workers take a self-reflexive approach that recognizes the history and impact of capitalism/colonialism/racism in social work education and practice (Pon, 2009).

While there has been a push by the Canadian Association of Social Work Education (CASWE) and Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW) to be more inclusive of refugees and immigrants, they are still not largely included in the training at various levels of social work education and practice (Yan and Chan, 2010). Social workers provide services to vulnerable populations that need supports. The participants in this study shared countless stories of experiencing discrimination due to othering practices, intersectional oppression, epistemic violence, and colonial racism. If social workers are unable to examine their own hidden biases, privileges, and position of power, they may inadvertently pressure their clients to assimilate and adopt the worldviews and perspectives of the worker.

Sakamoto (2007) interviewed skilled immigrants and critically examined cultural competency models. The author notes:

> What needs to be understood here is that immigrant service providers work within government-funded programs, which implicitly assume structural assimilationist views under the guise of 'immigrant integration,' and are therefore limited in their roles as professional (p.527).

Similarly, Pon (2009) examined the role of social workers in welfare systems and found that "cultural competency promotes an obsolete view of culture and is a form of new racism" (p.59). Cultural competency needs to be critically explored, as it can be argued that it is an ontology of forgetting how colonialism and racism are embedded in social policy and practices in the history of social work education (Pon, 2009). Therefore, social workers have a responsibility to their clients and profession to advocate for structural change. The participants indicated that it is critical that the realities and voices of immigrants are considered. Without a

critical self-reflexive lens, advocacy, and activism, there is a danger that social workers will reinforce existing mainstream Canadian ideologies that treat racialized immigrants as the "foreign other." These racist and colonialist ideologies need to be challenged in social work education, practice, programming, and policy. For example, CASWE's vision for social work education is to critically examine power relations in society, and dismantle inequitable social structures (CASWE, 2021, para.1). To uphold the values of the profession, CASWE encourages social work programs to advocate for a just world based on humanitarian and democratic ideals (CASWE, 2021, para. 1).

Recommendations:

Participants in this study proposed a series of recommendations regarding the FSWP based on the themes of transparency, a navigation program within the system, and fairer assessment of credentials described below followed by specified recommendations.

Transparency

The Canadian government and FSWP made the participants believe that they would find employment in their trained profession. When this did not happen, the participants felt betrayed, misled, and cheated by the immigration and employment systems in Canada. The participants were not able to make sense as to why the Canadian government would allow them to enter the country, only to watch them struggle in society.

As discussed throughout this thesis, the Canadian government has recruited highly educated and qualified immigrants from abroad. However, many skilled racialized immigrants are experiencing downward social mobility and poverty when they settle in Canada. Clearly, the goals and objectives of the FSWP are not congruent and consistent with the results of the program (i.e., that many skilled racialized immigrants were unable to practice in their trained professions).

Some of the participants describe how FSWP and newcomer programs are more interested in meeting their own deliverables than assisting skilled racialized immigrants to find employment in their trained professions. They discuss that newcomer programs and settlement services in Canada are ineffective in addressing the employment needs of skilled racialized immigrants, since they provide minimal supports such as job searching and resume editing. They do not address the structural challenges that skilled racialized immigrants experience when they look for work in their field (i.e., non-recognition of credentials by employers and occupational licensing bodies due to discrimination, etc.). So, it is important to ask, why are the outcome measures of immigration programs based on numbers of skilled racialized immigrants who used the service, and not on how many land jobs in their respective fields? What measures are being used to assess the successes of immigration policies and programs in Canada? It is critical that policy makers and government officials address these important questions and place them in the context of a Canadian society that still holds on to racist and colonialist beliefs of immigration from racialized and "Third World" countries.

In addition, it is critical that the Federal government is fully transparent that the criteria FSWP uses to recruit highly skilled racialized immigrants is not the same criteria that employers use to assess the skills and qualifications of applicants. The fact that there is no FSWP centralized website is very telling. It reveals and illuminates the secrecy of the program and reinforces that the Canadian government and immigration systems are hiding something from skilled racialized immigrants and the Canadian public (i.e., how life may look like for some immigrants and their families).

Recommendations:

1. FSWP create central website that provides transparent and honest information regarding what to expect as an immigrant to Canada (e.g., type of jobs that are in demand in Canada, testimonials from previous applicants, etc.).

2. A collaborative network between the federal and provincial governments with the immigration sector be developed to assist immigrants to find work in their fields. Newcomer programs need to go beyond providing minimal supports (i.e., resume writing) and help to address structural determinants of health (i.e., anti-racism workshops and education, advocacy, peer support groups, finding employment in one's field, etc.).
3. The FSWP and immigration system in Canada needs to be fully transparent about how they conceptualize and operationalize the deliverables of their program. As noted above, emphasis needs to be placed on how many skilled racialized immigrants land jobs in their respective fields as outcome measures rather than by the number who use the FSWP.

Navigation Program

As the participants discussed in the Findings chapters, they had little to no formal supports from the Canadian government once they immigrated to Canada. Some of the participants mentioned that they felt very alone once they arrived at the airport, as they were left on their own to navigate a new society. As a result, the Canadian government needs to be more proactive in supporting skilled racialized immigrants and their family members when they make the transition and immigrate to Canada. One way to be more proactive is to offer a navigation program to assist skilled racialized immigrants to understand and work within the system.

The Canadian government needs to move beyond its preoccupation with "human capital" to recognize and care about the lived realities of people who have immigrated here. It needs to consider the real challenges associated with transitioning to and settling in a new country. As I uncovered in this thesis, not all immigrants have the same experiences. This navigation program needs to use an intersectional and social justice lens, by not treating all immigrants under the FSWP the same. As the participants' quotes and stories revealed, skilled racialized immigrant women experience structural violence in society differently than men. This navigation program

needs to have a strong equity, diversity, and inclusivity (EDI) lens to support individuals coming to Canada.

Recommendations:

4. The federal government needs to create a navigation program that helps immigrants that come to Canada under the FSWP. Applicants would be notified of this opportunity before they immigrate to Canada, and they would be matched with a 'navigator coordinator' that provides supports via mentorship, peer supports, etc. The navigator would be available to support newly arrived immigrants and family members to settle on their feet and into a new system. The navigation program coordinators would be trained in intersectionality/EDI and collaborate with community organizations to assist individuals in finding the right services/supports.

Fairer Assessment of Credentials

The non-recognition or devaluation of foreign credentials is influenced by the process of "gatekeeping" from Canadian employers, professional organizations, and occupational licensing bodies (Zandnia, 2017). Zandnia (2017) discussed that institutions that assess the credentials of foreign-trained immigrants have the power to grant access to certain groups, while excluding others. The participants describe that they are socially excluded by accreditation bodies and Canadian employers when their knowledge, skills and existence are not valued.

As the participants illustrated in the Findings chapters, they interpret the experience of not having their credentials recognized as a form of structural and systemic racism and intersectional violence. The thesis findings reveal that systemic racism and othering practices are embedded within the "gatekeepers" via credentials (i.e., accreditation bodies, employers, etc.), as immigration and employment structures justify the need to gain "Canadian standards or experience" as a tool to discriminate against skilled racialized immigrants. It is important to note that the process of assessing and evaluating foreign credentials are quite complex, as there is

racist, sexist, ablest, ageist, and class-based biases that influence how credentials are assessed and valued (Guo, 2009).

It is important to have a fairer and more equitable approach to evaluate and assess the credentials and skills of immigrants who come to Canada under the FSWP. It is important to question why certain immigrants experience social exclusion due to their group membership. Is the phrase "needing more Canadian experience and meeting Canadian standards" coded language that accreditors and employers do not value knowledge from racialized immigrants? This needs to be further critically explored.

Recommendations:

5. That the federal and provincial levels of governments formulate a standardized assessment process of foreign credentials that is equitable and transparent (e.g., fair appeal process). In addition, institute a third body organization to review the assessment of credentials by licensing bodies to ensure that biases were not influencing the evaluation process.

Employment Equity Legislation

As the participants discussed in the Finding's chapters, they experienced unfair treatment and discrimination from Canadian employers. Canadian employers routinely told them that they need 'Canadian experience' to practice in their fields. In addition, employers are not routinely held accountable when they socially exclude racialized immigrants from their workspaces, since they are not mandated to take equity, diversity, and inclusivity seriously. As a result, they have the power to discriminate against skilled racialized immigrants and use coded language that they need 'Canadian experience'.

6. *Recommendation:*

   Employment equity policy needs to be legislated across Canada and made mandatory for all provincial and territorial organizations. All provinces and territories need to bring in employment equity legislation, so that the policy will expand the number of employers covered. Currently, the Employment Equity Act only applies to the following industries and workplaces: federally regulated industries, crown corporations, federal organizations with 100 employees or more, and portions of the federal public administration (Canada.ca, 2020). ‘

Universal Child Care and Increase Minimum Wage

In addition to the recommendations listed above, it is critical that there is universal child care coverage and an increase in mimum wage earnings in Canada. When there are little social buffers to protect workers from neoliberal capitalism, they are more likely to live in poverty. Policy makers need to take into account the unfair macro conditions that place immigrant workers at a disadvantage.

Study Limitations and Future Research Directions

In addition to the strengths and original contributions of this thesis, there are some limitations related to sample size. This is intentional, as the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) approach encourages researchers to use a small sample size when exploring a phenomenon. As a result, there are specific reasons for why the sample size is small.

Also, there are limits to theoretical generalizability, as the goal was never to claim that the findings of this study were to be generalized to the broader population. However, the research findings can be transferrable, as the themes uncovered a pattern and trend that skilled racialized immigrant’s experience health deterioration due to structural determinants of health (i.e., discrimination, othering practices, etc.).

Future studies on this topic area can employ qualitative and quantitative approaches and critically assess the goals of the Federal Skilled Workers Program (FSWP). For example, future studies could use a wider cross-section of skilled racialized immigrants to examine the outcome measures of FSWP and newcomer programs. As asked earlier, what measures are being used to assess the successes of immigration policies and programs in Canada? Future studies on this topic area can explore this question in more detail.

In addition, future studies would benefit from a longitudinal approach to track the career trajectories of skilled racialized immigrant's overtime. This study focused on newly arrived immigrants that have lived in Canada at least 4 years. Future studies could explore if the Healthy Immigrant Effect is still relevant for immigrants residing in Canada for a longer period. Unique factors may emerge from the studies, such as changes in well-being and mental health due to geography (i.e., living in a big city with more cultural supports compared to a smaller town with limited resources and supports).

Lastly, there needs to be more research on the association between not having credentials recognized and trauma. The field of mental health of highly educated and skilled racialized immigrants is still new. More research can uncover and understand how premigration, migration, and post-migration factors influences the well-being of skilled racialized immigrants and their families.

Conclusion

This thesis consisted of seven chapters. Chapter 1 provided an overview of the topic area and discussed the history of the Federal Skilled Workers Program (FSWP). Chapter 2 reviewed existing scholarship and literature and provided a detailed account as to why Post Colonial Feminism (PCD) and the intersectional approach aligned well to address the purpose of this study and research questions. Chapter 3 discussed why Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was a helpful research design to study how participants made sense of their well-being when they immigrated to Canada. Chapters 4 and 5 presented the key

findings of this study, and chapter 6 critically analyzed them through discussion. This chapter concluded by providing recommendations for future research, policy, and social work practice.

Lastly, we are still in the middle of a major pandemic due to COVID. CBC (2020) reported that new immigrants in Canada, many who are racialized, are disproportionately affected by COVID. Many racialized immigrants in Canada are essential workers, and in precarious positions. They are at greater risk of contracting the virus. When skilled racialized immigrants are unable to find secure employment in their fields, they end up in overcrowded communities due to poverty, racial, gender, and class inequities. Policy makers and social workers need to consider social and structural determinants of health when serving and supporting racialized immigrants and their families.

As the findings chapters uncovered, the participants shared very personal stories of experiencing intersectional violence when their credentials were not recognized. As one participant mentioned, it is like an iceberg, and most Canadians can only see the tip of the iceberg (e.g. credentials not being recognized). However, what they fail to see is what is at the bottom of the sea (e.g. epistemic violence, colonial racism, unjust structural conditions, health challenges, family strain, etc.). The participants recognized that their understanding of well-being is associated with social and structural determinants of health. For example, they saw their well-being is directly associated with the discrimination they encounter in society, and proper access to resources and supports (e.g. affordable housing, employment in trained field, peer supports, etc.).

This thesis explored how well-being is associated with the inequitable programs, policies, and neoliberal practices that treat immigrant workers, not as human beings, but as untapped "human capital," and, at the same time, incompetent and illegitimate knowers. As the findings chapters uncovered, these unfair and inhumane practices negatively impact the overall well-being of racialized immigrants and their families. This is why individualized remedies (e.g.

CBT) are not sufficient to transform the inequitable macro conditions that sustain the unfair treatment of racialized immigrants that come to Canadas under the FSWP. Rather, the participants shared that there needs to be social and structural transformation in society, so that racialized immigrants are treated with dignity, fairness, and respect.

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Approval Period:	**03/31/17-03/31/18**

Tower ETHICS APPROVAL

To: **Sasan Issari**
Graduate Student of Social Work, Faculty of Liberal Arts & Professional Studies

From: Alison M. Collins-Mrakas, Sr. Manager and Policy Advisor, Research Ethics
(on behalf of Denise Henriques, Chair, Human Participants Review Committee)

Date: Friday, March 31, 2017

Title: **The Construction of the 'Healthy Working' Immigrant**

I am writing to inform you that this research project, **"The Construction of the 'Healthy**

Working' Immigrant" has received ethics review and approval by the Human Participants Review Sub-Committee, York University's Ethics Review Board and conforms to the standards of the Canadian Tri-Council Research Ethics guidelines.

Note that approval is granted for one year. Ongoing research – research that extends beyond one year – must be renewed prior to the expiry date.

Any changes to the approved protocol must be reviewed and approved through the amendment process by submission of an amendment application to the HPRC prior to its implementation.

Any adverse or unanticipated events in the research should be reported to the Office of Research ethics (ore@yorku.ca) as soon as possible.

For further information on researcher responsibilities as it pertains to this approved research ethics protocol, please refer to the attached document, **"RESEARCH ETHICS: PROCEDURES to ENSURE ONGOING COMPLIANCE".**

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me

Yours sincerely,

Alison M. Collins-Mrakas M.Sc., LLM

Sr. Manager and Policy Advisor

RESEARCH ETHICS: PROCEDURES to ENSURE ONGOING COMPLIANCE

Upon receipt of an ethics approval certificate, researchers are reminded that they are required to ensure that the following measures are undertaken so as to ensure on-going compliance with Senate and TCPS ethics guidelines:

1. **RENEWALS:** Research Ethics Approval certificates are subject to annual renewal. **It is the responsibility of researchers to ensure the timely submission of renewals.**

a. As a courtesy, researchers will be reminded by ORE, in advance of certificate expiry, that the certificate must be renewed. Please note, however, it is the expectation that researchers will submit a renewal application prior to the expiration of ethics certificate(s).
b. **Failure to renew an ethics approval certificate** (or to notify ORE that no further research involving human participants will be undertaken) **may result in suspension of research cost fund and access to research funds may be suspended/ withheld**.

2. **AMENDMENTS:** Amendments must be reviewed and approved **PRIOR** to undertaking/making the proposed amendments to an approved ethics protocol;

3. **END OF PROJECT**: ORE must be notified when a project is complete;

4. **ADVERSE EVENTS**: Adverse events must be reported to ORE as soon as possible;

5. **POST APPROVAL MONITORING:**

a. More than minimal risk research may be subject to post approval monitoring as per TCPS guidelines;
b. A spot sample of minimal risk research may similarly be subject to Post Approval Monitoring as per TCPS guidelines.

FORMS: As per the above, the following forms relating to on-going research ethics compliance are available on the Research website: a. Renewal
b. Amendment

c. End of Project
d. Adverse Event

Appendix B: Recruitment Poster

HAVE YOUR EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCES AS A SKILLED IMMIGRANT IMPACTED YOUR WELL-BEING?

Hi, my name is Sasan Issari, and I am a PhD student in the School of Social Work at York University. I am conducting a study to understand the experiences of immigrants who came under the Federal Skilled Worker Program. My hope is that the study will contribute to making positive changes in programs and policies related to employment for immigrants and support for their well-being.

Are you an immigrant who came to Canada under the Federal Skilled Worker Program? I am hoping to interview immigrant men and women who:

1. Are over 18
2. Self-identify as a racialized immigrant
3. Have lived in Canada for at least four years
4. Have immigrated to Canada under the Federal Skilled Worker Program
5. Have worked in jobs where credentials were not recognized
6. Preferably, professionals in regulated field

If you fit this description, please consider participating in an interview that should take no longer than 90 minutes of your time to complete. Participation is completely voluntary, and you can withdraw at any time. The interviews will be confidential, and your answers will remain anonymous. In other words, any information such as your name and the name of employers will not be identified. If childcare is a significant issue for you, I will offer 30 dollars toward childcare so that you are able to participate.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please contact me.

Looking forward to hearing your experience!

Appendix C: Informed Consent Form

Study Name:

The Construction of the 'Healthy Working' Immigrant

Researcher: Sasan Issari, PhD thesis research
School of Social Work, York University
4700 Keele Street, Toronto, Ontario, M3J 1P3

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the well-being of 'skilled racialized immigrants' (SRIs) who came to Canada under the Federal Skilled Workers Program (FSWP). I use terms 'well-being' and 'mental health' interchangeably, but don't define them because I would like to get a better understanding of what study participant mean by these words. The goal of this proposed study is to understand the meaning that SRIs who come to Canada under the FSWP make of well-being

This study has two objectives:

- To learn about how SRIs who came to work in Canada under the FSWP make sense of well-being.
- To explore the impacts of classism, racism, sexism, and ableism, on the well-being of SRIs.

What You Will Be Asked to Do

You will participate in a 1 to 1.5 hours-long one-on-one interview. The focus of this interview will be on your experiences as a skilled immigrant, particularly as these experiences relate to well-being and employment. The interviews will be conducted in English. The interview will be audio recorded with your permission and transcribed. Also, you will be asked to review a summary of the initial results for your feedback about how accurately the initial findings reflect your experiences. For your involvement, you will be reimbursed $30 dollars for any childcare expenses that were used during the interview.

Risks and Discomforts

The risks of participating in this study are no more than what you would encounter when talking about your experiences to others in everyday life. Any risks will be minimized by my commitment to following ethical guidelines. For example, I will ensure confidentiality, anonymity, and the voluntary nature of your participation and will securely store and manage all data. Although I am asking you to share your experiences of employment, as I explain under the section called 'Confidentiality and Anonymity', I will take utmost care so that information you share cannot be traced back to you. I will do this by anonymizing the transcripts. In addition, you are not obliged to discuss anything which you do not wish to talk about. You will not be coerced

to share any experience that you wish not to share. I am asking participants to share their experiences of working and living in Canada as an immigrant, which aspects of this experience that you share are completely up to you. You can withdraw from this study at any time if you choose to, even after the interviews are over. You can stop the interview, stop the recording, or withdraw entirely from the interview at any time. There will not be any negative consequences of doing so, from me, the agency, or York University. I will check to make sure you feel safe and comfortable throughout the interview, provide a clear framework of the research objectives, and explain that you can leave any time during the study. In addition, I will provide a list of resources regarding community supports in Toronto.

Benefits of the Research / Benefits to You

You may directly or indirectly benefit if you participate in this research. Some of these possible benefits include feeling empowered by sharing stories, and feeling positive about your experiences as a skilled immigrant. Your participation will contribute to research on immigration, employment, and well-being, and raise awareness about policy and practices in employment, immigration, and mental health. One potential benefit of this study is to address the gaps in both scholarly research and literature about the experiences of racialized skilled immigrants in employment. The potential benefit to society is that this study may increase our knowledge and understanding about ways to support the well-being of skilled immigrants in Canada.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary and you may choose to stop participating at any time. Your decision not to participate or to discontinue participation will not influence the nature of your relationship with me or the nature of your relationship with York University either now, or in the future.

Withdrawal from the Study

You may stop participating in the study at any time, for any reason, if you so decide. Your decision to stop participating, or to refuse to answer particular questions, will not affect your relationship with the researcher, York University, or any other group associated with this project. In the event that you withdraw from the study, all associated data collected will be immediately destroyed wherever possible. If you decide to stop participating, all associated data collected will be immediately destroyed wherever possible. Also, you will still be eligible to receive the promised $30-dollar child care compensation for agreeing to be in the project.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

You will not be identified in any reports or publications personally. Your name, the name of the organization you work for, or any identifying information will not be used in the study. Furthermore, if you wish, you can choose any name that you would like to use during the interview. When the audio recorded data is transcribed, all identifying information about people, situations, and organizations will be removed and no one but the principal investigator will know the identity of the participant. There may be a hired professional

transcriber who will listen to the audio recording. This transcriber will sign a pledge form ensuring that confidentiality will be upheld. Transcriptions will be stored on a password protected computer (and USB stick) in a locked file cabinet at the principal investigator's residence. All data will have been completely anonymized. I will ensure that no one knows you participated in this study, including anyone from the agency where you may have heard about this study. The data will be kept for 5 years after completion of the PhD however, in the event of publishing the results of the study, the data will be held until completion of publication.

The principal investigator and his committee (Dr. Atsuko Matsuoka, Dr. Norene Pupo, and Dr. Maria Liegghio) will be the only people who have access to the anonymized transcripts. A final report of the findings will be provided to interested participants, as well as to interested community organizations or groups. Excerpts or quotations of your words from the transcripts may be used in a final report of the findings, other publications or in conference presentations. Your name will not be used in the release of the findings or in any publications. Furthermore, when using direct quotations, all identifying information about you or about the people or situations you describe will be altered or stripped so as to not reveal identities. Confidentiality will be ensured to the fullest extent possible, except as required by law to follow a court order or to notify police or the Children's Aid Society of any child endangerment concerns, such as suspected abuse of a minor.

Questions about the Research?

If you have any questions about the research in general, or your role in the study, you can contact me, Sasan Issari, directly during working hours (8-4pm, Monday-Friday). Also, you have the option to contact my supervisor, Professor Atsuko Matsuoka, School of Social Work, York University. In addition, you can contact the Faculty of Graduate Studies at York University at 416-736-2100 (ext. 55521).

This research has been reviewed and approved by the Human Participants Review SubCommittee, York University's Ethics Review Board and conforms to the standards of the Canadian Tri-Council Research Ethics guidelines. If you have any questions about this process, or about your rights as a participant in the study, you may contact the Senior Manager and Policy Advisor for the Office of Research Ethics, 5th Floor, York Research Tower, York University, telephone 416-736-5914 or e-mail ore@yorku.ca.

Legal Rights and Signatures

I, _____, consent to participate in the above-described research conducted by Sasan Issari. I understand the nature of this project and wish to participate. I understand that I am not waiving any of my legal rights by signing this form. My signature below indicates my consent.

Please initial below to indicate your understanding:

_____ I understand the procedures and consent to participate in this study.

_____ I consent to being audio-taped during the interview.

_____ I consent to being contacted about participating in a follow-up telephone interview after the initial interview.

_____ I consent to a hired individual transcribing the audio tapes.

_____ I consent to the use of quotations (words or phrases from the interview) in a final report and in papers for publication.

I have read and understand the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study. My signature below indicates my consent.

Signature Date

_____ _____

Participant

Signature Date

_____

Principal Investigator

Appendix D: Sample Interview Questions

(The questions and probes here are for my own information and will not be shared with potential participants.)

Preamble: Thank you for agreeing to share your experience.

Tell me a little bit about you before we start?

1st half of Interview: (General questions regarding immigration and employment)

Expectations prior to coming to Canada and FSWP

1) When did you come to Canada under the FSWP and what kind of qualification or skills were required? Have your hopes and expectations of living in Canada changed since you immigrated? If yes, what has changed, and how does this feel like to you? Probes: Social Status, etc.

2) When thinking of the FSWP, do you consider it fair? (Probes: meeting expectations, acted as a burden, geography, etc.). What effect has coming to Canada under the FSWP impacted your well-being?

Experiences Working in Canada

3) Describe what it was like for you to find a job? (emotionally, physically, etc.) What helped or hindered the process? Were there things that could have helped with the process? (probe for well-being related to community supports and government services. Maybe ask a scaling question: on a scale of one to ten, one being easy and ten being difficult, how would you rate the ease for finding a job?)

4) Have you experienced any unfair treatment in current or former jobs? Probes: discrimination, Credentials not recognized, Supports, etc. How have your work experiences in Canada impacted your life? (Probes: emotions, relationships, length looking for work, types of jobs, Social, Family, Employment/Financial, Community, were expectations met.

Their experience and perception of well-being

5) What does well-being mean to you? (Probes: connection to body and emotions, connection to community and friends/family, connection to culture/environment/spirituality, and connection to social structures and services/supports)

6) How have your emotions been like since you migrated and worked in Canada? Probes:

sadness, anger, fears, hopelessness, grief, substances, seeing/hearing things, etc.

7) Would you tell me if the work you have/had is/was stressful? If yes, how do/did you manage? Probes: Individual, Family, Community, etc. How about at home? Do you find the home life is stressful? If yes, how did/do you manage? If no, what helps to keep the home life manageable?

8) Tell me about the influence your work and home life have on your well-being. What supports do you have here and back home? Probes: Community Supports, gaps in Services, etc.

9) Have you received supports/services from a social worker or counsellor in the past? (Probe: Role of social; worker, etc.). Is there anything you would like social workers, employment counselors, or other people migrating under the FSWP to know?

Appendix E – Resources

Distress Centre of Toronto/Ontario
416-408-4357 (help)
https://www.torontodistresscentre.com/ **Toronto**
211 http://www.211toronto.ca/topic/health-care
1-888-340-1001
Contact a nurse at Telehealth Ontario
1-866-797-0000
Mental Health Hotline Ontario
1-866-531-2600 or mentalhealthhelpline.ca
Drug and Alcohol Helpline
1-800-565-8603 or drugandalcoholhelpline.ca

Appendix F – Confidentiality Agreement

Project Title: (Note: Must be the title as it appears on the protocol form as submitted)	The Construction of the 'Healthy Working' Immigrant
Principal Investigator:	Sasan Issari

I _ _____ (name of team member) understand confidential information will be made known to me as (please check all that apply):

[ ] an interpreter [ ] a transcriber
[ ] an audio assistant [ ] a video assistant
[ ] a research assistant
[ ] other (please specify) _____ for a study being conducted by Professor/Dr. _____ of the Department of _____, York University, I agree keep all information collected during this study confidential, and will not reveal by speaking, communicating or transmitting this information in written, electronic (disks, tapes, transcripts, email) or any other manner to anyone outside the research team. Further, I agree that final disposition of all data must be in accordance with the approved protocol and/or agreement with the Principal Investigator.

I am familiar with the Tri-Council Policy statement and have been apprised of my responsibilities with respect to the ethical conduct of research involving human participants and adhering to the approved protocol

Name of Research Team Member:	
Signature of Research Team Member:	
Date:	

Name of Principal Investigator:	
Signature of Principal Investigator:	
Date:	