Stories of Racialized Internationally Trained Post-Secondary Educators

Re-entering their Professions

By

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education
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Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto

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Abstract

This research project investigates the job search experiences of racialized internationally trained educators seeking to re-enter their professions in Canada. Previous studies have made extensive headway in understanding the job-search experiences of racialized immigrants. Specifically, some studies have demonstrated that racism is endemic to the Canadian labour-market, while others have concluded that work experience and credentials obtained in some countries are systematically undervalued in the Canadian labour-market. Further, studies have demonstrated that factors such as non English sounding names and accents can greatly limit some individuals’ job opportunities. Despite this widespread consensus, narrative accounts of job search experiences are almost entirely absent from present research. Hence, in distinction from the quantitative methods of the majority of recent studies of the subject, this work relies on the narratives of racialized immigrant educators for its principal empirical evidence.

The counter narratives assembled in this work provide a unique and unprecedented insight into the experience of racialized immigrant educators in the Canadian job-market. Through interviews with racialized immigrant educators from various educational, racial and
political backgrounds, this study seeks to explore the challenges that are faced by some racialized immigrants in Canada. The results of this study confirm the consensus in the existing literature, but also demonstrate that discrimination against racialized immigrants has often been greatly under-stated. The narratives suggest that racialized immigrant educators experience significant discrimination during the job search process and in Canadian society in general. Further, this study reveals the extent to which the discrimination faced by racialized Canadian immigrants is not the result of single factors—such as race, accent, non English names and culture—but is rather the cumulative and overlapping result of multiple factors of discrimination. The consequences of this discrimination lead to alienation from Canadian society, family breakdown, disenchantment, loss of self-worth and identity. Subsequently the effects can extend from one immigrant generation to the next. These results are mostly unheard and unexplored in existing literature and dominant discourse.
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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Positioning Self in the Research

As a racialized immigrant living in Canada for the past 14 years, I have been fortunate to have accomplished many of the goals that I established for myself before and after I entered the country. Along the way, I have met other racialized immigrants who have not fared so well. Many of these individuals claimed to have encountered a number of systemic variables operating within Canadian society that prevented them from obtaining their socioeconomic goals. Most often, challenges faced during the job search process were at the forefront of factors identified as significant obstacles baring their success. It is in part because of these testimonials that I decided to focus my doctoral research on the job search experiences of racialized internationally trained immigrants to Canada. In many ways I can identify with the stories and experiences of other racialized immigrants. Within a few weeks of settling in Toronto, for example, I noticed that my darker skin and accent played a role in the way I was treated. Specifically, I was constantly asked questions like: Where are you from? What is your background? I also received no responses to job applications for which I felt very qualified. I quickly realized that being an immigrant with darker skin, having an accent and having a diploma from a non-Canadian educational institution would get me a job earning only minimum wage. With this as a stimulus, a few months after arriving in Toronto, I embarked on a journey that would change the way I viewed Canadian society, the wider world and ultimately changed my perspective on life. I enrolled to study at a post-secondary educational institution.
Over the past 14 years in Canada I have enrolled in numerous formal education and professional development programs that I assumed would provide the opportunities and financial stability that I desired. This often meant working full time and undertaking educational pursuits in tandem. Throughout this stage of my life, the challenges have been endless. For example, the lack of an existing social network when I initially moved to Toronto was very isolating. I was still a teenager at the time and had left all of my family and friends back in Dominica. I had no prior knowledge of the Canadian education system or how to find a job and did not know anyone in Toronto who could provide the direction I needed. As I previously mentioned, I was unable to find work for which I felt qualified for so initially I worked as a window cleaner, a house cleaner and baby sitter. At times it was difficult to provide my basic needs such as clothing and shelter as all of my jobs paid minimum wage. And, balancing the demands of manual labour and full time classes left me mentally and emotionally exhausted at the end of every day. In spite of this I continued to work hard to build a new life in my new adopted country. This included making new friends and building a new social network. To achieve this I sought out relationships with professors and other administrators within the university and tried to build friendships with the people I met through my volunteer work with charitable organizations. Despite these attempts I still felt like an outsider as the friendships seemed to be limited to professional settings such as work and school. I was rarely invited to family or social gatherings of the people I met. At times I felt ignored and isolated in Canadian society. On quite a few occasions I was ignored by a store clerk or was asked to repeat myself many times during a class discussion. I was even called a Nigger by a few teenagers who accidentally collided with me on the street. However, as my time in Canada increased so did my understanding of Canadian life and Canadian society. Because of this new understanding I felt that I needed to make changes to myself in order to fit in. As a
result I modified my accent, studied Canadian history, watched hockey and copied the form of dress of others my age. I no longer braided my hair as I felt braided hair made me look even more different than White Canadians. I made changes that I thought would help minimize my differences. Over time I noticed that it was easier to build friendships and relationships that extended beyond professional settings such as the classroom or the workplace. The people I met seemed more receptive to engaging me in conversations. It became easier to make friends from all cultures and especially among Canadian born. I attributed this to the changes that I had made to my appearance, having less of a Dominican accent and my new knowledge of Canadian life. Subsequently after a few years of being in Canada I got access to better career opportunities and I finally felt like I was starting to fit in. To date I continue to build my social network as I am always aware of the isolation I felt during my early years in Canada. I am also constantly aware that I am a person of color and that differentiates me.

My journey through the Canadian post-secondary education system is happily nearing an end. I view the process as one that has reshaped my self-image as well as one that has achieved for me a unique and changed perspective. When I first arrived in Canada I was encouraged by the successes of certain others who immigrated to Canada before me. I found the achievements of individuals like Michael Lee Chin and Olivia Chow to be clear examples of the rewards possible for those who dared to dream and to work hard to achieve those dreams. I was convinced through my observation of these role models that the road to socio-economic success involved staying in school, earning a high level of education and demonstrating complete dedication to the task at hand. Although I still believe these strategies to be somewhat effective, I am much more aware of the many hurdles and challenges that can be everyday realities for racialized immigrants like myself despite earning a high level of education.
My greatest learning experience involving this changed perspective came during the data collection phase of my study. I began this research process with the aim of gaining a better understanding of the job search experiences of racialized internationally trained post-secondary educators who seek to reenter their professions in Toronto. I felt strongly about this topic but underestimated the impact that the stories told by my study’s participants would have both on the direction of my research and on my personal beliefs about the way in which racialized immigrants are impacted by established Canadian systems and practices. The responses of the participants changed the direction of my study as the stories that emerged often bore little resemblance to existing literature. I heard riveting accounts of the negative effects of the challenges faced by racialized immigrants while they attempted to find suitable employment. Full alienation and disconnection from Canadian society, blatant overt racial discrimination, family breakdown, poverty, financial ruin, health problems, severe depression, suicidal thoughts, shame and frustration from numerous unsuccessful bridging programs were just some of the consequences uncovered. There were countless tears, emotional outbursts, anger and frustration expressed by the participants. At times the conversations became too emotional for the participants to continue. There were also occasions where I discontinued recordings as I felt that the information being shared was too personal to record and to include in this study.

The detailed interviews with racialized internationally trained educators suggest that these individuals are experiencing intense levels of negative emotional and severe financial strains that have life-altering consequences directly attributable to the challenges encountered while attempting to reenter their professions in Canada. Hence, my own experiences, review of existing literature coupled with the life experiences shared by the participants of this study, have ultimately led to a belief on my part that significant numbers of racialized immigrants are
severely disadvantaged in Canadian society despite working hard and despite being highly educated.

1.2.1 Canadian Immigration Policies and Racial Discrimination

Like earlier periods in its history, Canada continues to rely on immigration to grow its population (Omidvar & Richmond, 2003). Between 2001 and 2006, for instance, Canada's foreign-born population increased by 13.6 percent. This was four times higher than the growth rate of 3.3 percent for the Canadian-born population during the same period. The 2006 census estimated that 1.11 million immigrants came to Canada between January 1, 2001 and May 16, 2006. These newcomers made up 17.9 percent of the total foreign-born population, or 3.6 percent of Canada's total population of 31.2 million. Recent immigrants born in Asia, including the Middle East made up the largest proportion (58.3 percent) of newcomers to Canada. This was virtually unchanged from 59.4 percent in 2001. However, this stands in stark contrast to 1971 when only 12.1 percent of recent immigrants were born in Asia. Newcomers born in Europe made up the second largest group (16.1 percent) of recent immigrants. Europe used to be the main source region of immigrants with 61.6 percent of newcomers to Canada in 1971 (Statistics Canada 2007, 2008). These statistics make clear the emergence of a long-term trend that sees an increasing proportion of racialized individuals in Canada’s population. Statistics Canada projects that by 2031 almost one-half of the Canadian population over the age of 15 will be foreign-born or have at least one foreign-born parent. Further, racialized Canadians will make up the majority of the population in urban areas of Canada such as Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver (Statistics Canada, 2010).

The growth of the racialized population in Canada can be understood as the consequence of a variety of geo-political transformations in the twentieth century. The biggest impact can be
located in the late 1960s, when the Canadian government adopted a points system for evaluating
the desirability of potential immigrants to Canada (Borjas, 1993; Green & Worswick, 2006). As
a consequence of the adoption of the points system, Canadian immigration since the late 1960s
has been overwhelmingly comprised of racialized individuals from developing countries. Canada
has the largest per-capita immigration rate in the world (Dolan & Young, 2004). This trend has,
in a matter of decades transformed the racial landscape of Canadian society. Yet, while
conventional histories are quick to celebrate Canada’s multiculturalism (Derwing & Lemon,
2006; Satzewich, 2007), it is important to qualify any such discussions with the
acknowledgement that past Canadian governments have not always pursued immigration policies
which promote inclusion of and equity for all people. Specifically, Canadian immigration
policies in the nineteenth century demonstrated explicit and implicit regulative initiatives that
showed preference for immigrants from Britain, the United States and Western Europe (Canada,
1903, p. 2939; cited in Wiseman, 2007, p. 19). While this trend was modified in the mid-
twentieth century, these explicit instances of legislated racial exclusion suggest a complex
historical legacy which continues to define the landscape of present day Canadian society.

1.2.2 The History of Canadian Immigration Before 1900

Canada was initially settled in the colonial period by a wave of British and French
immigrants. According to Knowles (2007) “between 1812 and 1850 the population of the region
which came to be Canada—known as British North America—grew from less than 500,000
people to more than 2.4 million” (p. 40). She further states that by the time of confederation,
approximately two thirds of British North America was of British origin. According to Knowles,
in addition to British immigrants, a considerable number of Irish immigrants—driven by the push of the potato famine—relocated to Canada after the War of 1812.

With the British North American Act of 1867 the distinct colonial provinces of Canada, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick were formed into federal dominion. The formation of a federal dominion marked the shift from Canada as an administered territory of England into a self-governed state. Affairs such as immigration policies, which had once been determined in London, England, became the responsibility of the newly minted government and its varied classes of ministers. According to Ghosh and Pyrce (1999), “although early immigration policies did not explicitly exclude non-whites from immigrating, immigrants from Britain, the United States and Western Europe were substantially preferred” (p. 235). These preferences were enacted through circuitous legislation, such as the 1879 amendment to the 1869 Immigration Act which prohibited paupers and destitute immigrants from immigrating to Canada. Such regulations, without directly prohibiting specific races, skewed potential immigrants to those arriving from prosperous countries of origin such as Europe and the United States.

In addition to the government’s indirect prohibitions on immigration, initiatives such as the 1885 head-tax act directly restricted the immigration of certain 'undesirable' racial groups to Canada (Holland, 2007). The head-tax act was created in response to concerns from both the government and domestic population of Western Canada borne out of the sudden influx of Chinese immigrants to British Columbia. While Chinese immigrants had arrived in Western Canada as early as 1859—brought up from California by the Canadian gold rush—considerable numbers began arriving in the 1880s. Between 1881 and 1884 more than 15,000 Chinese males entered British Columbia (CIC, 1995; Foon Sien, 1967, 8). Chinese immigrants had mainly travelled to Canada to work on the Canadian Pacific Railway. The competition brought by
Chinese immigrants drove down the wages for existent British Columbian laborers, who responded to the transforming labor market with an appeal to the provincial government. The provincial government, in turn, lobbied the federal government to enact legislation to stem Chinese immigration. Consequently, the head-tax was passed in 1885, which required that each Chinese immigrant pay a $50 entry fee upon arrival in British Columbia. Through the passing of Chinese Immigration Act of 1904 the head tax was increased from $50 to $500. In addition, the federal government sought to regulate Chinese immigrants through the restriction of their rights in Canada. Simultaneous with the head-tax act, the Canadian government passed an act which deprived Chinese immigrants of the right to vote. Knowles (2007) suggests that the discriminatory nature of the head-tax was acknowledged but accepted by the Canadian establishment. According to Knowles, Secretary of State Joseph Chapleau, after the announcement of the act, conceded that it placed racial limits on immigration. In spite of Chapleau's recognition of the prejudice of the act, he, like other members of the Canadian government, affirmed its importance. Chapleau maintained that Canada should be known abroad as “being inhabited by a vigorous energetic white race of people” (p. 73).

1.2.3 Immigration in Canada between 1900 and 1967

The first half of the twentieth century, like the nineteenth century, was a time of rapid transformation in Canada. By the early twentieth century Canada had successfully transitioned from an economy that was primarily dependent on agriculture and trade to an economy that experienced, according to Ghosh, J. et al. (1999), a substantial “influx of business and powerful transportation companies” (p. 235). Further, “the economy began to be reorganized into corporate, industrial, and metropolitan profiles in a way that was typical of most capitalist nations at the time” (p. 235).
Canadian immigration policies in the early 1900s reflected the new priorities of the Canadian economy. While the first decades of Canada's establishment, between 1867 and 1900, required an immigration policy which sought to satisfy the demand for large quantities of settlers to farm land and construct infrastructure, the early 1900s required an immigration policy oriented towards the selection and regulation of immigrants who were deemed suitable for Canada's nascent industrial and corporate needs. According to the colonial and exceptionalist discourses which prevailed in the early twentieth century, 'suitable' immigrants continued to be synonymous with Western European and British immigrants (Fitzpatrick, 1919, p. 2; cited in Ho, 1987, p. 77).

This is supported through an examination of Frank Oliver, who presided over Canadian immigration after his 1905 appointment as minister of the interior and superintendent of Indian affairs. According to Knowles (2007), Oliver's term as minister of the interior inaugurated a concerted project to dissuade, and sometimes expel certain groups of immigrants. Knowles writes, “the ethnic and cultural origins of prospective immigrants took precedence over [their] occupation” (p. 106). Accordingly, Oliver's address to the House of Commons in 1903, in response to the arrival of Ukrainian and other Eastern European immigrants, maintained that

The filling up of the North-west with settlers [...] is not merely a question of furnishing a market for the manufacturers and traders of the east. [...] It is a question of the ultimate results of the efforts being put forward for the building up of a Canadian nationality [...] This can never be accomplished if the preponderance of the population should be of such class and character as will deteriorate rather than elevate the conditions of our people and our country at large. (Knowles, 2007, 106 – 107)

Oliver's rhetorical discrimination was consolidated into concrete legislation, such as his 1906 immigration act, which expanded the grounds for rejecting and sometimes even deporting 'unfit' immigrants. The 1906 act barred the immigration of epileptics, the deaf, dumb, blind and others deemed unfit by the state. It also authorized the deportation of immigrants who, after two years, had come to depend, in part or in whole, on Canadian charitable institutions. While the act
stopped short of explicit prohibitions on the ethnic origins of potential immigrants, clauses such as section 38 of the 1906 immigration act granted Canadian immigration authorities the right to deny potential immigrants based on their suitability, or lack thereof, to the 'Canadian climate' (Hollihan, 1992). These provisions were broad enough that prejudiced authorities could easily deport immigrants who, for ethnic, linguistic and cultural reasons, were deemed unfit for Canadian culture and industry. This time in Canada’s history consisted of various immigration legislation that was driven by racial and cultural considerations.

The span of time from the First World War until the end of the Second World War was characterized by wildly fluctuating immigration policies in Canada. While Canada accepted a great deal of refugees following both wars, the inter-war period, especially the Great Depression, saw a tremendous retraction of immigration to Canada. For instance, although 104,806 immigrants arrived in Canada in 1930, only 11,324 landed in 1940 (Ghosh, 1999, p. 235). Continuing the ethnic biases of the early 1900s, the overwhelmingly majority of immigrants to Canada until 1945 arrived from either the United States or Western Europe (Canada, 1903, pp. 29 - 39; Wiseman, 2007, p. 19).

The restrictions on the volume of Canadian immigration, developed throughout the Depression, were lifted following the Second World War when the Canadian government instituted an 'open door' policy aimed at accepting refugees and immigrants from war-torn Europe. Yet in spite of the seemingly nondiscriminatory name, the government qualified the 'open door' policy with a four class hierarchy, which prioritized British, French and American subjects over other immigration applicants. While the regulations did not explicitly ban potential
immigrants from elsewhere, scholars argue that the policies were developed with the goal of excluding Asian immigrants from Canada (e.g. Ghosh, 1999, p. 235).

It was not until 1962 that the Canadian government began to actively eliminate the racist and discriminatory undertones that had accompanied virtually all immigration legislation since confederation. These transformations were driven both by certain changes in Canada and economic shifts abroad. Specifically, in the 1960s Canada began to experience a substantial decline in birthrates, as well as a substantial increase in life expectancy. At the same time, the usual immigration sources in Western Europe were dwindling, as the push factors which had driven immigrants to Canada in the first place declined with the rise of European prosperity. While the Canadian government might have sought immigrants from economically depressed Eastern Europe, mobility restrictions resulting from the Cold War prevented any substantial migratory flows between these global regions. Consequently, the Canadian government began to look elsewhere to satisfy its demographic needs, specifically to Asia and Latin America.

1.2.4 Immigration Policies After 1967

As a hallmark of immigration policies in the history of Canada, the establishment of the points system in 1967 symbolized the elimination of race, color, and national origin as selection criteria as well as “modernized the immigration system to enable Canada to broaden the intake of immigrants based on educational and occupational qualifications” (Li, 2003, p. 102). The points system dispensed with the ethnic and national hierarchies that had characterized postwar Canadian immigration policies, and replaced them with an individual evaluation form for each potential immigrant, that ranked applicants based on education, job-skills, language proficiency and wealth (Ghosh, 1999, p. 236). Over the next few decades this new policy began to change the racial makeup of Canada. By 1987, for example, only 30 percent of Canadian immigrants
were from traditional source countries, with the remaining 70 percent from Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, and Latin and South America (Boyd & Thomas, 2001). In spite of these transformations, many critics have argued that removing the overt race-based selection for immigrants did not result in the elimination of favoritism of “white, educated English-speaking individuals of European descent” (Lowe, 1993, p. 148), since the Eurocentric ideology determined the policy context and civic society. The 'points' system continues to provide the foundation of contemporary immigration policies in Canada (Curtis, 1988, p. 121). Although the points system has undergone revisions since its inception in 1967 it remains today the foundation for Canada’s immigration policy framework.

The examination of the history of Canadian immigration policies reveals that in the past various forms of discrimination have played a constitutive role in the formation of its national immigration policy. Whether racially discriminatory policies have been enacted through the presumption of who is suitable to Canada and who is not, or else through the enforcement of protectionist labor measures against foreign workers, the effects of discrimination in the history of Canadian policy cannot be overlooked. Scholars such as Samuel (2001; 2004) and Sefa-Dei (1996; 2005) emphasized that the overt structures of racism which characterized earlier moments in the history of Western society have given way since the civil rights movement to polite forms of racism as well as implicit networks of racialized privilege. The question of how to unearth and address structures of discrimination which persist in Canadian society is not an easy one and this topic continues to spawn research and debate on a national and international scale.

1.3 Statement of the Research Problem

At the present time, Immigration Canada uses a points system to assess the immigration status of internationally trained applicants. In this system, an applicant must demonstrate that
he/she is qualified for a targeted occupational field in Canada. Specifically, immigration officials look at education and training, current and past employment duties, job skills, experience and language skills to assess whether the applicant is qualified for immigration and eventual citizenship. This system is intended to attract individuals with professional credentials and university degrees (Green & Green, 2004, p.132). Numerous studies have concluded that once these immigrants arrive in Canada they face many challenges to finding employment statuses to match those held in their countries of origin. For example, Reitz (2001) claimed that “most studies have reported that the market value of immigrant qualifications is generally less than native-born Canadians” (p. 13). And Esses, Dietz, and Bhardwaj (2003) asserted that employment success is negatively affected in part by the lower value of immigrant human capital, the ethnic, racial or national origins of immigrants, as well as the possibility of discrimination based on such backgrounds. Other studies have identified communication and English language preferences, non recognition of prior credentials and work experience, high costs of retraining and discriminatory practices of employers as some of the difficulties faced by immigrants during the job search process. (Canadian Council on Learning, 2008; Catalyst, 2008; Gilmore & Le Petit, 2008; Goldberg, 2006; Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, 2002; McBride & Sweetman, 2004; Picot & Hou, 2007; Reitz, 2001; 2004; 2007a, 2007b; Statistics Canada, 2005a, 2005b, 2007; Teelucksingh & Galabuzi, 2005; Türegün, 2008; Zietsma, 2007).

Like most nations born and developed from the European push to colonize, Canada has evolved to a mix of people from many different races. According to Hum and Simpson (2000) “Canada's image of itself as a multicultural country is doubtlessly reflective of its history, one which takes pride for its welcoming of immigrants and its tolerance for people of different
colors” (p. 1). Most would agree that Canada occupies a preeminent position on the world stage in its perceived commitment to the values of diversity and equality among its people (Derwing & Lemon, 2006; Smith & Jackson, 2002). While equality between diverse social groups can be measured and developed through a staggering array of indices, economic equality - both in terms of means and employment opportunities - is consistently recognized by governments as a critical measure (if not the critical measure) of the success or failure of programs of social equality (OECD, 2008). To this point, the Canadian government has attempted to develop many legislative initiatives to promote equality in employment, examples of which can be found in the 1984 Report of the Royal Commission on Equality in Employment and the 1986 (revised in 1995) Employment Equity Act. These initiatives were supposed to have consolidated the Canadian government's legislative commitment to the affirmative integration of marginalized groups - women, non-whites, aboriginals and people with disabilities - into Canadian workplaces. Specifically, the 1995 Employment Equity Act stipulated that any business fulfilling contracts in excess of $200,000 with the Canadian federal government is required to promote workplace diversity and to give account of its activities. However, because affirmative hiring practices must reconcile the immediate qualifications of candidates with personal judgments of employers, the effectiveness of equality initiatives can be difficult to measure. As a consequence, doubts continue to exist for these initiatives in regards to the fulfillment of their assigned mandates and their defined objectives. Questions related to employment equity, and thus immigrant integration into Canadian society, has spawned a significant number of studies. For example, government funded institutions like the Maytree Foundation, numerous immigrant settlement agencies, educational institutions, various government administrations along with independent researchers have collectively contributed to decades of data on this topic. Within
this large body of research is a consistent finding that points to high rates of unemployment and a rising number of immigrants living in poverty in this country (Aydemir 2003; Aydemir & Skuterud 2004; Azuh, 1998; Bennett, 2001; Goldberg 2004, 2006; Jackson, 2001; Mata, 1999; Oreopoulos, 2009; Reitz, 2000).

My research study builds on past studies in this area by further exploring the job search experiences of racialized internationally trained educators. In addition, my study also uncovered the very complex process and the sometimes difficult emotions and life altering experiences that are oftentimes part of this process. My interest in internationally trained post-secondary educators stems from an internship in 2008 at George Brown College where I spent three months lecturing internationally trained educators who were students in the College Teacher Training Program. This ongoing program is made up of bridging curriculum aimed at preparing internationally trained educators for teaching careers in Canadian community colleges. Since teaching in the post-secondary sector is not a regulated profession in Canada, the bridging program is well attended and touted as one of the main ways to gain entry into the profession.

Although the requirements for admission to the College Teacher Training Program may have changed since 2008, at the time of my internship, eligibility for entry required that participants have a post-secondary degree, teaching experience at the post-secondary level and a high level of English language proficiency. The individuals I met all had tried on their own but failed to successfully enter the teaching profession in Canada and had hoped that the bridging program would provide for them a gateway to the opportunities they so desperately sought. A number of the participants opined that issues of racial discrimination combined with their internationally achieved education and lack of Canadian work experience were some of the factors that negatively impacted their employment success. I was intrigued that race was
perceived as such a key factor. And interestingly, although they held this perspective, focus on race was never part of formal group discussions and the topic of racial discrimination was not included in any of the College’s literature for this program. On the other hand obtaining Canadian work experience and steps immigrants needed to take to get credentials recognized in Canada were readily discussed. Personal contact with many of the program’s participants subsequent to its completion has revealed that the majority are still searching to find employment as teachers.

The internship experience coupled with extensive reading related to the Canadian immigrant experience provided for me an essential foundation as I proceeded in my research. Early on, and sustained throughout the doctoral process, I found awakened within me a passion for the topic at hand and an empathy that facilitated both insight and drive.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study originally sought to explore the ways in which racialized internationally trained post-secondary educators experience the job search process in Canadian society. Included within this general subject are important specifics, such as the exploration of the obstacles faced by racialized internationally trained educators while re-entering their professions, the consequences of these obstacles, and ultimately the impact of this process on the ability of racialized internationally trained educators to find inclusion or exclusion within Canadian civil and social life. This research objective builds on past initiatives in Canadian scholarship and policy, but importantly also charts new territory. Despite the abundance of existing research, a review of the literature has not revealed any studies that exclusively examined the job search experiences of racialized internationally trained post-secondary educators. Related studies, for instance, have focused on internationally trained educators at the K-12 level (Bascia, 1996;
Chassels, 2010; Hirji and Beynon, 2000; Phillion, 2003; Taraban, 2004) or else on racialized professionals as an aggregate. The aim of my study was to build on existing literature and contribute to important areas that are not presently covered.

This is not to suggest that all related literature has been sufficiently critical. Notably, many of the works cited throughout this thesis have contributed to, instead of challenged, dominant discourses surrounding immigrants in Canada. For the purpose of this study, discourse can be defined as the field of interpretations and utterances that produce knowledge and ‘regimes of truth’ in particular social spaces and times (Foucault, 1972). ‘Discourse’ is often employed in critical literature to designated the normalization of certain tendencies in speaking over others. In recent decades, for instance, anti-racist scholarship has identified that some ways of speaking about race or gender come to dominate and consolidate modes of making meaning. The implicit and explicit understandings of power holders are reproduced through discourse, producing fixed ways of speaking and thinking in society. As discourses proliferate, their biases come to be accepted as best practice or ‘common knowledge.’ As Foucault suggests, discourse holds the monopoly on what is assumed to be true in a particular society.

In the context of the literature on racialized immigrants and the job search experience in Canada, the discourse that has come to dominate often advocates bridging programs and retraining as preferred interventions to help immigrants reenter their professions (Austin, 2008; Public Policy Forum, 2008). Concurrently, the dominant discourse on the integration of racialized immigrants suggests that many immigrants need personal and professional improvements before they are eligible to re-enter their professions. Finally, the dominant discourse places nearly exclusive emphasis on the economic importance of immigrants to Canadian society (Kunz & Hanvey, 2002; McIsaac, 2003; Reitz, 2001) and does not sufficiently
recognize the many other contributions of immigrants to this nation’s vitality and societal health. Adding to this complexity, past authors on immigration matters allude to racial discrimination in Canadian society but often fall short of viewing issues like the non-recognition of foreign credentials through a lens of race. Hence, racial discrimination is not nearly as prominent as other discourses pertaining to immigrant employment. With the impact of racial discrimination minimized, the onus is placed on immigrants to be retrained or modified in one way or another in order to reenter their professions. My study aimed to change this by situating race and racial discrimination at the forefront of the discussion.

Authors such as Escayg (2010) have critically challenged reductive economic valuations of racialized immigrants. Escayg suggests that there are many non-economic advantages that minority teachers bring to the Canadian schools. Escayg notes that minority teachers provide valuable links between the school experience and minority students, who often feel disconnected from the educational system at large: “teachers of colour represent a renewed sense of hope where all students can engage with education in meaningful, empowering and holistic ways” (p. 4). Such challenges to the orthodox discussion of immigrants are highly significant, because they serve to reorient dominant understandings and ways of speaking that prevail in a particular society. Given recent critical work, such as the Henry Report’s conclusion that Eurocentric biases are profoundly at play in Canadian universities, or Eisenkraft’s statistical demonstration that racialized educators are often excluded from academic positions, or at the very least confined to entry level jobs, it is clear that existing approaches to the study of racialized immigrants are insufficient.
Using counter story telling as my principal empirical research method, I was able to gather information and insight that would not have been possible through other approaches. Solorzano and Yosso (2002) defined counter storytelling as “a method of telling the stories of those people whose experiences are not often told including people of color, women, gay, and the poor” (p. 26). Counter storytelling plays an important role in the development of new understandings of identity, equality and justice. Hence, this study sought to engage those most affected by providing them with an avenue for expression and with an opportunity to tell stories previously unheard, and in the worst case scenarios, ignored. This study also provided them the opportunity to reflect upon their Canadian experiences and suggest recommendations for improvements. A more thorough explanation of counter story telling will be provided during the methodology section of this research project, but for now it suffices to underscore the applicability of this data collection method to the subject at hand.

This study promises to further the understanding of the immigrant’s plight and to contribute to ongoing dialogue intended to influence change to immigration policy as well as changes to perceptions and behaviours of ordinary citizens. The study yielded valuable insights into the lives of racialized immigrants as they struggle to cope with some of the challenges encountered in Canadian society. Hence, the findings of this study have resulted in new narratives, discourses and a different lens through which to view immigrant experiences in Canadian society. Still the need for further research on the Canadian immigrant experience and the need for insightful recommendations for improvement to policies remain as important today as it was decades before.
Chapter 2
Transnationalism, Intersectionality, Integrative Anti-Racism

2.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to develop a theoretical basis from which to understand and interpret the counter-stories of racialized internationally trained post-secondary educators assembled in this study. It should be emphasized that the theoretical framework not only provides the basis for the interpretation of this body of research but also serves as a means of connecting the study to the wider body of work which already exist on racialized immigrants in Canada.

The method of research utilized in this study is counter-storytelling. Counter-storytelling research assembles narratives from social outgroups whose perspectives are not well represented in dominant—traditionally white, heterosexual, male—discourses (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002b). Counter-storytelling develops from the assumption that confronting dominant discourse with the perspectives of outgroups can provide critical information that is needed to challenge dominant discourse. Delgado (1989) suggested that through counter-storytelling “the stories of outgroups aim to subvert [...] ingroup reality” (p. 2413). Further, counter-stories can form “…a bridge between individual experience and systemic social patterns…their analysis can be a potential tool for developing a more critical consciousness about social relations in our society” (Bell, L.A., 2003, p. 4). A more thorough explanation of counter story telling will be provided during the methodology section of this study.
Since this study is specifically concerned with compiling the counter-stories of a social outgroup—comprised of racialized internationally trained post-secondary educators—who are not well represented in dominant social discourse, I determined that the theories most suited to enriching this research would facilitate the recognition of the unique perspectives and experiences that are recounted by my study’s participants. In support of this approach I draw on three contemporary theoretical developments, namely transnationalism, intersectionality and integrative anti-racism.

There are a number of reasons why I have chosen this particular approach. First and foremost, while the three theoretical fields selected here have been applied to a wide variety of studies, they are all related in their attention to immigrant experiences and racial discrimination. Consequently, much of the recent research in these areas directly applies to my own study. Secondly, like the research methodology of counter-storytelling, which seeks to bring an unrecognized or unrecorded outgroup experience into the midst of in-group discourse with the aim of promoting social change, transnationalism, intersectionality and integrative anti-racism are very applicable to research projects like mine that also aim to promote social change. Taken together, I believe that this approach forms a strong theoretical basis for my study and provides a solid foundation for a rich and productive discussion of the narratives in this study.

2.2 Transnationalism

Transnationalism is a broad-reaching theoretical program that spans varied disciplines such as anthropology, migration studies, economics and social science (Kennedy and Roudometof, 2002). Specifically, transnational research attempts to reframe the analysis and description of identity and community among individuals, such as immigrants, who maintain
strong networks and allegiances across national borders. The practices which constitute the formation of transnational identity are broad-reaching, but include phenomena such as chain migration, communication between immigrants and their homelands, and the sending of remittances. In contrast to traditional approaches to the understanding of immigrant identity, which are predominantly determined by discourses surrounding statehood and citizenship, transnational studies maintain that in many concrete instances global human migration engenders new identities that cannot be reduced to traditional categories of understanding (Levitt, 2001). According to Vertovec (1999), “transnationalism provides an umbrella concept for some of the most globally transformative processes and developments of our time” (p. 459).

Transnational identities are not unique to the last thirty years. As Vertovec (2009) pointed out, “social patterns which developed out of the mass migration to the Americas in the nineteenth and [early] twentieth century manifested many similar patterns to contemporary transnationalism” (pp. 14 – 15). Nonetheless, the literature is in agreement over the fact that the late twentieth century witnessed an intensification and proliferation of transnational patterns. Owing to the rise of globalization, as well as the development of new technologies of communication and transportation, more people are migrating now than ever before. Not only are rates of global human migration increasing, but the means of maintaining bonds between immigrants and their countries of origin are more abundant than ever. Consequently, in recent years there has been a great deal of attention devoted to transnationalism as it relates to immigration. For example the Routledge “Research in Transnationalism” series devoted an entire issue to the exploration of “new immigrants and transnational culture” (Kennedy and Roudometof, 2002).
In order to develop a ‘transnational’ theoretical approach for the purposes of my study I will first define the assumptions that foreground transnationalism, and then examine the applicability of transnationalism to the understanding of the experiences of racialized immigrants. Kennedy and Roudometof (2002) provided a succinct introduction to transnationalism as it relates to immigrants. They wrote “[t]ransnational migrant communities are groupings of immigrants who participate on a routine basis in a field of relationships, practices, and norms that include both places of origin and places of destination” (p. 239). Further, Schiller, Basch and Blanc-Szanton (1992) identify transmigrants as those whose “lives cut across national boundaries and bring two societies into a single social field” (p. 345). Recognizing the close connection migrants keep to home communities, authors on transnationalism argue that these "transnational" communities, while geographically separate, are "imagined" as one (Devra, 1999).

Transnational theory marks a shift in thinking about social processes. While conventional frameworks for understanding global dynamics are framed in terms of states and nations, transnationalism attempts to understand global phenomena as processes unfolding in a deterritorialized—that is, porous and open—space (Levitt, 2001). As Levitt (2001) indicated, “transnationalism de-emphasizes the role of geography in the formation of identity and collectivity and creates new possibilities for membership across boundaries” (p. 202). The transnational assertion that ‘deterritorialized’ approaches to the study of global dynamics are ultimately more productive than state-centered models extends from the consequences of the technological forces which shape modern life. Transnationalism theory maintains that the contemporary global infrastructure of communication and transportation—including airplanes, telephones and the internet—transforms social relations to such an extent that state-centered
analyses are no longer adequate (Vertovec, 2009, pp. 54 – 61; Olwig, 2002 p. 102). Not only do these shifts enable strong bonds of family, economy and culture to flourish across vast distances, but they also demonstrate the porosity of national borders and geographic distinctions.

Specific to Canada, Wong and Satzewich, (2002) wrote that Canada has shown a strong commitment to multiculturalism which may have a role to play in transnationalism. They stated that as Canada’s multiculturalism policy has evolved, there has been greater emphasis on encouraging immigrants to engage in transnational social practices which in turn develops transnational social identities (p.1). They argued that transnationalism in Canada is very similar to the US in that in both countries transnationalism is a form of immigrant adaptation. However, Wong (2008) suggested that Canadian practices of transnationalism can be distinguished from the American example in that national policies in Canada encourage the practice of active multicultural citizenship. According to Wong, American immigration policies encourage assimilation, whereas Canadian official policies promote a ‘civic multiculturalism’ wherein ‘belonging,’ ‘participation’ and citizenship are supplement with the development of multicultural identity and difference. Critics contend that active citizenship is irreconcilable with transnationalism because “the practice of transnationalism produces ‘citizens’ who de facto belong to more than one nation” (Wong, p. 87). Since the Canadian multiculturalists program is fundamentally oriented towards citizenship, some critics suggest that “what results for transnationals is a “thinner” and “shallower” citizenship” (Wong, 88). Authors such Kelly (2003) disagree. He affirmed that transnationalism is reconcilable with citizenship and identity in Canada. Kelly suggested that while “the literature on transnationalism [...] initially implied transcendence and undermining of the nation-state as a unit of regulation or analysis [...] it is also now apparent that the state is far from irrelevant” in the context of transnationalism (p. 216).
Through functions such as the regulation of immigration criteria and the “responsiveness” of the host country to the needs of immigrant communities, the nation plays a fundamental role in the lives of transnational individuals. He affirms that transnationalism does not cut Canadian immigrants off from participation in Canadian society, but rather enriches Canadian society through the formation of linkages and networks between Canada and abroad.

Vertovec (2009) in his overview of the field of transnationalism, identified the concepts of ‘social capital’ and ‘social networks’ as two of the most definitive and productive concepts which transnational studies employ to describe transnational communities. With respect to my own study of racialized immigrants, these key terms will help to identify both the challenges and sites of resistance encountered by racialized immigrants during the job search process. They also facilitate the description of the communities immigrants employ to overcome social challenges, and to marshal resources which are otherwise unavailable to them.

Vertovec (2009) described ‘social network’ analysis as a method of abstract analysis that posits each person in a community as a node connected to others in a network of relations. Vertovec posited that “the advantage of the social network perspective lies in its ability to allow us to abstract aspects of interpersonal relations which cut across institutions and the boundaries of aggregated concepts such as neighbourhood, workplace, kinship or class” (pp. 32 – 36). According to Hannerz (1980) social network analysis “constitutes the most extensive and widely applicable framework we have for the study of social relations” (p. 181). Ultimately, the advantage of social network analysis is its absence of constitutive assumptions. Social network analysis enables discussions and conceptualizations of society which are not discursively or structurally connected to notions of borders or states. As Rogers et al. (2001) suggested, “global networks increasingly give organizational expression to corporations, ethnic diasporas,
professional bodies, [...] and social and political movements” (p.4). By adoption a conceptual framework that carries a minimal amount of historical baggage, transnationalism scholars have been able to describe transnational phenomena while avoiding the re-inscription of conventional categories and assumptions.

Relatedly, ‘social capital’ theory is a conceptual system that attempts to measure the ways in which individuals mobilize resources through their membership in particular communities and networks. Social capital does not designate the resources themselves, but simply an individual’s ability or inability to secure resources. Accordingly, social capital provides the opportunity for both privileged and marginalized individuals to develop new networks of resources. Conversely, one’s place outside of social capital has the capacity to severely limit individual freedoms (Portes, 1995, p. 12; Portes 1993). Within the context of transnationalism, where myriad intersections of geographic community and virtual or imaginary community develop, the generalizability of social capital theory is one of its greatest strengths. Its emphasis on the comparative freedom or restriction experienced by individuals makes social capital theory a particularly productive method of evaluating the lives and experiences of racialized immigrants in Canada.

Having examined the underlying assumptions of transnational theory as well as several of the key theoretical terms employed in transnational research, I now turn to a practical implementation of transnational analysis. Matthews (2002) provided a robust account of the practical applicability of transnational theory in “Boundaries of diaspora identity.” Her study was comprised of a series of interviews and reflections on a small selection of East and Central African-Asian immigrants who resided in Toronto and Montreal. All of the participants were adherents of the Ismaili faith. Matthews’ study developed out of her attempt to respond to the
fact that “in the post-modern era, increased rates of international migration have intensified the problem of identity construction. This intensification requires new ways of conceptualizing space and place” (2002, p. 68). Matthews’ participants were characterized not only by conventional transnational identities, in which one geographic locality was experienced through another, but by another degree of virtualization. As descendants of the Ismaili religion, India “represents the source of the culture and practices of their upbringing” for her participants yet, all of Matthews’ participants were selected on account of having been raised in Africa (Uganda, Burundi, Tanzania) (2002, p. 72). The virtual transnational identities that existed for them in Africa were further intensified through life in Canada. Not only was a sense of ‘home in India’ mediated through lines of communication which span the globe, but it was further mediated through the particular geographic African homes of each participant (2002, p. 72). The conceptions of Ismaili faith and culture which guided the lives of Matthews’ participants were not received directly from India, but rather through the particular reception of Ismaili in the different African countries each participant identified with home.

While the remoteness of Matthews’ participants from their cultural and practical ‘homes’ might suggest, according to traditional understandings of identity, a lack or absence of connection to community, Matthews found quite the opposite to be the case in her study. According to Matthews, “one of the ways that minority populations respond to exercises of power from majorities is through the creation of imagined communities (2002, p. 74). Imagined communities “imbue categorical fictive relationships with the emotions and intimacy of face-to-face relationships” (2002, p. 74). Through the imaginative community minorities who are oppressed or threatened by dominant cultural identities in their receiving societies can forge spaces for resistance. Accordingly, “imagined communities play a role in breaking free from the
arbitrary classifications set forth by majorities bent on situating minorities” (2002, p. 75).

Recalling Vertovec, imagined communities offer racialized immigrants the opportunity to construct social networks and to develop social capital in spaces that are not otherwise open to their formation.

Despite its laudable contributions to understanding immigrant experiences, transnational theory has come under criticism from a number of perspectives. Guarnizo and Smith (1998) suggested that transnational practices and relations might simply be “an evanescent phenomenon which will not last beyond first generation migrants” (pp. 15 – 16). According to Guarnizo and Smith, transnationalism is overly reliant on the example of immigrants to build its account of current social trends. They maintained that while transnational theory might be appropriate to first generation immigrants, whose identities are formed between their original homes and their receiving societies; it does not sufficiently apply to other generations. While this argument might apply to some applications of transnationalism, my research project is limited in its investigation to first generation immigrants. Since my research limits itself to participants whose identity formation is, by all accounts, developed between two or more distant points of identification, the question of whether their transnational identifications persist in subsequent generations of immigrants is a moot point.

Other authors, such as Foner (1997) and Smith (2001), suggest that recent enthusiasm for transnationalism is unwarranted, since ‘transnational’ phenomena have been operative for hundreds of years. Foner argues that “Transnationalism is not new, even though it often seems as if it were invented yesterday” (p. 355). He argues that the implicit argument is that since transnationalism is not a unique historical development, the extent of scholarly attention it has received over the last several decades is unwarranted.
Another potential criticism of transnationalism was put forward by Roberts, Frank and Lozano (1999) who suggested that within the context of Mexican immigration to the United States, transnational communities are more prominent among blue collar workers and medium skilled white-collar workers than among highly skilled professionals (p. 258). The authors explained the conclusion of their research by suggesting that blue-collar workers, lack the language skills to establish ties and support systems in their receiving communities. This reliance helps to affirm and develop transnational communities. They argue that on the other hand, highly-skilled professionals have access to pre-existing international connections, and language skills that allow them to maintain less dependence on their countries of origin. While these objections present a challenge to my decision to extend transnational theory to the analysis of racialized internationally trained immigrant educators in Canada, it should be noted that Roberts, Frank and Lozano’s study relies on a small sample population of skilled professionals. Further, authors such as Vertovec (2009) show the existence of transnational identities among many different immigrant groups including highly educated immigrants.

In summary, transnationalism theory demonstrates that the formation of identity and community among immigrants is a complex process that may rely on both national and transnational networks. Studies that limit their scope to immigrant experiences within a defined country or territory and do not consider the contributions of transnational identities are liable to miss important factors that maintain influence on immigrants in their adopted countries. As previously mentioned, factors such as the individual’s emotional and financial connections to their country of origin through remittances, and religious and cultural communities can all play a vital role in identity formation among immigrants in Canada.
2.3 Intersectionality

Recent developments in intersectional studies demonstrate the blind spots which populate accounts of human experience. These recent developments show that at the margins of generalizations lie social categories which elude the main discourse according to conventional—principally white, male and heterosexual—narratives. Since immigration studies analyze participants who come from a whole range of classes, races, countries, religions, nationalities and genders, it is imperative that this study attempt to account for all of these factors that may play a role in the immigrant’s experience.

Since my study deals specifically with racialized immigrants—and not only racialized individuals, or immigrants in general—the formation of a theoretical framework which is sensitive to overlapping social categories is critical. The effects of overlaps in traditional social categories, such as ethnicity, sexuality and gender are misrecognized or overlooked all together in conventional social research (Collins, 2000). Intersectionality is an approach to studying "the relationships among multiple dimensions and modalities of social relationships and subject formations" (McCall, 2005). The core thesis of intersectionality is that various forms of discrimination and exclusion in society such as racism, sexism and homophobia interact with each other and create an "intersection" of multiple forms of oppression (Knudsen, 2007).

Hence, this study takes into consideration that racialized immigrants in Canada may have to contend with multiple overlapping factors such as accent, culture and skin color which may contribute to varying types and levels of discrimination in Canadian society. The identification and articulation of the specific challenges and oppositions which develop from these overlapping identity markers is an important step towards the elimination of social inequality and discrimination in Canada.
One of the major research themes arising from the ‘intersectionality’ theory is the exploration of forms of oppression that intersect in the labour market. People who are considered to occupy the bottom of the social hierarchy by virtue of their race and gender (i.e. visible minority women) are more likely to experience discrimination. By approaching the question of immigrant experiences of the labour market through the lens of intersectionality, the particular social structures which produce discrimination can be described in their specificity (Browne I. and Misra, J., 2003).

Intersectionality theory can be defined as a theoretical program which attempts to determine the complex ‘intersections’ which characterize the formation of identity, and in turn, various forms of oppression and discrimination in modern society. While traditional identity studies—such as first and second wave feminism—should be commended for its commitment to the attempt to secure the welfare of oppressed social groups, the disciplinary structures which foreground such theories complicates their application to many of the unique configurations of identity which arise in a globalized world (Collins, 2000). Traditional approaches to theories of identity maintain that the task of accounting for the other can be satisfied through the addition of concepts such as ‘female identity’ or ‘black identity’ to traditional critical discourse. Yet in the early 1990s many identity scholars began to recognize that such minority categories (‘female identity’ or ‘black identity’) recapitulated the very forms of exclusion they were developed to address (McCall, 2005). Crenshaw (1993) noted “that such movements often excluded subjects whose identities were comprised of multiple oppressed categories. In dealing with the subject of black women and identity, Crenshaw wrote “because of their intersectional identity as both women and of color within discourses that are shaped to respond to one or the other, women of color are marginalized within both” (p. 1244).
Crenshaw highlighted a practical case of such exclusions by citing certain disenfranchised newly-married immigrant women in North America. According to Crenshaw, there existed a provision in the United States' 1988 Immigration and Nationality Act which stipulated that “a person who immigrated to the United States to marry a United States citizen or permanent resident had to remain 'properly' married for two years before even applying for permanent resident status” (p. 1247). This arrangement ceded tremendous control to the citizen-spouse and often resulted in severe spousal abuse. Conventional theories of identity, which seek to elaborate either women's rights or immigrants’ rights, lack the tools, according to Crenshaw, to adequately address such intersectional spaces where multiple oppressed identities overlap. Consequently, Crenshaw maintained that theories of identity must situate themselves immanently within the coordinates of intersectional experience before they can fulfill their political objectives.

Crenshaw (1993) provided a succinct summary of the concerns of the field by stating

The problem with identity politics is not that it fails to transcend difference, as some critics charge, but rather the opposite—that it frequently conflates or ignores intra group differences. In the context of violence against women, this elision of difference in identity politics is problematic, fundamentally because the violence that many women experience is often shaped by other dimensions of their identities, such as race and class. (p. 1242)

Intersectionality presents a development of many earlier programs in identity politics, namely programs which sought to consolidate the scattered identities of individuals such as visible minorities and women into coherent, organized and political classes. Hence, the theory seeks to explain systematic social inequality arising from discrimination that can be attributed to socially and culturally constructed categories such as gender, race, class and disability. Yet, in distinction from conventional approaches to identity politics, intersectionality theory maintains that these
categories coexist with, and affect, one another. To explain a particular instance of discrimination that a black female faces in the job market merely on the basis of skin color, while ignoring her gender and sexual orientation, presents an overly simplistic analysis. It is the intersection of these multiple identities which determine the identity of the applicant. Importantly, the intersection of multiple oppressed identities does not equate to a simple growth in the magnitude of discrimination but rather, as the case of the Immigration and Nationality Act demonstrates, a particular field of unique challenges which are not readily discernible from a general description (Crenshaw, 1991).

In a similar vein, Verloo (2006) proposed a marriage of theory and practice for the European Economic Union in the development of policies to address multiple inequalities. Verloo focused on intersectionality, noting that as a concept it is regularly found in gender studies, sociology and economics. Yet Verloo also emphasized that intersectionality is sparingly applied to political and policy practice in Europe when dealing with multiple inequalities. In explaining the dynamics associated with intersectionality, he relied on the work of Crenshaw (1991) to distinguish between structural intersectionality and political intersectionality. Structural intersectionality is said to exist when the intersection of inequalities directly impacts individuals in society. Verloo believed that this could explain “why a black woman is not considered for one job because she is black since the ‘norm employee’ is a white woman, while other jobs are also unavailable to her since the jobs available to black persons in that context are predominantly male jobs” (p. 213). As applied to gender inequalities, Verloo posited that critical questions related to structural intersectionality include “How and when does racism amplify sexism? How and when does class exploitation reinforce homophobia? How and when does homophobia amplify racism?” (p. 213) Political intersectionality is said to exist when the intersection of
inequalities impact political strategies. Crenshaw used the example cited earlier in this study in which she was denied access by the Los Angeles Police Department to statistics on domestic violence due to fear on the part domestic violence activists that the data may reinforce racial stereotypes. Verloo viewed critical questions in analyzing political intersectionality as “How and where does feminism marginalize ethnic minorities or disabled women? How and where do measures on sexual equality or on racism marginalize women? How and where do gender equality policies marginalize lesbians” (p. 213).

Verloo illustrated the concept of intersectionality in both the structural and political contexts showing how various social categories may intersect with structural and political situations and how the result of each may be relevant in providing insight into policy-making. An important point made by Verloo is that very little attention has been paid to both structural and political intersectionality in policy-making, with policy-makers treating all inequalities as similar and not attempting to understand the nature of the relationships between them.

Scholars such as Nash (2008), Chang and Culp (2002) and Gressgård (2008) have challenged the direction and rigor of this program. Nash, for example, suggested that intersectionality studies are open to a number of critiques. Nash’s principal objections concerned the vague definitions of intersectionality which circulate in the discipline, the lack of a defined methodology appropriate to the discipline, and the somewhat paradoxical use of “black women as quintessentially intersectional subjects” (p. 1). These critiques converge in Nash’s observation that intersectionality studies are deployed almost exclusively as an analytical/theoretical framework in situations involving “multiple marginalized subjects” such as black or Latina women (p. 9). This tendency is significant because by limiting its investigations to particular cases of “multiple marginalized subjects”, intersectionality fails to develop a full-fledged theory
of identity. The exclusion in intersectional studies of “examination of identities that are imagined as either wholly or even partially privileged” indicated to Nash that intersectionality is often more concerned with the determination of a space which is exclusively concerned with accounts of oppression, than it is with the rigorous examination and elaboration of identity. (2008, p. 10).

Nash’s critique of intersectionality was echoed by Gressgård’s (2008). He suggested that intersectionality studies rely on the rhetorical terms “complexity” and “multiplicity” to secure its theoretical territory without adequately interrogating the implications of these terms. According to Gressgård, intersectionality as a discipline assumes that it itself is the only theoretical discipline which is adequate and sensitive to the ‘complexity’ of its subjects. In the parlance of intersectionality, the modern subject is a complex of multiple intersecting identities which are not adequately encompassed by traditional identity studies. Yet, according to Gressgård, this assumption ignores the variety of complexity “that cannot be identified because it cannot be subsumed under a general concept, or rule or law”. Intersectionality reserves a critical territory for itself in spite of the fact that its very object might be fundamentally elusive. As Chang and Culp (2002) wrote “how many points of intersection are there?” (p. 485).

The abovementioned scholars are right to call into question the rigor of many aspects of intersectional studies. As Chang and Culp elliptically suggested, there may well be an innumerable number of intersectional points or qualifications which mark particular individuals. Nonetheless, intersectionality serves as an important corrective to traditional identity studies. To see the productive potential of intersectional theory, one need only look to the exploration of forms of oppression experienced by individuals in the labour market. By approaching the question of immigrant experiences of the labour market through the lens of intersectionality, the particular social structures which produce discrimination can be described in their specificity
As previously espoused, within the context of immigration, intersectional interpretations of discrimination in receiving societies are especially critical because immigrants from racialized groups can be vulnerable to discrimination in the labour market due to multiple exclusionary identities which come into play during the job search process. Exclusionary identities in a receiving society such as Canada might include English/French language challenges (including accent), physical appearance, and gender among others. Any attempt to account for the challenges faced by new immigrants which attends to only one of these identities will fail to capture the unique configurations of oppression which are operative in contemporary society (Browne I. and Misra, J., 2003). Consequently, modes of qualitative research such as the counter-story telling are particularly well suited to communicating points of intersection specific to immigrant experiences in the labour market.

2.4 Integrative Anti-Racism

The final theoretical addition to my framework is integrative anti-racism. Like intersectionality and transnationalism, integrative anti-racism attempts to expand conventional understandings of identity to encompass difference and complexity. What distinguishes integrative anti-racism from the two theories previously addressed is its development as a solution, or method of addressing a social problem, namely racism in schools and education environments.

According to Samuel (2005) integrative anti-racism can be defined as “the study of how the dynamics of social difference (race, class, gender, sexual orientation, physical disability language and religion) are mediated in people's daily experiences” (p. 26). It is important to note that the dynamics of social difference are recognized by integrative anti-racism scholars as
fundamentally complex and indeterminate. Integrative anti-racism presents a twofold body of theoretical research which at once attempts to analyze the dynamics of social difference, while motivating a political reorientation of social relations.

Like intersectionality, integrative anti-racism was developed in the late twentieth century in response to recognized inadequacies in the accomplished, yet essentializing, emancipatory anti-racist discourses of the mid-twentieth century. Integrative anti-racism attempts to account for the subject as a site of complexity and multiplicity (Harper, 1997, p. 201). Further, integrative anti-racism favours qualitative research, including narrative accounts of experiences of oppression and marginalization. Specifically, integrative anti-racism attempts to suspend prejudgements regarding the role or identity a research subject is supposed to embody, thus allowing the research subject to announce the complex intersections which constitute their subjectivity (Taylor, 2006, p. 521).

The movement owes its origin in large part to George Sefa-Dei, whose work in Anti-racism education: Theory and practice attempted to direct and improve anti-racist practice in the Canadian education system. According to Samuel (2005), Dei’s work prioritized “the process of articulation of social difference (Dei, 1996, p. 60) through race, class, and gender as complex sites and multiple subject positions that need to be interrogated and ruptured” (pp. 26 – 27). According to Dei, subjects are multiple instead of singular. Likewise, social arrangements are 'complex' sites which do not immediately present their meanings. Dei’s emphasis of ‘complex sites and multiple subject positions’ presents a particularly well suited means of analyzing the subtle operations of racism in a contemporary Western context. Samuel emphasized that integrative anti-racism is especially useful in addressing 'polite' forms of racism which are operative in Canadian society (2005, p. 31). According to Samuel, polite, or covert racism, acts
in an implicit register. In the contemporary Canadian context, ‘polite’ racism operates through networks of power relations and historical intersections which implicitly regulate the freedoms of certain minority groups, as well as the capacity of said groups to define and express themselves. Contemporary forms of racism in Canada do not manifest themselves in resounding or generalizable terms, but in implicit structures that must be critiqued with an equally subtle method. The essentializing anti-racist discourses of the mid-twentieth century may well have been adequate to their historical moment, when discrimination announced itself publicly through racist laws and regulations, but the present demands a critical anti-racist system which attends to contemporary modes of oppression (2005, p. 31). Racism continues to structure and inform social life, even while dispersed across a multicultural landscape (Belkihr & Ball, 1993). Effective initiatives to redirect contemporary modes of oppression must engage with the fractured and de-centred organizations of power, authority and oppression which are operative in the present.

In key ways integrative anti-racism can be seen to methodologically avoid the critiques of intersectionality levied by Gressgård and Nash, as developed above. In distinction from intersectionality, which attempts to constitute hybrid subjectivities of oppressed identities, such as immigrant women, integrative anti-racism responds to racism and oppression by rejecting the notion of fixed identity—be it a traditional identity, or an intersectional identity—altogether. Integrative anti-racism research suggests that power and oppression often coexist within the same groups and individuals. Samuel(2005) suggested as much when she wrote that “[i]t is important to note that subjects do not solely fit one category as oppressor or oppressed but can shift positions in different situations and contexts” ( p. 27).
Ultimately, integrative anti-racism is useful for my project because it develops a productive response to questions of oppression and discrimination. It is also useful because the majority of integrative anti-racism scholarship concerns the struggles which emerge for marginalized individuals in learning environments such as high school, university and ESL classrooms. Consequently, integrative anti-racism scholarship can serve as a model for my project given the extent to which the hiring of internationally trained racialized immigrants relies on institutions of employment that exist in Canadian society.

In summary, transnationalism, intersectionality and integrative anti-racism help to localize the concerns of my study’s participants within the unique contemporary context that facilitates and determines their experience. Transnational theory helps to mobilize a productive sense of the global dynamics which underpin the formation of identity in the modern world. Intersectionality theory deploys and strengthens resistance to the misnaming and misrecognition of discrimination. It also helps to frame the virtues of the counter-storytelling methodology which sustains this study. Integrative anti-racism, for all of its affinities with the other two theories outlined here, serves this project by inspiring lines of critique and analysis of the points of contact between marginalized individuals and institutions of knowledge and power.
Diagram 2.4.1 Exclusionary identities intersect during the job search process

Racialized internationally trained immigrants begin the job search process.
Chapter 3

Literature Review

3.1 Overview

The literature describing the experiences, challenges and outcomes faced by racialized internationally trained immigrants seeking to re-enter the Canadian workforce is extensive and multi-perspectival. While there are many potential approaches to the study of various forms of discrimination my review suggests that the majority of studies conform to two tendencies: 1) an emphasis on the role of isolated rather than multiple factors in the experience of racialized immigrants 2) a quantitative approach to the examination of discrimination as a social phenomenon, as opposed to a qualitative one. Quantitative research projects, in their pursuit of universal cause and effect relationships, tend to isolate factors of study instead of examining the context-specific meanings of social practices (Flick, 2006, pp. 12 – 13). Yet the experiences of racialized immigrant job seekers are often determined by the intersectional overlapping of factors of discrimination—including but not limited to race, language, and cultural custom (Burkner, 2011). Consequently, quantitative studies are in many ways limited in their descriptive scope. Regardless of these limitations, the literature is in agreement over the fact that experiences of discrimination are significantly more acute and common among internationally trained immigrants than among their Canadian born counterparts (Greve, Salaff, and Chan, 2009; Guo, 2006; Li, 2001, 2003). However, the contributions of the existing literature towards the understanding and interrogation of discrimination in Canadian society should not be underestimated. In addition to assembling statistical evidence for the existence of discrimination, such studies can also provide qualitative studies with a means of orienting, developing and supporting their research.
Throughout recent Western history, race has served to distinguish populations and people on the basis of differing physical characteristics such as skin color (Darwin, 1872; Zuckerman 1990). Yet the received understanding of ‘race’ as something that is objective and grounded in material reality does not contend with the historical reality. Correcting received opinions, Apple (2009) defines race “as not a biological entity but instead a historically produced and mediated social construct filled with and generated out of structures and identities of exclusion and inclusion” (p. 651). Within the context of immigration, Omi and Winani (1986) explain that racialization is a historical/ideological construction formed from pre-existing conceptual or discursive elements. According to Omi et al., American society during its early formative years attached racial meaning to serve existing power structures. They further explain that American society stopped short of racializing immigrants from Europe—including Irish and Easter European populations—after the Civil War, encouraging their assimilation. Therefore, racialized meaning was consolidated with the categorization of people who are of non-European or Anglo-Saxon stock. In this study, I use the term racialized to identify the segment of the population that will be the focus of the study. The combination of Apple’s definition of race and Omi and Winani’s explanation of the formation of ‘racialized’ as a category that is inextricably tied to the history of immigration provides the basis for the use of the term racialized in this study. Specifically, I used the term racialized to identify immigrants from Africa, Asia and Latin America, who might experience negative treatment in Canadian society on the basis of having darker skin color.

My review of the literature reveals that there has been some research devoted to the examination of the experiences of racialized internationally trained immigrant educators in Canada (Cho, 2010). Yet such studies have only begun to explore the challenges and outcomes
they face in the job-search process. This is in spite of the fact that ‘educator’ is the fourth most common profession among Canadian immigrants (Pollock, 2010). Studies of hiring practices and employment opportunities predominantly focus on the experiences of internationally trained immigrants in general, or else the experience of internationally trained immigrants in other professional job markets, such as medicine and engineering.

The objective of this literature review is both to develop an account of the field of contemporary research into the experiences of various types of discrimination faced by racialized internationally trained racialized immigrant job seekers in Canada, but also to suggest what has been historically neglected in the tradition, namely qualitative analyses of the experiences of immigrants. I develop the first objective of this review through examining three fields: 1) shifts in Canadian immigration policy and its impact on the immigrant labour force; 2) factors—such as race, name and gender—that could negatively impact racialized immigrants seeking to re-enter their professions in Canada; 3) the challenges faced by immigrant and racialized teachers at both the K-12 and postsecondary level. I develop the second goal of this chapter through an examination of counter-narratives of the experience of discrimination. While there are a number of counter-narrative research projects that examine experiences of discrimination, both among racialized individuals and immigrants, such research in to the job search experience of internationally trained racialized educators in Canada is underdeveloped. I am not aware of any existing studies of this nature. By consulting qualitative counter-narrative methodologies for this study, I hope to address these shortcomings.

3.2 Shifts in Canadian Immigration Policy and Its Impact on the Labour Force

A survey of the literature on Canadian immigration trends since Confederation reveals a wide range of demographic shifts. As previously stated, while recent immigration policies have
promoted the acceptance of racialized immigrants into Canada, opportunities to re-enter the workforce at a level that is commensurate with their level of experience and education in sending countries have declined. The existing literature on immigration policy and the labour force in Canadian society has helped develop these conclusions.

While the first one hundred years of Canadian immigration history are marked by a strong bias towards Western European immigrants, my literature review suggests that in more recent years there has been a pronounced shift in the source locations for immigrants to Canada. Today, Canada receives most of its immigrants from Asia (Reitz, 2001; Aydemir and Skuterud, 2005; Esses, Dietz, and Bhardwaj, 2003; Statistics Canada, 2008). The literature is in agreement that this outcome is the consequence of shifts in the Canadian immigration system in the 1970s, namely its reinvention as a system that assessed the eligibility of immigrants primarily based upon education and skill set (Curtis, 1988, p. 121). Consequently, immigrants to Canada are increasingly economically independent professionals. Whereas in the mid-1980s, only 30% of immigrants to Canada were classified as ‘economic immigrants’ Ley (2009) noted that approximately 60% of the immigrants granted admission to Canada in 2008 fell into the economic class.

Despite the increase of skilled ‘economic immigrants’ to Canada, the literature indicates that the recent generation of immigrants to Canada have not fared as well as previous groups of immigrants in terms of employment and earnings. For example, my study builds on the work of Alboim and McIsaac (2007) and their conclusion that historically disadvantaged individuals, such as racialized groups, have not experienced equivalent labour market success as have Canadian-born groups. Both Green and Worswick (2004), and Aydemir and Skuterud (2005) have found that immigrants who arrived in Canada in the 1990s earned around 30% less than
Canadian-born workers. They claimed that, in contrast, earlier cohorts of immigrants who arrived before the 1970s were earning comparable wages to Canadian-born workers. Picot, Hou and Colombe (2007) also documented a marked disparity in the earnings of immigrants who arrived after the 1970s. They asserted that among immigrants who arrived between 1991 and 1999, about 1/5th of entering immigrants were in the chronic low-income category (a period lasting five years or longer). Chronic low income was 2.3 times higher among new immigrants in the early 1990s than among Canadian-born, new labour market entrants.

Picot and Sweetman (2005) confirm that current cohorts of immigrants to Canada face more challenges than their predecessors. On average, immigrants who arrived to Canada before the late 1970s reduced or eliminating the earning gap between themselves and non-immigrant Canadians over their working lifetime. Yet, echoing Aydemir and Skuterud’s (2005) demonstration of the diminishing opportunities available to immigrant cohorts since the 1970s, Picot and Sweetman found that for immigrant cohorts since the late 1970s the earning gap is never bridged. Among immigrant cohorts who arrived in Canada during the 1980s, after 16 to 20 years in Canada, their average annual earnings only equalled 85% of those recorded for their non-immigrant Canadian counterparts. Likewise, for immigrant cohorts who arrived in Canada during the 1990s, after 6 to 10 years their annual earnings were only 70% of those earned by their non-immigrant Canadian counterparts (Picot and Sweetman, p. 8). Ultimately, statistics suggest that recent racialized immigrant professionals to Canada are even less likely to succeed than racialized immigrant professionals from earlier generations.

The literature reveals that in spite of the fact that a majority of immigrants to Canada arrive with extensive international education—and thus qualify as ‘economic immigrants’—there are no assurances that they will find suitable work in Canada. Most often they are presented with
an obligatory credentials assessment that evaluates their suitability for current labor practices and
the need for more training, education and/or Canadian work experience before being allowed to
practice. The formidable obstacles that stand between skilled immigrants and the possibility of
obtaining gainful employment in their trained fields leave many immigrants with menial jobs
outside of their specializations. Boyd and Schellenberg (2008) stated that while 90% of Canadian
born people who studied medicine have secured positions as physicians, only 55% of
internationally trained physicians are working in their intended field. Among the 45% who are
not working as physicians, a full 33% currently work in areas completely unrelated to medicine
(2008, p. 4). While trends in medicine might not be completely representative of wider
challenges faced by internationally trained professional immigrants in Canada, they are
indicative of the formidable gap which stands between the promises and realities encountered by
immigrant workers in Canada.

Additional research focused on recent immigrants (Goldberg, 2004; Boudarbat, 2007;
Zietsma, 2006; Oreopoulos, 2009) suggested that the trend of unemployment and under-
employment will continue into the foreseeable future. Zietsma (2006) concluded that “very
recent and recent immigrants to Canada have had even more difficulties in the labour market
compared with both established immigrants and the Canadian born” (p. 6). Zietsma further
observed that labour market disparities between more recent immigrants and the Canadian born
were evident across many socio-demographic characteristics, such as province/region, sex, level
of education, and age groups.
3.3.1 Factors That Could Negatively Impact Racialized Immigrants Seeking to Re-enter their Professions

While the literature on immigration trends and labour practices in Canadian society forms an invaluable account of macro level discrimination in Canadian society, the experience of specific sub-groups of Canadian immigrants are often overlooked. Since this research is specifically focused on the job search experiences of racialized immigrants, the following section will develop an account of the existent literature which details the challenges faced by some racialized immigrants during the job search process. For the purpose of this review I take the job search process to encompass such varied activities as online and in-person job applications, interviews, networking opportunities, job fairs, bridging programs, recertification, and re-education.

3.3.2 Non recognition of work experience and credentials

As previously mentioned, the existing data indicates that more recent immigrants are experiencing far greater difficulties in the labour market when compared to native born individuals and, most notably, to previous immigrant groups. Zietsma (2007) helped develop this point though his investigation of the numerous factors that contribute to higher unemployment rates among immigrants. He focused his attention on the 2003 longitudinal survey conducted by Statistics Canada in which Canadian immigrants between the ages of 25 and 44 were asked to identify the factors that they felt were preventing them from entering the labour market. The immigrants who were surveyed identified a lack of Canadian work experience and a lack of recognition of international credentials as two of the most serious problems they faced in the job search process. Further evidence to support Zietsma’s conclusion can be found in research produced by Bauder and Girard (2005). These researchers determined that most immigrant professionals seek employment in occupations for which they were trained. However,
regulations established by various licensing bodies often preclude the employment of immigrants because the credentials and work experience obtained in other countries are frequently viewed as inferior to Canadian credentials and work experience. Similarly, Teelucksingh and Galabuzi (2005) highlighted various issues that often result in the non-recognition of immigrants’ credentials and work experiences. The researchers asserted that many prospective immigrants are unaware of the processes required to obtain Canadian licenses in order to re-enter their professions. They are unaware that their past credentials and work experience will be evaluated in Canada. The authors believed that in fact many immigrants fail to acquire adequate information about licensing requirements in their professions before they arrive in Canada and are often unprepared for the evaluation process. Furthermore, upon their arrival, immigrants are faced with a scarcity of reliable tools that could aid them in the verification of their credentials, education and certifications.

This lack of recognition of credentials and work experience results in a disproportionate number of immigrants in positions for which they are overqualified. Li, Gervais and Duval (2006) interviewed immigrants who have faced problems gaining recognition for their work experience and credentials. They wrote that between 1993 and 2001, “[m]ore than 52% of recent immigrants with a university degree worked in a job requiring only high school education. This is twice the proportion of 28% among their Canadian-born counterparts” (p. 6). This study also reported that immigrants had a 72% chance of being overqualified for their present positions, whereas the Canadian-born population had only a 36% chance of being overqualified. Furthermore, these authors observed that over qualification varied depending on the field of study in which the immigrant participated. Specifically, immigrants who studied science or health-related subjects had a lower incidence of over-qualification: “approximately 20% of
workers who had studied science or health were overqualified at some point in their career” (Li et al., p. 6). Scientists and health workers were reported to have a significantly lower rate of overqualification than those who had studied commerce (37%) or the arts, humanities, or social sciences (32%). In general, Statistics Canada reported that the higher the level of education, the higher the rate of unemployment and underemployment among immigrants (Canadian Labour and Business Centre, 2003, p. 20).

Guo (2009-2010) emphasized that with such a high percentage of highly educated potential employees, it was startling to find that few have achieved any kind of upward mobility in the workforce. Guo indicated that higher satisfaction and earning potential was evident among immigrants who had obtained their training in Canada in comparison to those who had received most of their training overseas. Guo described what he called the “triple glass effect,” which he saw as causing the majority of problems in the job procurement and advancement process:

In fact, immigrant professionals potentially face three layers of glass in their integration process. The first layer, the glass gate, determines whether immigrants should receive their professional membership and enter a gated professional community. [...] In securing a professional job, many immigrants hit the second layer of glass – the glass door. As Pendakur and Woodcock (2010) point out, glass doors put up barriers that limit disadvantaged workers’ access to employment at high-wage firms. [...] For those “lucky” ones who are already within the doors of a professional company, a third layer of glass may be encountered in subsequent career stages – the glass ceiling. Glass ceilings prevent immigrants from moving up to management positions (p. 26-27).

Some researchers view the non-recognition of education and work experience received in a foreign country as a form of employment discrimination. Specifically, Reitz (2001) suggested that “the situation of non-recognition of foreign professional or trade credentials becomes a serious form of employment discrimination when immigrants who are licensed to work in a particular field in their country of origin are refused a parallel license for work in Canada” (p. 9).
3.3.3 Accent and language discrimination

Evidence cited earlier in this study supports the conclusion that the vast majority of immigrants to Canada arrive from non-English speaking countries. It is claimed that lack of fluency in the English language can, at times, pose severe communication challenges for them during the job search process. Alboim and McIsaac (2007) identified the lack of English language proficiency as a significant barrier to finding employment. They asserted that this language barrier is particularly intimidating for immigrants as it impedes their abilities to effectively communicate during the job search process, including interviews. Oreopoulos (2009) similarly noted that the lack of English language skills is a major problem with significant implications for immigrants during the job search process. He contended that it is especially challenging when immigrants come from countries whose native languages share nothing in common with the English language. He identifies Asian, African and Eastern European languages as falling into this category. He asserted that accent and language discrimination by potential employers helps to explain why recent immigrants, though highly skilled, face much poorer prospects than non-immigrants in the Canadian labour market. Oreopoulos’s study was informed by the work of Henry and Ginzberg (1985), who studied 237 employers and their responses to job enquiries based on enquirers accents. These authors discovered that applicants with English accents were told that jobs were available 85% of the time, those with Slavic last accents were told that jobs were available 52% of the time, and those with Indo-Pakistani accents were told that jobs were available 47% of the time. He concluded that in many cases there seems to be a misconception in Canadian society that people with accents are not as capable or intelligent as those without an accent.
In similar fashion, Creese and Kambere (2007) suggested that the presentation of an accent may be misconstrued on the part of employers as representing poor communication skills and that this perception negatively influences the immigrant’s chances of success in securing a targeted employment opportunity. They discussed English language fluency, accents and race in their book, *What Colour Is Your English?* Drawing from preliminary research on African immigrant women, the authors highlighted the need to explore the social construction of language fluency and the intersection between accents and processes of racialization. They believed that accents of racialized people also shape perceptions of language competency. Specifically, individuals with an accent may not be viewed by dominant groups as being fluent in English. As a result, accents may provide a rationale for (dis)entitlement in employment or in full participation in civil society without troubling liberal discourses on equality. To support their case, Creese and Kambere showed that African women with advanced degrees from English language institutions are perceived as less competent because they speak with accented English. They concluded that accent and language discrimination can negatively affect an individual’s ability to gain access to social goods, including jobs, which may lead to a loss of confidence, depression and withdrawal from society for the affected individuals.

### 3.3.4 Name discrimination

Gua (2009) conducted a case study involving participants enrolled in an English as a Second Language (ESL) program which was intended to prepare immigrant professionals for the Canadian labour market. Among other things, the research focused on the role of an individual’s name during the job search process. Gua noted that the participants and administrators of the ESL program were all familiar with the negative stereotypes and discrimination associated with ethnic names. With this in mind, the administrators of the program encouraged the participants to
change their names to English sounding names. All of the participants in this case study, with the exception of two, chose to change their names to English-sounding names. Gua suggested that the ESL participants and administrators felt that if immigrants adopted anglicized names, then employers would assume that they had been integrated into Canadian society. In contrast, ethnic names implied that the individual had not become integrated into Canadian society.

Oreopoulos (2009) expanded on a study by Bertrand and Mullainathan (2004) which concluded that resumes with white-sounding names sent to blue-collar job prospects in Boston and Chicago generated call-backs about 50% more often than the same resumes sent with black-sounding names. As part of his study, Oreopoulos and his research team sent thousands of resumes online in response to job postings across multiple occupations in the Greater Toronto Area. He discovered a similar proportion of name discrimination involving black versus white sounding names as that uncovered by Bertrand and Mullainathan (2004). The study concluded that interview request rates among applicants with ‘English sounding’ names who possessed Canadian education and experience were more than three times higher than the rates among applicants with Chinese, Indian or Pakistani names with international education and experience, but were no different compared to foreign applicants from Britain.

3.3.5 Lack of strong social networks

There is evidence in the literature to demonstrate that many immigrants rely heavily on their social networks to find employment. For example, Goel and Lang (2009) used census data from immigrants arriving in Canada between October 2000 and September 2001 to examine the role of social ties in the job search process of new immigrants. They concluded that immigrants for whom English is a second language are heavily dependent on their existing social networks for information such as job leads. Based on their study of recent immigrants to Canada, Goel and
Lang noted that “42% of most recent immigrants indicated that they found their current or most recent job using networks” (p. 13). The study also concluded that immigrants continue to use their networks to find jobs even after being in Canada for four years.

It is widely believed that the heavy reliance on social networks provides a partial explanation for the persistent unemployment and underemployment of immigrants. According to McDonald, Lin and Ao (2009), “[r]esearchers have commonly invoked isolation from job opportunities as an explanation for persistence of gender and race inequality in the labour market, but few have examined whether access to information about job opportunities varies by race and gender” (p. 1). McDonald et al. observed that, given the widespread use of informal hiring practices, the distribution of job information plays a central role in determining success and failure in the labour market. The authors suggested that information about job opportunities is unevenly spread throughout society. Specifically, racialized immigrants lack information about job opportunities because they are most likely to only know other racialized immigrants. Job information is not randomly distributed throughout the population; rather, it is a function of a person’s social capital and the resources embedded in his or her social relationships which can provide a variety of returns when accessed or mobilized by an individual. Therefore, this process provides an alternative mechanism through which discrimination may operate.

3.3.6 Racial discrimination

Because this study focuses specifically on racialized immigrants, the issue of racial discrimination in the Canadian workforce is of particular interest. It is charged that labour market discrimination has divided Canada’s workforce along racial lines with people of colour overrepresented in lower skilled, low paying jobs. Many conclude time and again that the low-earnings average among historically disadvantaged racial groups, specifically Blacks and South
Asians, is fuelled by their inability to find jobs with equitable pay despite being highly skilled and better educated than the Canadian-born population. For example, authors such as Gilmore (2007) observed that, in 2006, African-born immigrants had the lowest employment rates and the highest unemployment rates of all immigrants to Canada, irrespective of period of landing. He further explained that, in 2007, modest employment gains pushed the employment rate of core working-age, African-born immigrants to 72.3%, up from 70.3% in 2006. Despite these modest improvements, the employment rate was still lower and the unemployment rate was still higher than that of both Canadian-born workers and immigrants born in other regions. Although recent studies such as Gilmore’s have provided statistics that evince discrimination in the Canadian job market, such statistics are certainly not new. Other researchers have made claims of racial discrimination in the past. For example, Reitz (2000) has written extensively about the existence and consequences of racial discrimination in the Canadian labour market in a study that examined immigrant employment trends from 1970-1995. Reitz’s findings showed that successive cohorts of racialized immigrant men and women have a progressive trend towards lower rates of labour force participation, as well as lower levels of earnings relative to the Canadian-born population. Reitz (2007) wrote, “Most studies have reported that the market value of immigrant qualifications is generally less than native-born Canadians” (p. 13). He also noted experimental studies by Esses, Dietz and Bhardwaj (2003) that illustrated how “assessments of the quality of foreign qualifications tend to be lower among persons who show other evidence of racial bias or prejudice” (p. 15).

In addition to studies which examine the job market outcomes of racialized immigrants, many studies have attempted to analyse the experience of racialized individuals, irrespective of their status as immigrants or citizens. These studies provide an important perspective on the
challenges faced by immigrants, since most immigrants in Canada come from visible minorities. Information from the 2000 Census has suggested that for visible minorities (about seven in ten of whom were born outside of Canada) the poverty rate was 38%, compared to only 21% for the Canadian-born population (Statistics Canada, 2000). Jackson (2001) put forth a similar claim by stating, “The 1996 census revealed that the overall poverty rate in Canada was 21%. For people who immigrated prior to 1986, the poverty rate was less than 20% but it was 35% for those who arrived between 1986 and 1990. It rose to 52% for immigrants who arrived from 1991 to 1996” (p. 1). Picot, Hou, and Coulombe (2007) also reported that “based on Longitudinal Information Database (IMDB) data, we find that low-income rates among recent immigrants deteriorated after 2000. Low-income rates of immigrants during their first full year in Canada reached 3.5 times that of the Canadian-born in 2002 and fell to 3.2 times in 2004” (p. 4).

3.3.7 Gender discrimination

Tastsoglou and Preston (2005) observed that full-time working immigrant women earn less than foreign-born men and native-born workers of both genders. Furthermore, women who immigrate as children are more likely to possess educational and work backgrounds recognized by Canadian employers than women who enter the country as adults. Recent immigrant women also tend to be more highly educated than their native-born counterparts. Among immigrant women (25-44 years of age) who entered Canada between 1996 and 2001, 27.7% held a bachelor’s degree, compared to 17.3% native-born women (Statistics Canada 2003c). Despite this discrepancy, Canadian women participate in the labour force in higher numbers (82.4%) than both all foreign-born women (75%) and recent immigrants (65%). The other major area of difference detected involved income rates. In the immigrant group, racialized immigrant women earned approximately 20% less than foreign-born, non-racialized women. Tastsoglou and
Miedema emphasized that education does not decrease the rates of unemployment for most recent immigrant women. Furthermore, racialized immigrant women tend to earn less than non-racialized immigrant women. In this context, income is not consistent with actual educational levels, since racialized immigrant women to Canada are on average more highly educated than non-racialized Canadian born women. Of the various factors that could potentially contribute to occupational difficulties, racialized immigrant women identified similar issues to those highlighted earlier in this literature review. For example, accent and language discrimination, credential and employment recognition and racial discrimination were all reported. Other issues impacting immigrant women’s labour force participation included the absence of support systems (such as childcare) and the existence of immigrant women’s native culture-based assumptions about the involvement of women in the workforce.

At the end of their analysis, Tastoglou and Miedema identified four methods of adaptation that immigrant women utilize when dealing with occupational difficulties: 1) They can earn a Canadian university degree; 2) They can obtain Canadian work experience through volunteering or accepting low-paying jobs; 3) They can work “extra hard”; or 3) They can make a huge personal sacrifice. (p. 228)

3.4.1 Discrimination and Internationally Trained, Racialized Immigrant Educators

In the previous section I identified various factors— including the lack of credential recognition, racial discrimination, the nature of the job search process, the role of social networks, accent discrimination, name discrimination, and gender discrimination — that pose significant problems to racialized, internationally trained immigrants seeking employment in Canada. However, because this study is focused on immigrants seeking employment within post-secondary education, the following portion of this review of the literature is particularly
relevant as it begins to highlight finding specifically applicable to racialized internationally trained educators.

3.4.2 Racialized Immigrant Teachers at the K-12 Level

Although limited, there has been research conducted on the challenges faced by internationally trained elementary and secondary educators who attempt to re-enter the teaching profession in Canada. This literature paints a similar picture of unemployment for internationally trained elementary and secondary teachers alike. For example, Taraban (2004) wrote that “despite a teacher shortage in many subject areas, a large number of internationally trained teachers are unable to find their ways into classrooms across Ontario” (p. 1). She went on to say that, upon arrival in Canada, internationally trained teachers experience many challenges in obtaining teaching certification required for teaching in publicly funded schools in Ontario.

Ryan, Pollock and Antonelli (2009) uniquely emphasized a number of major issues surrounding employment for racialized internationally educated teachers (IETs). They claimed that the employment of educators of colour has not kept pace with the growing number of racialized individuals in the Canadian population and in the Canadian student body at large. Further, IETs are six times more likely to be unemployed in their first year of eligibility to teach, ten times more likely to be unemployed because they could not find a teaching job, three times more likely to be underemployed, three times more likely to have non-permanent positions, and three times less likely to be regularly employed as a teacher than their Canadian born counterparts. Even those teachers in higher demand subject areas, such as French, physics, chemistry and secondary mathematics, are significantly more likely to be unemployed (43%) compared to their Ontario counterparts (3%). Ryan et al. contended that Canadian employers seem to believe that immigrants from developing countries have inferior credentials and “human
capital,” perceived deficits that make such job applicants less desirable and competitive in the current job market. Pollock (2010) examined the work experiences of IETs in Ontario and noted that among immigrants specifically, teaching is the fourth most common profession. She discovered that in spite of this circumstance many IETs are employed in non-permanent teaching positions with little prospect of advancement; she estimated that 1/5 of these teachers work under this condition. She claimed that “As occasional teachers, IETs are marginalized by virtue of their unique work arrangements, and resulting attitudes and beliefs about them as a group act as barriers that limit or obstruct social interaction between themselves and other teachers (full-time, permanent) at the school site” (p. 3). Pollock characterized these teachers as a group on the outside who seek entry through various means including engagement in volunteer work to increase their exposure to Canadian schools, gravitation to formal and informal learning opportunities and acceptance of all occasional teaching positions regardless of location or other obligations. All of these actions contribute to what Pollock dubbed a “cycle of marginalization.” Between the lack of networking and the over-representation in the occasional teaching force, IETs experience an array of hurdles in their efforts to be permanently hired into the Canadian teaching profession.

In a study whose findings reflect the professional realities faced by IETs, Lau (2008) investigated the negative experiences of five racial-minority teacher candidates in their attempts to secure teaching positions within the school system. In partial explanation of the problems generally faced by minority teachers in Canada, Lau concluded that “a culture of whiteness” exists in the educational system: “A lack of racial diversity in the faculties of education perpetuates a culture of whiteness which results in a lack of racial diversity in the teaching staff which results in a lack of diversity within school administration” (p. 75). Echoing other’s work
in critical multicultural or antiracism education (Dei, 1996), Lau further contended that racial minority experiences and voices have no power or place in Canada’s Eurocentric curriculum.

Internationally trained teachers who find it difficult to enter their professional field in Canada often enrol in teacher education programs in order to gain Canadian credentials. Chassels (2010) focused her research on the experiences of ten participants in one of Ontario’s Initial Teacher Education (ITE) Bachelor of Education program. When asked to reflect on their experiences, the interviewees described various hardships presented by the ITE program. Chassels presented a summary list of the problems encountered by the immigrants enrolled in the program to include time, language, the professional teaching culture, racism, “otherness” (as related to inadequacy, invisibility, isolation, and inadequacy), and a competitive labour market.

In a similar study, Phillion (2003) focused specifically on the difficulties faced by immigrant women training to become teachers in Canada. Her research examined the experiences of five visible minority women who completed the teacher certification process in Ontario. All of the women had prior teaching experience in their native countries and Phillion documented their stories through interviews and casual conversations. Phillion separated the obstacles encountered by these IETs into three distinct categories: systemic, social, and general. Systemic obstacles were deemed to include the costliness of having professional qualifications verified in Canada, the high expense of the teacher certification process, and the difficulty in obtaining Canadian work experience and recommendations. Social obstacles were determined to relate to broader discriminatory issues involving racism, exclusion, and the lack of minority teachers as role models. General obstacles were listed as including English proficiency, past work experiences and teaching models, and current jobs outside of the teaching profession. In addition to these obstacles, the interviewees noted that they felt pressure to adopt what they
called “Canadian” teaching styles; if they failed to conform to these standards, the interviewees were convinced that they would be unable to procure permanent teaching positions.

Cho (2010) echoed earlier statistical findings that only 7% of all IET applicants found regular teaching jobs in the Ontario public school system, whereas 29% of all applicants at large were successful in their job searches. In trying to understand the reasons behind this low success rate, Cho identified three periods during which IET candidates face particular hardships. First, almost all international teaching candidates (ITCs) are required to gain admission into Bachelor of Education programs for re-credentialing purposes. This often proves to be too expensive and time-consuming for many ITCs. Secondly, different types and levels of discrimination are frequently an issue during the study and internship periods of ITCs. And finally, finding a job after graduation is often quite difficult for most ITCs. Despite a recognized need to increase diversity in the teaching force, Cho theorized that the overarching goal of Canadian public education (to assimilate students into broader Canadian society) actually contradicts the impulse towards diversity. In this context, diversity is perceived as antithetical to Canadian norms/culture at large.

Schmidt and Block (2010) drew attention to the policy issues and concerns that directly impact IETs. In general, the authors argued that employment and ethno-culture policies have a strong influence on the hiring and integration of IETs. Schmidt and Block noted that the treatment of IETs in the hiring process seems to be unfair. In 2007, the Ontario College of Teachers reported that while 41% of Ontario education graduates were employed by the spring semester of their first year out of college; only 8% of newly certified teachers who had finished their teacher training outside of Canada had procured equivalent positions in the same time frame. Focusing on the school system in Manitoba, Schmidt and Block acknowledged that one
factor working against IETs is the fact that there are currently no shortages in the teaching profession. When shortages exist, employees and professional certification bodies are usually more accepting of credentials obtained in other countries. The implication is, therefore, that during periods of minimal shortages, IETs face a more difficult time becoming re-credentialed and finding teaching positions.

Shifting from policies to general practices in how school systems deal with internationally trained teachers in Canada, Walsh and Brigham (2007) developed a study based on questionnaires sent to the directors or deans of approximately 40 teacher education programs across Canada. The purpose of the survey was to document the practices of the programs that relate to the training of IETs. Of the universities that participated in the study, two institutions had programs especially created for IETs, and one university had a teacher recertification program designed specifically for IETs. Walsh and Brigham determined that education programs with large numbers of students are more likely to have formalized practices than ones with smaller numbers of students. Furthermore, they determined that a high correlation exists between the presence of programs for IETs and the number of immigrants in a certain region. Nonetheless, 70% of the participant teacher education programs had no practices specifically accommodating to IETs or only worked with them informally. Beynon, Ilieva and Dichupa’s (2004) formulated a critique of British Columbia’s education faculties and credentialing bodies with recommendations for change. They argued that the accreditation agencies and overall processes function as “gate keeping” mechanisms to ensure that certain cultural capital and wealth are transmitted and perpetuated. Beynon et al. suggested that the British Columbia College of Teachers (BCCT), and other bodies like it, are responsible in part for the obstacles faced by IETs in the employment process. They contended that it is through the certification framework that a
specific status quo and set of standards are maintained by the regulatory bodies, neither of which favours IETs.

3.4.3 Racial Discrimination in Higher Education

Among publically funded workplaces in Canada, higher education institutions are important locations in the struggle for racial equality. Racial equality in higher education has far reaching impact which exceeds the boundaries of a campus location. For example, hiring racialized teachers in higher education can be viewed as fostering the development of racial equality in the Canadian culture at large. Kailasanathan (2006) believes that hiring racialized teachers at any level of the Canadian education system promotes an antiracist educational message. “Immigrant teachers can and should be perceived as key components in the propagation of multicultural values and education. […] They [bring] with them a wealth of knowledge from their home countries, offering important assets in diversifying and strengthening instructional practices in Canadian schools” (p. 4, 5). Escayg (2010) notes that minority teachers provide valuable links between the school experience and minority students, who often feel disconnected from the educational system at large.” (p. 4).

While there are no comprehensive studies which have measured the extent of discrimination against racialized internationally trained immigrants during the hiring process, data from the 2006 Canadian census suggest that racial discrimination exist in Canadian Academia. The 2006 census identified that while 24% of PhD holders in Canada are visible minorities, only 14 percent of university faculty positions are held by minorities (Eisenkraft, 2010). According to Eisenkraft (2010), this discrepancy becomes even more egregious in light of the fact that a disproportionate number of faculty positions held by minorities are entry level faculty positions. Entry level faculties are generally removed from the governance of the
university. He suggested that since the university is in many ways a self-governing organization, the exclusion of visible minorities from the senior faculty of universities exacerbates discriminatory practices in the approval of research projects and pedagogical orientations. Further, since university governmental organizations and administrators are largely responsible for university hiring practices, the bias against racialized individuals in the upper levels of university faculties represents a neglected opportunity to address the structural biases of Canadian society from within the university itself. Eisenkraft (2010) also quoted Dr. Peter Li, a professor of sociology at the University of Saskatchewan who specializes in race, inequality and immigration. Dr. Li shares the sentiment that structural racism occurs in hiring and promotion on university campuses and that it sustains a biased status quo. Dr. Li believes that the practice of racial discrimination is regularized and embedded in the social process of the institution, and that it is not random. In fact, this view is supported by the “Report of the Taskforce on Anti-Racism at Ryerson University” published in 2010. The report pointed to an enduring system of structural racism, expressed in both explicit and implicit forms, with adverse impacts on particular groups of students, staff and faculty. The report concluded that racialized and Aboriginal faculty felt largely shut out of key social networks that determine success at Ryerson. Some faculty members also commented that they felt a culture of patronage that disadvantaged those “out of the loop.”

Other reports claim the existence of racial discrimination at other Canadian universities. One such claim resides in the Henry Report which comprised of surveys targeted at understanding the experiences of visible minority and Aboriginal faculty members at Queen’s University. The Henry Report concluded that “White privilege and power continues to be reflected in the Eurocentric curricula, traditional pedagogical approaches, hiring, promotion and
tenure practices, and opportunities for research at Queen’s University” (Queen's University Senate Educational Equity Committee, 2006, p. 156). The report also concluded that feelings of racial discrimination described by the faculty are a reflection of the culture of Queen’s, one dominated by the beliefs and values of White men. Moreover, the report stated, that the Queen’s community is mostly composed of White students, staff, and faculty. Consequently, racist beliefs are incorporated in the everyday discourse of the university and shape all interactions within it.

The evidence of racial discrimination from the Ryerson University and Queen’s University reports are in line with historical discriminatory practices in education in general. For example, in the past with the support of government legislature, many Western countries were able to restrict access to education for various racial groups. In the United States, specifically, such practices were commonplace. For example, the case of Plessy vs. Ferguson, which began in 1883, resulted in one of a combination of rulings passed by the state of Louisiana essentially stating that the Fourteenth Amendment applied only to the actions of government, not to those of private individuals, and consequently did not protect Blacks against individuals or private entities who violated their civil rights. In particular, the Court invalidated most of the Civil Rights Act of 1875, which was passed by the United States Congress to protect Blacks from private acts of discrimination. Some states took advantage of the Plessy vs. Ferguson decision by legalizing segregation and passed laws like the Jim Crow segregation laws in Southern Mississippi. To justify this segregation, the “Separate but Equal” rule was mandated. This rule meant that different groups of people utilized separate facilities or services with the claim that each group still received equal quality of treatment. These segregation laws ultimately meant separate schools for Blacks and Whites. Though the “Separate but Equal” rule meant that schools with a predominantly Black population were to provide the same type of education as a White
school, this law had no real effect since Black schools were not equally funded compared to White schools. It was not until 1954 in the case of Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka that separate schools were declared unequal and no longer legal.

Although Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka directly related to primary education in the US, and not faculty hiring, the impact of racial discrimination in education and society in general cannot be overlooked in this discussion. It is important to note that in the United States, for example, racial discrimination was still sanctioned by law until the mid-twentieth century. As mentioned during the introduction of this thesis Canada’s racial exclusionary immigration laws were also abolished around that time. Since then legislation such as affirmative action in the United States was enacted to stem the impact of racial discrimination in society and education. Affirmative action attained widespread use through John F. Kennedy’s 1961 “Executive Order 10925” which demanded “affirmative action to ensure that applicants are employed, and that employees are treated during employment, without regard to their race, creed, color, or national origin” (Fubio, 2001, p. 144) Kennedy’s order served to consolidate both social and legislative trends that had been unfolding in American since the mid-1950s. Landmark cases such as Brown vs. Board of Education established a legislative precedent for the development of more extensive initiatives to counteract the effects of social, cultural and economic marginalization of individuals based on race, sex and other factors throughout the remainder of the twentieth century (Fubio, 2001).

The impact of affirmative action has been debated and the legislation has been contested for decades. For example scholars like Elmore and Blackburn (1983) provided evidence that affirmative action has not had a positive impact of faculty hiring’s in the United States. They cited numerous studies which supports the contention that the number of black faculty in white
universities is small (less than 3 percent). In addition, they found that blacks are no more heavily represented in the young faculty groups than in the older, and they remain clustered at the less prestigious schools. More recent data points only to a slight increase. The 2008 report from the National Center for Education Statistics outlined that “84 percent of full-time faculty with tenure was White, non-Hispanic, 7 percent were Asian/Pacific Islander, 4 percent were Black, non-Hispanic, and 3 percent were Hispanic” (p.10). With this evidence it is not difficult to infer that more robust studies on faculty composition in Canada would yield similar results.

### 3.5 Counter-Storytelling and Accounts of Discrimination

A survey of the literature on counter-storytelling research into the experiences of discrimination among racialized immigrants in Canada yields few results. In contrast to the above-compiled literature—on the history of immigration in Canada, factors affecting discrimination against immigrants in Canada, and discrimination in K – 12 and post secondary education—only a handful of studies have been devoted to exploring comparable issues from the perspective of narrative research. The state of the literature results from the fact that sociological research over the last century has placed an excessive emphasis on quantitative, as opposed to qualitative, methods of research. The ease with which quantitative studies can be scaled to encompass large volumes of respondents in their sample populations, coupled with the conviction that numerically dependent research has privileged access to ‘objectivity,’ provide some justification for this preference (Neuman, 2010; Cohen, L., Manion, L. & Morrison, K. (2007).

Although quantitative research is important for supporting the study of discrimination, scholars have argued that quantitative research insufficiently describes the lived experience of research participants. (Marvasti, 2004, p. 7). While racialized internationally trained immigrants
might experience discrimination based on factors such as race or gender, individual experiences of discrimination that are not identical or interchangeable. In abstraction from lived experience to statistics, the existing literature suggests that potentially valuable qualitative accounts of experiences are lost. Likewise, in the examination of isolated factors of discrimination, instead of attempting to explain individuals as the bearers of multiple intersecting oppressed identities, quantitative research threatens to misrepresent experiences of discrimination. As thinkers such as Collins (1986; 1998) have emphasized, the contemporary experience of oppressed individuals should not be reduced to a single oppressed identity. The general signifier ‘black educator’ or ‘female educator’ threatens to collapse the experience of intersectional individuals, such as black female educators, into one category or the other. Qualitative research methods such as the counter-story present a corrective to this tendency. By collecting firsthand accounts of individuals that are predetermined by survey categories, narrative research offers an opportunity to affirm the intersectional identities of oppressed individuals (Solorzano and Yosso, 2002, pp. 25 – 27). As I have mentioned previously, my review of the literature suggests that while narrative research has been rigorously deployed to build qualitative social research about the experience of oppressed or marginalized peoples in certain examples, with respect to Canadian the study of internationally trained racialized post-secondary educators is nonexistent.

In non-Canadian contexts, qualitative studies of immigrant experience have contributed important insights to the scholarship on the experience of racialized immigrants in North America. George (1997) provided a discussion of the complex perspectives that counter-stories and qualitative research offer to considerations of discrimination and identity in the context of the South Asian immigrant experience in the United States. George’s study examined the personal accounts of race offered by South Asian immigrants in the midst of heated discussions
of affirmative action and immigration policies in the state of California. She identified “a certain reluctance to acknowledge a racial identity for oneself and for the community at large” in the narratives of her participants (p. 31). George suggested that, while in certain contexts, racial categories are affirmed and embraced within the South Asian community, in other contexts they are rejected and disavowed. The narratives from George’s research suggested that in situations in which South Asian immigrants are mistaken for immigrants from other ethnic origins, the tendency is to deny the existence of race. George provided the example of a South Asian participant who described the experience of being mistaken for Mexican in the context of assisting an elderly Anglo couple (p. 37). In the experience of being ‘misrecognized’, as “brown” instead of Indian, and thus interchangeable with other marginalized individuals, the tendency is to deny the existence of race (p. 32). While George’s scholarship does not apply directly to the experiences of immigrants in the workforce, it provides an exemplary discussion of the potential advantages and perspectives which counter-narrative research offers to the study of experiences of discrimination.

With respect to a Canadian study, Skogen and Mulatris (2011) offered an example of the importance of narrative research in the context of the development of scholarly understandings of Canadian immigrant experience. Their study presented an application of phenomenological narrative analysis to the stories of immigrant teachers in Canadian schools. The study attempted to understand and frame the experience of “hospitality” recounted by the study’s participants. The notion of hospitality taken up by Skogen and Mulatris is indebted to Jacques Derrida who defined hospitality as the welcoming and inviting of the stranger at both the individual level and the state level (p. 21). A discussion of hospitality is therefore a discussion of the experiential space in which immigrants and other outsiders transition into both a foreign society and a foreign
job-market. Skogen and Mulatris suggested that narrative research provides insight into the unrecorded hurdles that immigrant teachers encounter in Canadian classrooms. The articulation of such hurdles is important because “not only do many of these [non-white immigrant teaching] students report having difficulties “fitting into” Canadian schools, but a fair number of them fail their student teaching placements outright” (p. 21). Their research yielded a number of themes related to hospitality that were common to immigrant narratives of the experience of their teaching placements. Challenges, such as “the classroom door as threshold” and the unfamiliarity of Canadian students, were identified as impediments to the experience of hospitality between immigrant teachers and their training institutions. At the same time, moments of “festive” and “relational” interactions between immigrant teachers and the teacher-hosts emerged as opportunities to develop the hospitality between immigrant teachers and teaching institutions in Canada. Skogen and Mulatris suggested that narrative research is a unique means of developing the “ability to maintain empathy” and “human dignity” between immigrant teachers and the educational institutions they become a part of (p. 36). Such research, according to the authors, provides orientation for an understanding of the experiences that are unique to the encounter between outsiders and their host institutions. While the authors do not directly address the value this research could have on the job-search outcomes of immigrant educators in Canada, their study nonetheless demonstrates the value of qualitative research for shaping and improving the opportunities of internationally trained immigrant educators.

Other studies, such as Duchesne and Stitou (2011), provide further elaborations of the experience of immigrant educators in the Canadian classroom context from a qualitative perspective. Their study attempted to determine why immigrant students in the University of Ottawa’s Faculty of education are more successful in the theoretical component of their teaching
education than in the practical component. By developing an understanding of the challenges that immigrant teachers face in the process of becoming reaccredited in Canada, Duchesne and Stitou demonstrate the applicability of qualitative methodologies to immigrant job-search experiences in Canada.

Their study sampled seventeen immigrant students in the Faculty of Education, whose ages ranged from 27 to 56. The interviews were conducted in an open fashion where participants were prompted to speak generally about their conception of education, both in their homelands and in Canada. Through their research, Duchesne and Sititou were able to identify diverse expectations and outcomes that teachers faced in transitioning to the Canadian system. Implicit assumptions which prevail in Canadian classrooms, such as ‘student-centered’ education, were found to be underemphasized in student-teacher resources. They conclude their study with recommendations to policy makers to revise teacher certification curriculums to include more emphasis on the cultural practices that are specific to the Canadian educational system.

Like the aforementioned authors, Cho (2010) attempted to collect the counter-stories of immigrant teacher candidates in Canada during the process of their reaccreditation in the Canadian education system. Cho indicated that her choice of a qualitative approach over a quantitative approach was intended to help understand her participants from their frame of reference (pp. 10 – 11). Cho’s choice of the counter-story as her method of research provides both a descriptive qualitative account of the thoughts and experiences of her research participants in discriminatory situations, as well as a viable alternative to conventional discussions of discrimination.

Cho chose not to restrict her participants to a prescribed medium of expression either, citing “focus group responses, narrative works, visual art, email correspondences and recorded
interviews” are all viable sources of narrative material (p. 11). Cho’s findings and discussion, likewise, reveal a diversity of outcomes and experience for the immigrants who comprise her sample. She suggested that

Some participants are “othered” by their accent. Participants without a so-called “accent” are “othered” by their skin colour. Some are “othered” for wearing religious dress and some use religion to mobilize their diversity capital. The specifics of race, religion, class, sexual orientation, gender, ethnicity, ability and nationhood cannot and should not be examined in isolation. (p. 11)

The factors that Cho’s participants identify as the cause of their disenfranchisement and ‘othering’ from the process of being certified as a Canadian teacher are not evenly distributed across participants. According to Cho’s study, an accurate description of the experience of immigrant educators in Canada requires sensitivity to the unique configurations of each individual’s experience.

The existent literature which utilizes counter-stories as a means of examining discrimination, both in the context of the educational labour force, and within North American society more generally is limited in its current development. Yet the conclusions of the research, namely that the self-descriptions of discrimination are complex and productive sociological material, is a conclusion that demands to be extended to the existent research on the experiences, outcomes and expectations of internationally trained racialized immigrant educators in Canada.

3.6 Conclusion

The literature on internationally trained racialized immigrants in Canada suggests a number of concise affirmations. One of the affirmations is that a large percentage of immigrants to Canada who have been educated and trained in their countries of origin continue to experience varying types and levels of difficulties as they attempt to reenter their professions. While this trend can be explained with recourse to a number of perspectives, one of the most compelling
explanations has been the existence of discriminatory factors that intersect in Canadian society. Specifically, my review of the extensive research literature reveals that discrimination in Canadian society is comprised of multiple intersecting and overlapping factors. The absence of Canadian social networks, racist tendencies in North America, name discrimination, and language all contribute to the network of challenges that are faced by racialized immigrants in Canadian society. Further, within the context of education, the extensive regulations and restrictions that surround hiring exacerbate, institutionalize, and normalize structures of discrimination.

Importantly, my review of the limited qualitative research on discrimination reveals that while the contributions of the quantitative research are invaluable to the development of an understanding of the challenges faced by racialized internationally trained immigrants in Canada, such research has its limits. My review determined that qualitative studies—principally narrative and counter-story research—provide a unique window into the nuances of immigrant experience in Canadian society. Such approaches are underdeveloped, and demand extension and application to the question of the experiences, challenges and outcomes of racialized internationally trained immigrant educators.
Chapter 4

Methodology

4.1 Introduction

Contemporary social research relies on a contested variety of research methods. For traditionalist researchers, natural science, statistics and mathematics provide the guiding methods of studies (Neuman, 2010; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). Nonetheless, critical developments since the 1960s and 1970s have challenged the dominance of traditionalist methods. The emergence of qualitative approaches to research and the ongoing debate as to which tradition, quantitative versus qualitative, is adequate to the phenomena under investigation has not reached any form of consensus. Bruner (1986), in comparing what he termed “two ways of knowing” or “two modes of thought”, wrote “the paradigmatic or logico-scientific one, attempts to fulfil the ideal of a formal, mathematical system of description and explanation. It employs categorization or conceptualization and the operations by which categories are established, instantiated, idealized and related one to the other to form a system” (p. 12). In contrast, “the other establishes not truth but verisimilitude” (p. 11). Bruner marked the mid-1970s as a point of origin that saw the social sciences gravitate towards a more intuitive approach to investigation. Dewey (1938) was one of the earliest theorists to identify the human experience of the world in the context of social reality as foundational to an explanation of human behaviour and helped set the stage for storytelling to be viewed as a means by which individuals achieve understanding of the experiences of others and move on to assimilate that understanding into their own personal circumstance.

The established use of the ‘story’ or ‘narrative’ as a base for qualitative inquiry is difficult to pin to a specific date, but today it is found in virtually every field and social science
Examples of field-diversity and subject-adaptation in the use of the narrative are not difficult to find. Pavlish (2007), for instance, focused his study on the life stories of refugee women and men displaced from their Rwandan homeland. He sought to provide for nurses involved with health care for these refugees contextual information that could be used to inform professional practice and relationships. His data consisted of narratives collected from thirty refugee women and men, and his analysis produced themes that represented powerful insights into the lives of patients with whom nurses interacted on a daily basis. Prevalent themes in the lives of women included “Leaving the good life behind”, “Worrying about their daughters”, “Feeling ambivalent about marriage”, and “Lacking hope”. Prevalent themes in the lives of men included “Leaving the good life behind”, “Having no peace in the heart”, and “Fearing for the future” (p. 30-32). Pavlish quoted Lawler (2002) who concluded “The truths people produce through such stories are not truths as conventionally understood by a positivist social science: nevertheless, they do speak certain truths about people’s (socially located) lives and identities” (p. 254). In my view, the life experiences conveyed to Pavlish by his study’s participants bear an important affinity with the stories told by my study’s racialized immigrants. The impact of such visceral messages uncovered through a narrative-based research methodology may not be fully possible through more traditional methods. Margery Wolf (1992) suggests that traditional ethnographic and social research run the risk of exploiting subject, and more damningly, of superimposing the researcher’s values in the process of research (p. 4). Hence, stories allow for the voices of a study’s participants to emerge and bring to light the experiences of participants that would otherwise be difficult to convey through a quantitative methodology.
4.2 Research Method

A central aspect of the research method employed by my study involves narratives. As reflected by Pavlish’s study, narratives are usually created in a sequential and detailed format that describes a series of events. These events may include experiences of oneself, others, places and relationships. Narratives are usually a mode of communicating and understanding our past, as well as present events, in order to think and decide about our future. This tendency is considered to be a human trait that leads us to communicate through the same medium (Barrett & Stauffer, 2009).

When an individual, irrespective of cultural origin, is called upon to give an account of their life, it invariably takes the form of a story or narrative; and the individual has no other means by which to depict experience over time other than through narrative (Bruner 1987). Mann (1992) addressed the ontological question of ‘What is a life?’ by first defining ‘a life story’. She cited Bertaux and Kohli (1984) who depicted a life story as a spoken autobiographical narrative resulting from communication with another. Mann used the perspective of Bruner (1984) to suggest a “life lived is what actually happens. A life experienced consists of the images, feelings, sentiments, desires, thoughts, and meaning known to the person whose life it is . . . A life as told, a life history, is a narrative, influenced by the cultural conventions of telling, by the audience and the social context (p. 272). Mann drew several conclusions from her study that represent helpful perspectives for researchers who intend to use narratives as a base of inquiry; it should be noted as well that these perspectives represent some the seeds of criticism for narrative-based research. Mann concluded that the researcher can only
access the life experiences of another person through the story, and as such, there is no objective truth to be uncovered other than a subjective experience that is filtered to the researcher by social and cultural screens. In reading and retelling a narrative, the researcher is unconsciously influenced by their own life stories. A final conclusion reached by Mann suggested that there is a potential impact on the story teller that could move in one of two directions, either a positive developmental experience on the one hand, or an alienation from the self on the other.

The process in which information is gathered for the purpose of research through storytelling or narratives is called narrative inquiry. Narrative inquiry has become a very effective qualitative research methodology in recent decades. Various disciplines such as history, anthropology, psychology, sociology and other academic fields have all embraced narrative inquiry as a research methodology. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) provided the ontological and epistemological underpinning of this research method in stating “humans are storytelling organisms who individually and collectively lead storied lives. The study of narrative, therefore, is the study of the ways humans experience the world.” (p. 2) Connelly and Clandinin identified field notes, interviews, journals, letters, autobiographies and orally told stories as some of the key sites of the collection of narrative information. Further, it should be emphasized that narrative research is a collaborative document, a mutually constructed story out of the lives of both researcher and participant. Webster and Mertova (2006) agreed with Connelly and Clandinin that narrative inquiry is developed through human stories of experience. They affirmed that narrative inquiry helps researchers investigate human experience through human stories.

Like the Rwandan refugees studied by Pavlish cited above, the participants of my study are typically viewed as marginalized members of society. For marginalized groups such as
women and Blacks, the narrative represents an alternative to traditional approaches to data collection and affords marginalized groups a more suitable means by which to achieve a voice (Canagarajah 1996). Denzin and Lincoln (2005) agreed with Canagarajah’s contention in stating “Telling the stories of marginalized people can help to create a public space requiring others to hear what they do not want to hear” (p. 642). My theoretical orientation finds a common ground in the thinking of Riessman (1993) who viewed the narrative researcher as one who understands that culture expresses itself through an individual’s story. Schwandt (1994) traced the array of qualitative methodologies in use today to three major theoretical perspectives – constructivism, interpretism and human inquiry. He viewed the purpose of these perspectives as similar in providing an understanding of the “complex world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it” (p. 118). These perspectives, as also supported by Guba and Lincoln (1994), Lather (1988), and Schwandt (1997), create for me a foundation in theory that facilitates a generalization from the individual accounts of my participants to a broader discovery of a common group experience in a society that prefers not to acknowledge the associated narratives. A goal of my research is to determine from the individual constructions provided by my participants a synthesis that speaks out about their collective lived realities. Chase (2005) explored the link between narrative inquiry and social change and credited narrative research over the past several decades with changing the contemporary narrative landscape for marginalized groups such as transgendered people, people with disabilities, and survivors of gendered, racial/ethnic, and sexual violence. In similar fashion, through my research, I hope to contribute to positive social change for the racialized immigrant in Canada.
4.3 Critical Race Theory (CRT)

While my research method can be broadly characterized as narrative inquiry, it can be more fully understood when viewed as facilitated by related research methodology involving critical race theory and counter-storytelling. Critical race theory is generally defined as a political-theoretical movement concerned with the transformation and elimination of inherent structures of racism in the West. Critical race theory has many different roots, but its first concrete expression can be located in the mid-1970s in the work of Derrick Bell and Alan Freeman. The work of Bell and Freeman developed as a response to practices of racial discrimination in the American legal system. Although early critical race theory was originally viewed as a framework for exploring legal questions, it has grown into a theoretical program concerned with the identification and transformation of fundamental structures of inequality in other disciplines such as education, politics and immigration.

Delgado and Stefancic (2001) defined the critical race theory movement as “a collection of activists and scholars interested in studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism and power” (p. 2). According to the authors, the movement also considers other aspects of conventional civil rights and ethnic studies discourses in a much broader perspective. They added that “critical race theory questions the very foundations of the liberal order, including equality, legal reasoning, enlightenment rationalism, and neutral principles of law” (p. 3). Crenshaw et al. (1995) believed that “critical race theory embraces a movement of left scholars, most of them scholars of color, situated in law schools, whose work challenges the way in which race and racial power are constructed and represented in American legal culture and, more generally, in American society as a whole” (p. 13).
Critical race theory is not limited to abstract pronouncements on the structures of racism and exclusion that constitute Western society. In addition to its theoretical armature, critical race theory has developed a number of practical programs which can be generally grouped under the rubric of critical race methodology. Critical race methodology seeks to employ tools of qualitative sociological analysis to uncover structures of racism and discrimination which support critical race theory. While there are a number of different approaches to the task of this discovery, Solorzano and Yosso (2002) identified five basic insights or assumptions which foreground any critical race methodology, namely the “intercentricity [relatedness] of race and racism with other forms of subordination,” “the challenge to dominant ideology,” “the commitment to social justice,” “the centrality of experiential knowledge” and “the transdisciplinary perspective” (p. 25–27). Critical race methodology is a method of sociological research which attempts to develop the above insights.

One of the most formidable challenges to any program of critical race theory is the prevailing social assumption that discriminatory structures do not exist or are self-evident. Solorzano and Yosso's second basic insight, the “challenge to dominant ideology,” stipulated that critical race methodology “challenges the traditional claims that the educational institutions make toward objectivity, meritocracy, colour blindness, race neutrality, and equal opportunity” (p. 26). Ideology has the function of simultaneously normalizing and obscuring the conditions of daily life. In the case of discrimination and racism in arenas such as politics and education, majoritarian narratives dictate that the effects of racism are negligible and that initiatives such as affirmative action are adequate to whatever discrepancies currently exist. Since the field of all societal activity is immense and difficult to quantify, this, and related majoritarian accounts are
capable of satisfying the cultural demand for at least token gestures towards the 'neutralization'
of irrefutable structures of social discrimination. Richard Delgado (1989), suggested that,

The stories of out-groups aim to subvert that in-group reality. In civil rights, for example, many in the majority hold that any inequality between blacks and whites is due either to cultural lag, or inadequate enforcement of currently existing beneficial laws - both of which are easily correctable. For many minority persons, the principal instrument of their subordination is neither of these. Rather, it is the prevailing mindset by means of which members of the dominant group justifies the world as it is, that is, with whites on top and browns and blacks at the bottom. (p. 2413)

According to Solorzano and Yosso, majoritarian “White” narratives, especially within the field of sociology, have the additional function of couching discriminatory conceptions of the social within narratives of “objective” and “neutral” research (p. 26). The problem is that in accepting the majoritarian narratives which attempt to account for race and racism, academics and lay people alike suspend the demand for a more thoroughgoing interrogation of social discrimination.

Having identified the ubiquity of dominant ideology, Solorzano and Yosso suggested that critical race methodologies help to “expose deficit-informed research and methods that silence and distort the experiences of people of colour and instead focuses on their racialized, gendered, and classed experiences as sources of strength” (p. 26). By confronting 'deficit-informed' majoritarian narratives with the narratives of particular groups whose experience is fundamentally incompatible with majoritarian narratives, critical race theorists and sociologists challenge the adequacy of current forms of understanding for the task of addressing injustice in social life.
Much of the criticism levelled towards Critical Race Theory takes its roots from where it began – the American legal system. Vargas (2005) noted the 1997 publication by Farber and Sherry of a book entitled *Beyond All Reason* as the beginning of a high profile debate between CRT scholars and what he termed neo-traditionalists. Farber and Sherry raised alarm over the Postmodern focus in the Western legal system over a move away from scientific logic as a means to determine truth towards an acceptance of stories turned into facts. They illustrated how this shift impacted legal theory by saying “Rather than relying solely on legal or interdisciplinary authorities, empirical data, or rigorous analysis, legal scholars have begun to offer stories, often about their own real or imagined experiences” (p. 39). Farber and Sherry cited the case of a fifteen year old black girl named Tawana Brawley where rationality in the courts and in the media was superseded by appeal to emotions. Brawley claimed that she was abducted, raped and tortured by a group of white men including a state district attorney and two policemen. It was later revealed in court that her story was fabricated as a diversion invented to have her family forgive her for running away from home. Despite the ruse, Brawley remained a storied victim with many in the public seemingly convinced that she was still a victim of a horrific crime even if, in this case, she did it to herself. Farber and Sherry contended “In other words, whether it was true or false, Tawana Brawley’s story tells us something about the condition of black women” (p. 96). In this instance, the power of the story to create an emotional indictment against the dominant culture of white males overpowered the truth in the court of public discourse.

In an effort to explain what they termed the postmodernists’ reliance on the story, Farber and Sherry offered “Because the scholarship of women and people of color reflects their distinctive knowledge [gained from listening to and telling stories], the radical multiculturalists argue, it cannot be judged or tested by traditional standards. Instead, they imply, it should be
judged according to its political effect: it should be judged in terms of its ability to advance the interests of the outsider community, because outsider scholarship is often aimed not at understanding the law, but at changing it” (p. 30). They expressed alarm over the negative impact of this postmodernist positioning on the objective workings of the American legal system and on the ability of the general public to distinguish fact from fiction. Farber and Sherry’s contentions surrounding manufactured discourse have parallel applications to how the world is coming to view issues surrounding global warming. In a 2004 fictionalized look at global warming, Michael Crichton’s *State of Fear* depicted what he considered the disturbing role of corporations and media establishments in scientific research and public opinion. The thesis of this novel contended that the threat of global warming is not based on facts but rather on assumptions upon which a story is subsequently constructed. Crichton included an appendix to *State of Fear* entitled *Why Politicized Science is Dangerous* in which he shared views on the various social issues contained by the novel, views that he supported by citing scientific data.

As may be expected, the liberal left opposes those who challenge tenets and methods associated with Critical Race Theory. Culp (1999) dismissed with vigour the views expressed by Farber and Sherry in *Beyond All Reason* stating without reservation that they demonstrated little understanding of “the Enlightenment view of knowledge, reason, merit and truth” and that “their apparent intention is to distort and destroy, not engage” (p. 1640). A notable counter to positions held by Critical Race Theorists such a Culp, and in particular to the charge of diversion, not engagement, is found in a 1997 book review by United States Court of Appeals Judge Alex Kozinski in which he determined as impossible a meaningful exchange of ideas with Critical Race Theorists. Kozinski asserted “The racial multiculturalists’ views raise insuperable barriers to mutual understanding. Consider the *Space Traders* story. How does one have a meaningful
dialogue with Derrick Bell? Because his thesis is utterly untestable, one quickly reaches a dead end after either accepting or rejecting his assertion that white Americans would cheerfully sell all blacks to the aliens” (Kozinski, 1997, para. 6)

Consistent with the points made by Kozinski above, Rosen (2000) depicted the storytelling movement as a significant impediment to any sort of transracial agreement. Critical Race Theorists’ advocacy for counter narratives of black empowerment to counterbalance dominant white paradigms, as claimed by Rosen, does not exclude factually unsubstantiated conspiracy theories or black law-breaking as a form of black self-help; both situations present weak prospects for mediation. Pyle (1999) criticized Critical Race Theory for “an unprincipled, divisive and ultimately unhelpful attack on the liberal tradition in America” (p. 789) that fails to present better alternatives to liberalism’s core values. In fact, as suggested by Pyle, African Americans continue to believe strongly in the promise of liberty, equality and justice (the ‘American Dream’) and largely reject the tenants of Critical Race Theory, similar to the ways in which they rejected appeals from socialists in the late nineteenth century, the Communists in the 1930s, and the neo-Marxists in the 1960s.

Despite the questions raised concerning the philosophical underpinnings of Critical Race Theory, it persists as an important research methodology in the social sciences. Schmidt and Block (2010), for example, relied on interest convergence as a construct from Critical Race Theory in an attempt to establish a meeting place between policy making and policy implementation to better facilitate agreement amongst power groups residing in the Manitoba public school system. Schmidt and Block examined educational policies in place in Manitoba that were developed to diversify the K to 12 teaching force. The researchers focused on internationally trained teachers seeking to resume their careers in Manitoba as a group that
logically should benefit from diversification policies. However, their examination suggested this not to be the case and proposed the use of interest convergence as a starting perspective from which to eliminate an apparent disconnect between policy and effective implementation. In another example, Cho (2010) focused on immigrant teachers in an analysis of the stories of immigrant candidate teachers enrolled in an Ontario Bachelor of Education program. Cho drew upon critical race theory to uncover the discourse and conditions that conspired to restrict these teacher candidates’ access to B.Ed. programs as well as to limit their success in field placements and coursework. Like Schmidt and Block, I see the stories of my study’s participants as powerful and influential in the establishment of a re-established discourse that has the potential to change policy and practice surrounding the circumstance of the racialized immigrant.

4.4 Counter-Story Telling

Counter-stories can be used as theoretical, methodological and pedagogical tools to reveal justice to issues such as racism, sexism and classism which are obscured from the public eye. Counter-storytelling is a method used to tell both one’s own stories and to bring the stories of others into visibility. Counter-storytelling attempts to challenge essentializing public discourses which might assert that there is a clear ‘Canadian Identity,’ 'Black identity' or 'immigrant identity.' Essentialist discourses—which are common in majoritarian narratives—suggest that issues such as discrimination can be easily resolved by broadly legislating the relations between essential groups. Solorzano and Yosso (2002) defined counter-storytelling as “a method of telling the stories of those people whose experiences are not often told including people of color, women, gay, and the poor” (p. 26). Counter-storytelling plays an important role in the development of new understandings of identity, equality and justice in a global context. It helps to expose the inadequacy of race neutral discourse and to show the inequalities that are
obscured by dominant ideology. As Richard Delgado (1989) suggested, counter-storytelling is a powerful means for creating new meaning as well as for challenging old myths. Solorzano and Yosso maintained that critical race methodology brings a trans-disciplinary perspective to bear on social issues. A trans-disciplinary approach reveals the interrelatedness and particularity of social experience. The counter-story, since it develops from the particularity of the experience of the individual, challenges the adequacy of essential categories by exposing the blurry boundaries between social groups. A counter-story such as the narrative of a latina immigrant woman confounds conventional attempts to relegate her into a simple category. She is neither simply latina, female or immigrant. The discriminatory structures which foreground her experience cannot be readily quantified or articulated through general categories. Rather, they only begin to emerge through qualitative research into her particular experience of the world—be it the world of the workplace, the home or public life. The counter-story suggests the inadequacy of existing modes of conceptualizing discrimination and serves to suggest the immense challenge which an adequate reckoning with social discrimination presents. It also confounds the narratives of objectivity and neutrality which prevail in popular sociological ideology by demonstrating the countless sites where quantitative sociology proves inadequate. In opposition to essence, counter-storytelling exposes difference and particularity as the constitutive foundation of social relations. García (2005) suggested “that counter-storytelling invokes anger, pain, and frustration for those who tell and listen to them” (p. 262). Despite potential progress toward social justice that has been made, counter-stories serve as a reminder of the continuing reality of racism and sexism. Thus, rather than engage in tense sentiments of “who had it worst,” counter-stories allow for the validation of experiences with oppression across all generations” (p. 262).
Counter-stories are, at their root, simply stories. Storytelling is not a new invention of modern critical race scholars, but rather the oldest way in which people have made sense of themselves and their world. Traditionally, the act of storytelling served to pass on knowledge from one generation to another. However, in modern times storytelling has been displaced by different modes of mass communication like writing, television, radio, and print-media. This shift has resulted in the dominance of majoritarian accounts of lived experience. By reviving the art of storytelling, qualitative sociologists who utilize counter-stories have attempted to overturn this cultural tendency.

This study employed the critical race methodology of counter-storytelling to challenge dominant accounts of the job search experiences of immigrants. Since one of the most important objectives of any project of social justice is the development of a society of socio-economic equality, the job market is well suited for the application of critical race theory. While dominant discourse might lead members of the Canadian society to believe that the academic job market is easily navigated by all qualified individuals, my research presents a series of counter-stories which challenge this account. Since my research is concerned with the narratives of immigrants—all of whom are racialized immigrants and also marked with other indicators of difference—the counter-stories they present challenge prevailing assumptions. What majoritarian narratives fail to identify or acknowledge is that there is no single job-market for all Canadians. Rather, there are many factors in the job market that impact opportunities and outcomes and differentiate racialized internationally trained immigrants from Canadian born. By raising these issues through counter-stories, my research emphasizes the deficiencies which highlighted popular understandings and dominant narratives of the job-market and immigrants in Canadian society. By re-framing and introducing new narratives and discourse, this study serves to bring to
the forefront the human experience of the immigrant. Most importantly, it highlights the negative emotional, financial and life altering consequences that result when internationally trained immigrants are unable to re-enter their professions in Canada. It also reveals how race intersects with other factors to directly impact the immigrant’s job search experiences and quality of life.

Researchers who use counter-storytelling at times feel obligated to defend its use as a legitimate research methodology. Pavlish (2007) in his study of the experiences of refugee women and men identified the subjective nature of stories-as-data while admitting the reality that events in people’s lives are filtered by personal perceptions. He conceded that “Subjectivity is often deeply distrusted in human sciences” (p. 29). Koch (1998) titled an article appearing in a well-established nursing journal “Story telling: is it really research?” She set the stage for her subsequent defence of story-telling by explaining that researchers in interpretative traditions are often called journalist or soft scientists. Koch explained further “Story telling work is described as unscientific, full of bias or entirely personal. The writer’s place (the fusion of researcher and the researched) in the text is often challenged. Stories are criticised for not being generalizable. Writers of stories can be accused of fabrication. There appears to be no agreed upon method of ensuring rigor” (p. 1187). She moved on to offer explanations for how research elements such as transferability and rigor are sustained in research projects that are based in storytelling. Rigor, for example, she claimed can be addressed “through creating stories that are vital” (p. 1188), stories that breathe life into the study and challenge the reader to question the dominant discourse. The rigor of thematic analysis further explained in this document sufficiently discharges the criticism that can result from using this approach.
4.5 Gathering Narratives

As previously stated, this study originally sought to explore the job search experiences of racialized internationally trained post-secondary teachers who sought to re-enter their professions in Canada. Towards this end, a total of 12 participants were selected for personal interviews. Participants were selected using network sampling facilitated through personal contacts and third party referrals.

Participants were chosen based on the following criteria:

1) Fit with the study’s definition of racialized
2) An earned baccalaureate degree before immigrating to Canada
3) Employment as a teacher at the post-secondary level in his/her country of origin
4) Search conducted for a teaching position at the post-secondary level in Canada

Interviews were taped, transcribed and then analyzed using thematic analysis.

From a list of personal contacts, I began by communicating with those who I believed were suitable candidates for this kind of study. I then asked these primary contacts to forward on recruitment materials to their own personal contacts. Beyond the individual selected to participate, at no time in this process was anyone informed of another’s participation. In the absence of a translator, I recruited only individuals who could read and write English. As expected, given that English was their second language, the English pronunciations of many of the participants were influenced by the language patterns of their native tongues. Despite this, effective communication was not a significant problem and I was able to establish a good rapport with each of the participants.
Arrangements were made to meet in person with individuals who matched the criteria for participation and who agreed to be part of the study. The selection of a meeting place was very important as I aimed to engage with each individual in a relaxed environment where they could freely tell their stories. The interviews took place at mutually agreed upon locations. The most common meeting places were the participants' homes, quiet parks, coffee shops and community centres. Since the individuals involved in this study may have experienced in the past various levels and types of discrimination, it was important for me to develop a trusting relationship with each person. Building this trust took several meetings with each participant since it was important that they not feel forced or pressured to tell their stories.

During our meetings I asked questions for clarification or further understanding but my goal was primarily to listen to participants speak about their views and experiences. Some of the participants spoke openly about their experiences during our first in-person meeting, whereas others were a bit more reserved until second meetings. Meetings ranged from 30 minutes up to 5 hours and I met with each participant at least twice. It was often difficult to predict the length of each meeting as it was based on the participant’s availability and their willingness to speak at that time. Most of the participants were very willing to speak openly and expressed gratitude for the opportunity to do so.

After each interview, I wrote brief notes that were used to assist me in remembering the surroundings of the interview (i.e., characteristics of the site.) Each interview was audio taped and later transcribed to paper. Participants were assigned a number that corresponded to their interviews and transcriptions. I made folders for each participant and each transcript was stored in folders on my secure home computer. After every meeting I added transcribed notes to the existing folders. Participants were made aware that transcripts could be sent to them one week
after the final interview and they could add further information or correct any misinterpretations that resulted. None of the participants chose to have transcripts sent to them.

Generally speaking, my interviews were unstructured and informal. My foremost objective was to allow participants to speak for themselves. While prescribed questions can provoke meaningful responses, they have a tendency to restrict what participants can speak about. I wanted to minimize this effect, and so I relied on an interview style which was dictated more by the concerns of my participants. Oftentimes I used a preformed question to stimulate discussion, but overwhelmingly I sought to keep our interviews as relaxed and personal as possible. The questions which loosely guided the interviews articulated below.

- Are you presently employed in your area of past work or study? If yes, what is your current employment? If no, what is your present occupation?
- How confident are you that your past education and training has prepared you to compete in the Canadian labour market?
- What type of methods have you used to find work in Canada?
- How do you prepare for your job search?
- If you have been interviewed in the past, how have you prepared for the job interview?
- Have you faced any difficulties in finding work? If so, what has impeded your ability to find work?
- Have you been able to overcome these difficulties? If so, what strategies have you used?
4.6 Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis is described as an analytical process which is closely aligned with counter-storytelling, and lends itself to the objectives of critical race theory. Thematic analysis is a twofold process which attempts to isolate themes from a preliminary analysis of a body of narrative material, and then re-examines the narrative material in terms of said themes. In contrast to quantitative methods, which presume frameworks for analysis, the qualitative thematic analyst allows the objects of their study to speak for themselves. An example of this method can be found in a 2004 article by Amir Marvasti entitled *Qualitative Research in Sociology* in which he cited Fleisher's 1995 ethnography of street hustlers. Fleisher attempted to uncover the life narratives of street hustlers by prompting them for stories with conventional "life stages" such as "early adolescence and primary school", or "middle school and high school". These categories made sense to Fleisher insofar as they were the major cultural moments which marked his own development. However, he quickly discovered that such markers were not equally relevant in the lives of his participants, and thus that they had to be modified. Consequently, Fleisher adjusted his promptings to encompass events such as "alcohol use and first involvement with crime," "drug use," or "delinquency" (Marvasti, 2004). By amending his framework to accommodate the particular lives of his participants, Fleisher ultimately uncovered nuances in the field of his research which would otherwise have been unavailable to him. Further, Fleisher's revised study opened new fields for comparative analysis. The 'street hustlers' in his original study would have been marginalized or excluded from comparison with 'normal' individuals, while in his revised study new categories for comparison might present themselves, such as 'inaugural socialization'. Consequently, a thematically determined analysis of qualitative data reveals new aspects of a particular field of inquiry.
The practice of thematic analysis borrows in many ways from phenomenological research, an early 20th century philosophical movement spearheaded by Edmund Husserl, which sought to examine the phenomena of experience via the systematic unearthing and elimination of presuppositions in experience and knowledge. Alfred Schutz, a Viennese sociologist, attempted to apply Husserl's phenomenological method to the analysis of social life. In brief, Schutz sought to observe and analyze social phenomena with the scientific rigor that the phenomenologist normally reserves for herself. The phenomenological method offers the possibility of objective analysis, insofar as it seeks to minimize the extent to which causes or concerns are read into the object of study. Thus, when applied to qualitative sociological inquiries, phenomenological sociology suggests the possibility of systematic analyses of the rich material of qualitative research. If a body of researchers can simultaneously suspend their preconceived notions and judgements concerning the object of their study, then, ideally, they should all be able to observe the same features of a phenomenon, such as an interview subject or focus group.

This is a challenging task, and so, sociologists have codified a number of methodologies for approaching systematic qualitative research. Nigel King described one such method in his 2004 essay “Using Templates in the Thematic Analysis of a Text.” King asserted that

The term ‘template analysis’ does not describe a single, clearly delineated method; it refers rather to a varied but related group of techniques for thematically organizing and analyzing textual data. The essence of template analysis is that the researcher produces a list of codes (‘template’) representing themes identified in their textual data. Some of these will usually be defined a priori, but they will be modified and added to as the researcher reads and interprets the texts. (UTTA; 256)

In King's example 'text' can refer to any of the objects of qualitative research, such as interview transcripts or personal narratives. The researcher determines a list of codes or templates through their attention to a text. Then, in light of their observations, the
researcher reappplies these codes or templates to the overall interpretation of a work. This way, a researcher can identify sites where a theme is explored both explicitly and implicitly in a text.

Thematic analysis proved to be a productive method for me to shape scattered and informal narrative information into coherent stories. My careful attention to the methodologies of thematic analysis ensured that the themes that emerged were consonant with the content of the narrative material from my interviewees. Any biases that I might have been inclined to read into the narratives of my participants were offset by my rigorous attention to the themes that emerged from the narrative transcripts themselves.

4.8 On the First Person Narrative Technique

It is important to note that no one is truly objective and no piece of research is strictly objective. However, my decision to present the results of my research as first-person narratives is the result of an extensive theoretical reflection on the challenges and possibilities offered by qualitative research, as well as the philosophical and literary tensions surrounding conventional binaries (self and other, fact and fiction) that define critical social research. Scholars such as Elliot (2005) and Aldridge (1993) have emphasized that while quantitative disciplines of sociology tend to cultivate an ‘objective voice,’ sociological work in qualitative disciplines actually questions the subjective-objective binary altogether. Comparably, Wolf (1992) suggests that the overlooked challenge of all sociological research is the question of whether “by studying our participants we are also exploiting them and whether by attempting to improve [their lives] we are imposing another (powerful) society’s values” (p. 4). For Wolf, conventional accounts of
objectivity and subjectivity fail to adequately engage with the underlying challenges that face social researchers, namely how to create productive social meaning.

Wolf’s study *A Thrice Told Tale* presents an extended meditation on the critical questions that surround the question of authorship and narrative voice. Her book is composed of three ‘tellings’ of a life and conflict in a small Chinese village in the 1960s. The first tale presents a ‘fictional’ research narrative, written in 1960 and derived from her research work; the second, a collection of anthropological field notes from that time; the third, a contemporary (1992) ethnographic reflection on her past experience compiling the former two documents (p. 7). Wolf’s work provides a variety of perspectives and methodological approaches to the understanding of a particular subject. Wolf understands the task of the social researcher less as that of discovering objective or subjective truth, but rather one of curating productive social meaning. She writes that the researcher “listens to as many voices as she can and then chooses among them when she passes their opinions on to members of another culture. The choice is not arbitrary, but then neither is the testimony” (p.11). Further, “no matter what format the anthropologist/reporter/writer uses, she eventually takes the responsibility for putting down the words, for converting their possibly fleeting opinions into a text” (p.11). Wolf reports that she sees “no way to avoid this exercise of power and at least some of the stylistic requirements used to legitimate that text” (p. 11). Ultimately, social research is a creative exercise that should surpass the crippling preoccupation of “self/other, subject/object” that commonly defines the methodological considerations of the discipline, and rather explore the perspectives, experiences and contexts which overlap in the formation of social narratives. Authors such as McCormack (2000) speak to the curatorial question of how to present narrative research, especially the challenge of translating interview transcripts into meaningful stories. McCormack suggests that
while the experience of rendering a transcript into a story can be ‘terrifying’ and ‘daunting’ for researchers, through a series of interpretive considerations—such as immersing oneself in a transcript, paying attention to the language itself and identifying the moments in the text when something unexpected is happening—researchers can meaningfully render their fieldwork into stories (p. 285).

Kiesinger (1998), in a narrative study of experiences of bulimia and obesity, endeavoured to render interview transcripts, developed through interviews with her participant, into a meaningful story that communicated inner-challenges faced by a bulimic obese woman in contemporary society. Kiesinger’s article is often autobiographical, providing reflections in which she recounts her struggle to find a form of narrative adequate to the empirical material she had assembled. Consequently, Kiesinger’s reflections provide a productive opportunity to explore why the first-person perspective is often the most applicable narrative voice in qualitative research. Kiesinger suggests that “In the initial stages of writing Abbie’s [her participant’s] story, I was concerned about ‘historical truth,’ producing exact, accurate renderings of time, place, mood, tone, and character. However, accounts written this way read much like clinical case studies or simple reports devoid of texture, vitality, and evocative power” (p. 90).

The overly formalistic qualities of third person narratives led Kiesinger to search for a new form. In an evocative passage, Kiesinger recalls herself seated in her living room surrounded by “more than 30 single-spaced pages of transcribed interview material” at a loss of where to begin (p. 84). Later that evening, after many false-starts, Kiesinger describes realizing that “telling a good story means offering an account of Abbie’s [her participant’s] life in which explanations and justifications of her experience become evocative, persuasive, and convincing”
Among the many ways of forming a transcript into an evocative, persuasive and convincing story, Kiesinger opts for the first-person narrative voice because “the first-person account adds energy and vitality, giving Abbie’s story an evocative power quite different from that normally accomplished when speaking in the third person” (p. 86). Further, Kiesinger suggests that “Because my goal was to express the pulse and flow of Abbie’s life while remaining as true as possible to the sentiments and feelings she expressed, I had to remain committed to telling a “good story.” This meant composing an evocative, believable account that would speak not only to the minds of readers but to their hearts, emotions, bodies, and interior selves” (p. 90).

While my decision to render the transcripts of my research participants in the first person might strike some readers as unorthodox, I maintain that by acknowledging and reflectively absorbing the contradictions of this process, I have managed to convey some of the “vitality,” “texture” and “evocative power” that exist so prominently in my participants’ experience of Canada.

### 4.7 Analysis of Interviews

I took the information that I had collected in my informal interviews, namely the transcripts of all meetings, and began the process of transforming these interview transcripts into stories. I followed a three-step process that included an examination of the transcripts, a thematic analysis, and an arrangement of these themes into stories. Specifically, I categorized the interviews based on the themes that emerged. For example I applied a separate code to chunks of information such that each transcript had similar codes if the themes that emerged resembled the other. Most of the transcripts were heavily
coded as many common themes emerged. Because the collection of accounts from each participant was extensive, and covered both their early lives and subsequent experiences of Canadian life, there was ample information from which to shape coherent and comprehensive stories. On occasion I changed the tenses of the narrative, and edited redundancies out of portions of narratives which overlapped with one another. I also attempted to preserve clarity of points in the stories. For example, if a particular interview began in the present and ended with a description of life before Canada, I felt it was important to rearrange events for the purposes of clarity and consistency between stories. Each story was directly and entirely derived from fragments of interviews. This process helped transform a large body of notes into productive and concise stories. Although the questions outlined above provided a loose outline to guide the conversation I specifically asked participants some of the same questions and therefore there were some main elements of each of their resulting stories that were common. In compiling the stories, I removed elements of the conversation that I felt would distract a reader and not give a clear understanding of the participant’s experiences. For example, I removed ums, aha, long pauses, sighs, emotions such as crying. I made minor editorial revisions. Due to the fact that most of the participants were highly educated and had previously attended many English classes, the content of the transcripts were of a very high quality. Specifically, most participants had non-English accents but had great grammar. In some instances I had to correct the flow of a sentence, the particular use of a word if used out of context or parts of their story that distracted from the overall experience in Canada. For example, I did not include extended accounts of war in their countries of origin, accounts of family issues or opinions on matters of global politics and religion.
I felt that making these revisions were important in order to not distract from the participant’s experiences. During the entire study, the plight of the participants was always at the forefront of my mind. As I met with each individual, transcribed the stories, coded for themes and constructed the stories, I was constantly aware that these are individuals who are already subjected to various elements of discrimination in Canadian society. Hence, by including sentences that required editorial revisions for example would further subject these participants and potentially other racialized immigrants to further discrimination as readers could form negative opinions about their English language and general competencies. Below I provide one example of how I constructed the stories you will read in the next chapter.

**Constructing Pancham story:** After reviewing the transcripts from my conversation with Pancham I was particularly interested in telling his story. There were many elements of his story that resonated with me. As with all the participants, Pancham spoke about his life in India and how it shaped his decisions, beliefs, aspirations for himself and his family. I met with Pancham for approximately six hours on multiple occasions so there was a lot of information to share. I used a coding mechanism to organize the information, identify themes and arrange the information into subheadings.

In order to tell a coherent story I first identified three subheadings. I selected parts of the transcripts that related to his early life in India, the decision to move to Toronto and finally his experiences in Toronto. Although I did not include sections that did not specifically fit into these subheadings I still had over ten pages of information. Pancham shared many opinions on religion, world politics and views on the future of Canada. I did not include these sections as they were outside the scope of this study. After compiling the 10 pages, I deleted sentences that I felt were repetitious or points that mirrored each other. For example, Pancham mentioned how
proud he was of his educational attainment in India many times throughout the discussion. I only included this once when compiling his story. After removing repetitious points I was left with just over seven pages. The goal was to keep all stories to 5 pages. Given the number of participants in the study, exceeding that number would make for an unmanageable study. From the over seven pages of information, I removed the subheadings, connected points, did some minor edits, removed ums, aha and words that were not relevant to the present context. The result was just over 5 pages and a coherent story that adequately depicted Pancham’s story from his life in India to his experiences in Canada.

**Paragraph from transcript:** Ah- I have stress (. . .) so much every day. (...) it is a negative impact of my health. (...) So bad for my health [pause] it is really bad you would not think it is so (...) One year now I find out that I have high blood pressure. (...) I didn’t tell my family. I take medication every day (...) need good health for my children you know? mhm mhm and we, well I have to support them (...) I have to stay healthy to support them.

[Sulking]

Look at my face (...) I look at me...my face in the mirror (...) who am I and I don’t recognize me.

I look aged (...) I look old (...) like I have aged and I feel like 60 year old. Old man from my village doesn’t look so old.

I had a lot of hope; full of hope you know, lot of hope when I was coming (....) Gave up a lot you know? Hope for future.

Well (...) uhm... now I am broken man. Not able to provide good life for my family.

(....) Maybe I still have hope somewhere [long pause] I give up hope of finding employment as a professor. I accept my fate and I accept that I will never be able to teach at college or university.
Paragraph from story

The stress that I face every day has had a negative impact on my health. One year ago I found out that I have high blood pressure. I have not told my family. I take medication every day and I am hoping that I can stay healthy enough to support my children. I look at my face in the mirror and I don’t recognize me. I look like I have aged and I feel like a 60 year old man. I was once so full of hope for the future and now I am a broken man unable to provide a good life for my family. I have now given up hopes of finding employment as a professor. I have accepted my fate and I have accepted that I will never be able to teach at a college or university again.

4.9 Ethical Considerations

The significant ethical issues that were considered in the research process include those related to informed consent and privacy. As a first step in the procurement of consent, participants were given all important details of the study, including the aim and purpose, prior the interview stage. Participants were informed that there would be no compensation for participation and that participation was completely voluntary. They were also told that they could withdraw participation or refuse to answer any questions at any time without consequence. In addition, the participants were made aware that all conversations would be taped and then transcribed. Participants were also informed that they had the opportunity to decline to have the interviews taped. Each participant was assured that at no time would value judgements be placed on their responses. And finally, they were informed that their accounts would be kept in strict confidence and stored at a secure location, and that to ensure anonymity, pseudonyms would be used to protect their identities. Further, in order to protect participants emotional state, at times I
stopped recording the discussions if the participant became overly emotional or was having difficulties communicating a very sensitive point. The participants appreciated that I was sensitive to this end.

4.10 Conclusion

Earlier in this section of the study, I reference the work of Koch (1998) and her focus on the vitality embedded in personal histories and the potential of the stories contained therein to naturally challenge the status quo and dominant discourse. In that regard, I am consistently drawn back to the rich and compelling experiences shared by the participants of this study. To reveal these stories and others in the context of sociological research is important work and the themes that have evolved from my analysis I believe are powerful in effect and significant insights into the problems faced by racialized immigrants in Canada.
Chapter 5

Racialized Canadian Immigrant Educators: Twelve Stories

5.1 Introduction

The following stories were collected from my twelve research participants over the course of several months of discussions. Participants were chosen on the basis of four criteria: they fulfilled the study’s definition of racialized, earned their advanced degrees before moving to Canada, worked as an educator at the post-secondary level in their country of origin, and desired to resume teaching work in Canada. In spite of these specific criteria, my study’s participants formed an extremely diverse group. Some were in their twenties, while others were in their forties. Some immigrated to Canada with families, while others arrived alone. Some held degrees in aerospace engineering, while others had studied sociology and English. Nonetheless, there were important continuities between their stories. Notably, none of my participants found employment in Canada that matched the job search expectations that they arrived with. Further, the participants all reported experiences of discrimination and marginalization.

As a result, the stories told provide riveting first-hand accounts of the experiences and emotions that racialized internationally trained educators face in Canada. Whether one examines the story of Pancham, who attempted for years to hide his failure from his family, or Taksheel, who participated in many bridging programs that yielded no professional opportunities, these stories speak to challenges and experiences that many Canadian born have never imagined. The sense of entrapment described by some of my participants and the expression of extreme regret at the decision to move to Canada is evident throughout most of the stories.

Table 5.1.1: General Participant Demographic Information
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age, Gender</th>
<th>Credentials</th>
<th>Marital status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Taksheel</td>
<td>29, Male</td>
<td>PhD Biochemistry</td>
<td>Single</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wasim</td>
<td>38, Male</td>
<td>M.Sc. Chemistry</td>
<td>Married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amihan</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>M.Sc. Economics M.Sc. Applied Mathematics</td>
<td>Married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ching Hao</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>PhD Aeronautical Engineering</td>
<td>Married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kennan</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>Single</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yuri</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>PhD Sociology</td>
<td>Single</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judy</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>M.A. English</td>
<td>Divorced (with a family)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abeni</td>
<td>36, Female</td>
<td>PhD Physics</td>
<td>Married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neime</td>
<td>35, Female</td>
<td>PhD Sociology</td>
<td>Divorced (with a family)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryam</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>M.Sc./PhD Chemistry</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radha</td>
<td>46, Female</td>
<td>PhD Mathematics M.Sc. Biology</td>
<td>Married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pancham</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>M.Sc. Mathematics</td>
<td>Married</td>
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**Table 5.1.2: Qualitative Summaries of lived experience in Canada and job-search outcomes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Lived Experiences in Canada</th>
<th>Job Search Outcomes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Taksheel</td>
<td>- Moved to Canada with the encouragement of his family&lt;br&gt;- Attended bridging programs related to teaching biochemistry at a post-secondary institution&lt;br&gt;- Reported that bridging program classes, focused on language skills, were too basic&lt;br&gt;- After being encouraged to apply for more bridging programs, described that the wait times were long (six months) and that the program fees were prohibitively expensive.&lt;br&gt;- Found a work placement through a bridging program, but the placement did not lead to permanent employment&lt;br&gt;- During interviews for long term job opportunities, Taksheel reported feeling that he was discriminated against on account of his name and his accent&lt;br&gt;- Suggested feeling as if “employers aren’t looking for Canadian work experience so much as they’re looking for Canadians”</td>
<td>- Worked at a fast-food restaurant&lt;br&gt;- Received a work placement through a bridging program&lt;br&gt;- The work-placement did not lead to a permanent job&lt;br&gt;- Continues to work at a fast-food restaurant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wasim</td>
<td>- Moved to Toronto with his wife, hoping to find a safe environment for his children, and abundant opportunities&lt;br&gt;- Wasim was encouraged to enrol in a bridging program for internationally trained teachers&lt;br&gt;- Found that the cost of the program exceeded his savings, so he took a loan from the Ontario government.&lt;br&gt;- Secured a teaching internship through his bridging program, but was prevented from securing a permanent teaching position because his M.Sc. was not recognized in Canada&lt;br&gt;- Applied to hundreds of positions, yet secured only a single interview response&lt;br&gt;- Described feeling marginalized during the interview&lt;br&gt;- Reported feeling that the Canadian labour market ‘feels inaccessible.’ Wasim was left with substantial debts from his bridging program, and no immediate career prospects</td>
<td>- Obtained an internship at a college through the bridging program&lt;br&gt;- Could not assume a permanent position because his M.Sc. was not recognized by Canadian universities/colleges&lt;br&gt;- Worked at a warehouse&lt;br&gt;- Has yet to secure work in his field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Details</td>
<td>Current Role</td>
</tr>
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<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amihan</td>
<td>Moved to Canada with her husband, hoping for career opportunities and the potential for personal and financial advancement. Applied for teaching positions at Canadian colleges and universities. Reported that interviewers dismissed her for her lack of Canadian experience, but recommended that she enrol in bridging programs. Found that between herself and her husband, they possessed only enough savings to enrol him in a bridging program. Had to find a temporary work arrangement to support her family, and settled for a retail sales position. Described feelings of exclusion and social isolation.</td>
<td>Retail sales position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ching Hao</td>
<td>After debating between Canada and the United States as an immigration destination, Ching Hao moved to Canada to raise his family. Describes that he moved with the assurance, from immigration recruiters that with his credentials he would easily find professional work. After moving to Canada, found that his credentials did not qualify him for the same teaching positions he had held in China. Reports that it would take six to eight years of additional schooling to qualify for the same positions in Canada that he held in China. Suggests that while he is happy to provide Canadian opportunities for his children, he is concerned that they will have to contend with the same discrimination as him.</td>
<td>After many unsuccessful interviews, now works at a gas station in Toronto.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kennan</td>
<td>Originally immigrated to Calgary, Alberta. Attempted to find work as a guidance counsellor, but was deterred because he lacked a recognized degree. Reported accent discrimination as another factor that prevented him from finding work. Moved to Toronto, seeing better opportunities, but reports feeling disappointed. Enrolled in a bridging program for internationally trained educators.</td>
<td>Volunteers at a community center in Toronto. Works full time at a grocery store.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Valued the friends and connections he made in the bridging program, but reported that he could not find teaching work afterwards.

**Yuri**
- Extensive training as an academic in an international context. Work experience in England, the United States and Barbados
- Relocated to Canada from Barbados while on academic Sabatical. Conducted research into the urban history of Toronto
- Decided to settle in Toronto after she found a romantic partner in the city
- After several years of searching, Yuri has not been able to find an academic position equal, or comparable, to the one she held in Barbados
- Reports that the job market for sociologist educators is saturated, and this is made worse by her status as an immigrant
- Managed to find related work in sociology, and is currently trying to develop her newfound connections into an academic position
- Found work in public housing research
- Continues to pursue academic connections

**Judy**
- Moved to Canada, from Guyana, with an advanced degree in English and two children.
- Described that she made her decision to move to Canada because of assurances she received from colleagues and immigration recruiters, such as the assurance that a supportive Caribbean community existed in and around Toronto, and that there was abundant teaching work for educators with her credentials
- Settled in Milton Ontario, outside the community of Caribbean immigrants in Toronto. Lacks the financial means to relocate to the city
- Reported finding few teaching positions in her immediate community
- Felt overqualified for available work, such administration work and entry level retail positions
- Volunteered at a local community center, and eventually found a full time paid position as a youth councillor for recent immigrants
- Found work at a local school, along with a position as an office clerk
- Volunteered as an ESL teacher several days a week
- Found a fulltime paid position as a youth councillor through a Halton region multicultural center

**Abeni**
- Immigrated to Canada, fearing political persecution in Libya
- Unemployed in her trained field
– Survived on savings while applying for teaching positions at Canadian colleges and universities
– Attempted to use business and professional connections from Libya to secure work in Canada, with no results
– Found job offers in small towns/cities in Canada, but could not relocate because of her family
– Settled on a job at a short term loan business, that is staffed predominantly by immigrants
– Relies on social assistance, and hopes to return to university in the near future to increase her qualifications in the Canadian job market

Neime
– Resolved with her husband to move to Canada.
– Her husband, trained as a physician, moved to Canada before her, but was unsuccessful in finding work in the medical field.
– Followed her husband to Canada after a year, but reports that their relationship was strained. In spite of having two children together, they divorced
– Suggested that their limited employment possibilities were one of the principal causes of their divorce.
– Attempted to find work to support her family, but felt herself rejected at nearly every step
– Reported a lack of effective programs geared toward established immigrant professionals
– Finds herself in a dangerous area of Toronto, fearing for the wellbeing of her children

Maryam
– Moved to Montreal with her husband
– Because of difficulties finding work in Montreal, within six months Maryam and her husband moved to Toronto so that they could live with a family friend.
– Maryam reports that her abilities as a French speaker are much more advanced than her abilities as an English speaker. As a result, she feels unsuited to the Toronto job market.
– Reported that her language skills in English are underdeveloped, and as a result she has had substantial difficulties applying for teaching work in Ontario.
– Received several interviews at local colleges, and

– Currently works in a short term loan business (Money Mart)

– After an extensive and unsuccessful job search, Nieme took a part time position at McDonald’s and another at a Walmart

– Found work at a local college, assisting a professor with a first-year course
eventually secured a position as an assistant.
- Has applied to enrol in a PhD program in Toronto, hoping to advance her career opportunities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Radha</th>
<th>Moved to Canada with her husband to pursue better opportunities for her family</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Applied for a wide variety of academic positions, but found no work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accepted a job in retail sales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attempted to apply for bridging programs, because employers suggested that they would make her resume more attractive to prospective employers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>After applying, Radha found that she was ineligible for programs because she had been in the Canada for too long</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Radha finds herself regretting the decision to move to Canada. The difficulties associated with the job search experience, and her exclusion from support networks leave her with little hope for her future in Canada</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pancham</th>
<th>Moved to Canada to provide opportunities to his children</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Found that in spite of his extensive publication record and teaching experience, he is ineligible for academic work in Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attended bridging programs, and many workshops for new immigrants, but reported that he derived little value from them</td>
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<td></td>
<td>As a result of his inability to find work, Pancham described extreme feeling of isolation, poor health and a failing marriage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reported that he has “now given up hopes of finding employment as a professor”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Works a menial job in food services, while attempting to preserve the illusion with his family that he is successfully pursuing academic employment</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- Found work in retail sales to support her family upon arrival in Canada
- Found herself outside the period of eligibility for Canadian bridging programs
- Remains working in retail

- Found employment in the food services industry at an entry level position
5.2 Discrimination, Alienation and Disconnection

5.2.1 Taksheel, 29

I grew up in a small town. When I was a young child, maybe four or five, I became desperately ill. The drinking water in the town had become seriously contaminated. Unfortunately, the people were not aware of the contamination until after many, many people had become sick. I happened to be one of them. The illness lasted for quite some time, and I was told that I came close to death. I vaguely remember high fevers and hallucinations. My parents must have been terrified of losing their only child, particularly as many people had died already from this illness. Luckily, however, I gradually recovered. I remember it took me a while to return back to full health — all I can remember is the frustration of not being able to play like the other children, of having to stay inside and rest in order to heal. In the end, I made a full recovery.

My parents were encouraging, loving, and supportive. They provided me with everything they could give. I always admired how hard they worked and I strived to do the same. They stressed the importance of a good education, and I understood. However, they always told me that they wanted me to move to Canada when I was older. I think a lot of their desire stemmed from my illness. They not only wanted me to have greater opportunities, but they wanted me to be safer and healthier, to live in a place where contaminated water didn’t decimate a village, where people had easy access to good health care. I originally could not understand why they wanted me to leave, but as I grew older, their reasons became apparent to me.
I did not want to leave them, but I wanted to make them proud. I also thought that, if I moved as a young man, I would be able to send money home and return to them all the kindness and support that they had given to me. I decided that I would move immediately after finishing my university education. I worked incredibly hard at my studies, knowing it would help my job prospects once I had entered the job market. I made sure to study English so that I would be fluent in the language, so as to make the transition into another culture significantly easier. I knew what my goals were and worked diligently towards them. My parents were very proud of my dedication and my progress. When I left my country, I had obtained a PhD in Biochemistry. It was incredibly difficult to leave my parents, but I wanted to make them prouder still, to show them that I was capable of everything they had wanted for me.

Once I had moved, I wanted to establish a life for myself as quickly as possible, but I knew it would take me some time. I was young, unmarried, with no children, and I wanted to make sure I could provide for my family before I started one. My qualifications were excellent. I had been the top student in my class. My grades had been exemplary and my research was interesting, innovative, and relevant. I had received many job offers in my home country, a couple of which were well-paying positions at reputable universities. I knew it would be difficult to achieve the same amount of acclaim in an environment where academics were unfamiliar with my credentials, but I thought that, given time and persistence, I would someday receive similar offers in Canada.

I moved to Ottawa. I figured that the nation’s capital would be a welcoming environment to new immigrants, as immigration is touted as having key importance to Canadian policy. When I moved, I didn’t know anyone. I found it very difficult to meet people. Even though I am friendly and outgoing, I found it difficult to connect with Canadians. My English is quite
good – I would not say I speak the language perfectly, but I am fluent. I do speak with what I’m told is a noticeable accent, however, and I often got the impression that people are less interested in having conversations with me because of my accent. I felt incredibly isolated. I hoped that my lack of success in establishing a social life for myself would not transfer into my career.

I did a significant amount of research into the ways in which immigrants can obtain meaningful occupation. After all my education, and after all the job offers that I had turned down in my country, I did not want to drive a cab for a living in Canada. I have always been an ambitious, driven, and a diligent worker. I knew it would be difficult to establish a career, but I was determined. I took a class to improve my English even more, I attended seminars directed towards immigrants looking for work, and I enrolled in a bridging program specific to occupational direction – teaching biochemistry at a post-secondary institution. The English workshop felt too basic. I found that the instructor only reviewed basic vocabulary and simple grammar, which I already knew well. It did not help to improve my fluency. The seminars were repetitive, encouraging immigrants to improve their language abilities, apply widely, and attend bridging programs. I had been told repeatedly that bridging programs were the best way to obtain a good occupation, as they allowed immigrants to gain Canadian work experience. I was very hopeful that this bridging program would finally put me on the right track.

It was incredibly difficult to get into the bridging program. There were countless immigrants who were trying to get into the program as well. As a result, I couldn’t get into the program immediately – I was told I had to wait six months. I needed money, both to support myself and to pay for the expenses of the bridging program, so I took the first job I could find, which was at a fast food chain. The work was terrible. It was demeaning and degrading. I had earned a doctorate degree and now I was receiving the same pay as children in high school.
However, I did my best to see this job as a means to an end. I reminded myself that I would earn money, which would allow me to stay here and continue looking for job opportunities. I did everything I could to stay positive, to keep my spirits up.

In the meantime, I continued looking for ways to improve my eligibility, and trying to stay informed on the latest research in biochemistry. After the six month wait, I was finally able to attend the bridging program. I did find the information helpful, but I was particularly happy for the opportunity to work at a post-secondary institution in my field. I was an assistant to an instructor at a college for two months. It was a good experience – not fully satisfying, of course. It was nothing compared to the intellectual engagement of my studies. However, this position had given me something invaluable — Canadian work experience. I was excited to think that I might now be able to obtain employment in my field, to find a meaningful career.

After the bridging program, I applied everywhere. I submitted countless applications, I called various offices to leave my name and number, and I visited every university and college within the area. It took several months before I was able to get a couple interviews, which I am sure I was only given because of my persistence. My interviews, however, were terrible. One of my interviews was at a college. I noticed that everyone at the office I was in was white. My interviewer, it seemed, spoke more slowly to me than he did to others at the office. I made a concerted effort to handle myself well, present myself confidently, and speak eloquently. However, his tone and manner did not match the level of conversation I offered him. I felt as though he was talking down to me because of my accent. I left the office humiliated and frustrated. I knew I wasn’t going to hear from the office again – and I didn’t. Another interviewer spent three minutes going over my name. He had a difficult time pronouncing my name. He asked me how to spell both my first and last names. When I told him, he replied that
the spelling he had been given from his receptionist was incorrect. I could tell that he was
growing increasingly hesitant to hire me simply because of my name. I wasn’t surprised when I
didn’t hear back from that interview, either.

It’s been four years since I moved to Ottawa, and I still work at the same fast food
restaurant. Not once have I been able to send money to my parents. I can barely pay my rent to
keep a roof over my head, let alone afford enough food for the week. I feel like such a failure as
a son. My parents had given me so much, and it is so important for me to repay them and
support them, particularly as they get older. I am wondering if I will ever be able to take care of
them. I try to sound positive about my prospects when we speak on the phone, but I think they
know that I am not doing well. I am ashamed that I have not achieved the success they wanted
for me. When I first moved here, my mother would tease me and ask me about when I was
going to get married, when I was going to find a wife. She has stopped doing that recently. I
would love to get married and have a family, but I feel so inadequate as a provider that I cannot
even consider the possibility. I am worried about when, if ever, I would be able to provide a
good life for myself, let alone others.

I have had a few subsequent interviews, but I keep running into the same difficulties, the
same prejudices. My interviewers never seem genuinely interested in me. Even though I know
that a positive attitude is important, I find myself losing hope even before I get to the interview.
The meetings are all the same. The interviewers all look at me the same way. I feel really
frustrated by my experiences in Canada. So much of the instruction on how immigrants can
obtain careers relies on bridging programs, but I feel as though the employers don’t even care.
All of my experience has led me to believe that employers aren’t looking for Canadian work
experience so much as they’re looking for Canadians.
5.2.2 Wasim, 38

My childhood was not an easy one. I was the first son born to a very poor family. Because I was the eldest, I was given great responsibility in helping my parents take care of my two younger brothers. I loved my family deeply, of course, but it is difficult for a child to understand and assume that level of responsibility. My father was always working, trying to earn enough money to feed his family. My mother was usually busy helping my father at his store. When she was home, she was usually faced with an enormous amount of domestic work and had little time for us. I was usually left to watch and take care of my brothers. They always looked up to me, I think, because I was the oldest. They would ask me to tell them stories. I had learned how to read at school, so I would often read to them, usually elaborating on the story as I went. They loved my stories, and I loved reading to them. As difficult as it was to take care of them, I loved them both deeply.

When I was fourteen, both of my parents were killed. A bomb exploded on the street outside my father’s store. We were absolutely devastated when we learned of our parents’ death, but I wish we could say that we were shocked. These sorts of bombings and attacks were something we had simply accepted as a part of life where we grew up. My country has had a difficult history, marked by terrible wars with neighbouring countries. Within the country itself, however, there are many political dissidents and religious fanatics, who often terrorize those who disagree with their beliefs. My brothers and I never learned who had bombed the street or why. We only learned — and quickly — that we had go to on.

As the oldest, I became the head of the home. My responsibility was to take care of my brothers — to ensure that we had enough to eat, to make sure that they were healthy. I had
always enjoyed school and found it interesting, but after my parent’s death, I approached it with an entirely different attitude. I decided that I needed to dedicate myself to my studies in order to do well, find a good job, and support my siblings, who were still quite young. It was an incredibly difficult role to assume, but I became our father. I had to. I worked and studied my way into university in order to get a better job that would provide my brothers and I with enough money. By this time, my brothers had grown and become more independent, which allowed me to devote more of my time to my studies. They were not quite old enough to take care of themselves, though, so I took care of them throughout my post-secondary education.

After I finished university, I began teaching chemistry at a reputable college. My brothers, thankfully, were doing well. They had grown into fine young men. One of my brothers had become a skilled mechanic. My youngest brother had adopted my own interest in learning and had enrolled in university himself. It was — and is — important to me that my brothers were safe and happy. Because I had a steady income, I would always give them money to make sure that they always had enough food, could always see access medical care. They were good men. I was proud of them, and I am to this day.

A few years, I married a lovely young woman that I had met through a friend at the school. We both wanted to begin a family, but were concerned about raising children in our country. She, too, had suffered personal tragedy due to the political, religious, and social turmoil of our country. Both of us wanted to provide a much safer life for our children. We both knew that we wanted to escape all this turmoil. I also thought that, if I moved to Canada, I might be able to make more money to send to my brothers. In the end, she and I decided to move to Canada. It was very difficult to leave them, but I knew that I was making the right choice for my family.
We moved to a poor neighbourhood on the outskirts of Toronto. Within days of our arrival, I went to a resource centre for immigrants. I wanted to do everything in my power to improve my likelihood of finding a job. I was instructed to enrol in a bridging program, which, I was told, would provide me with training in the Canadian workforce and improve my competency within the Canadian labour market. I was eager to resume my former work, so I enrolled in a bridging program for internationally trained teachers. I read many websites and brochures that assured me that the bridging program would help me find work, that this bridging program would allow me to transfer my skills to the Canadian market. It sounded very promising.

I was unable to afford the high costs of the bridging program, so I took out a loan through the Ontario Student Assistance Program. I was concerned about assuming such a significant debt so soon after my move to Canada, but I could see no other way to resume working in a way that would utilize my skills and experience. Through the bridging program, I obtained an internship at a local college. I was thrilled — I felt as though I was finally on my way towards resuming my former career. When the internship was over, I spoke to the chair of the program and told him that I would like to continue teaching. He informed me that I was not considered qualified for the position because I needed to have a master’s degree. Excited, I informed him that I had already earned a master’s degree. He shook his head and told me that my master’s degree was equivalent to a bachelor degree in Canada, and that in order to be considered eligible for the position; I would need to earn the same degree at a Canadian university.

I was so disheartened to learn that, after my education, my experience, and my internship through the bridging program, I was still ineligible for the position that I formerly held. I could not attend graduate school again because, due to the loan to put me through the bridging
program, I was already in significant debt. At this point, I had two children under the age of five, and my wife was pregnant with our third child. I was in desperate need of employment, so I took a job at a warehouse. The labour was physically exhausting and paid very little. I developed significant back problems, but because I could not give up the job, I had to continue working.

I decided that I would not give up hope, and that I would apply for every opportunity that I could find. Over the course of my five years in Canada, I applied to over two hundred jobs. Not only did I apply to every public college in Ontario, but I went so far as to bring my applications in myself, so that I might meet with the faculty and administration to improve my chances at obtaining the position. If my work schedule at the warehouse prevented me from going in person to the campus, I would call the administration of the university to speak with them directly. I wanted my potential employers to know that not only was I an excellent candidate for the job, but that I was deeply interested, highly motivated, and ready to work. I always make sure to provide a well-written resume with a cover letter, my teaching philosophy, examples of my past research, sample lesson plans, and references. I believe that education is a particularly sophisticated profession, and I want my job applications to reflect that belief.

After all of my efforts, I was only ever given one interview. From my estimation, the interview was terrible. Several times throughout the interview, the dean asked me to repeat what I had said — I could tell it was because he could not understand my accent. I was embarrassed but also frustrated. He gave me the impression that he was not remotely interested in my accomplishments or my abilities. Despite the fact that I have a good command of the English language, I could tell that all he heard was my accent. Even though I did not feel confident after the interview, I made sure to follow up by calling a few times. Each time, I was not given a
response. Two months later, the coordinator of the program called me to inform me that the program had changed and they no longer needed a chemistry teacher. I was devastated.

I am deeply ashamed. I am the man of my home, and yet I cannot provide for my wife and children. I am still struggling to pay the debt that I incurred in order to finance the bridging program. There are some weeks where I cannot afford enough groceries for my family. My young children do not understand why they don’t have enough to eat, and I don’t know what to tell them. Because my financial situation here has been in such shambles, I have not once been able to send money home to my brothers. We write to one another, and although they would never complain or ask me for anything, I can tell that they are both struggling to make ends meet. I cannot free myself from the guilt of having let my brothers down. They were like sons to me — I raised them for the better part of their lives. I should be supporting them. I should be supporting my young children. I feel so guilty — I feel like I have failed my family. I worry all the time about my children’s futures. If I do not have enough money now, how will I be able to help them through university? This is not the life I wanted to give them. I feel as though I have tried every available avenue and have only found dead ends. The Canadian labour market seems inaccessible to me. I don’t know what to do.

5.2.3 Amihan

My name is Amihan, Ami in short. I could perform a regression curve analysis to predict how H&M will fair in the next two quarters, could even advise an investment team about the most promising lingerie items at La Vie en Rose. With a double Masters degree in economics and applied mathematics from a great University in the Philippines, I could be your personal financial consultant, though you may not be able to guess that, since I currently work at The Gap,
where they should really consider discontinuing some of their denim jeans. Trend reports suggest that an inventory of khakis or even yoga wear would be more appropriate. However, The Gap executives would never listen to a sales associate.

Indeed, I work for The Gap as a sales girl, not as one of their financial analysts. It is strange. I received excellent training for the latter but have held a career, if I may call it that, in the former.

Allow me to explain: My husband and I attended the same university in the Philippines. In fact, we met while taking a class on advanced game theory. The professor once gave the class half way through the term a challenging problem as a bonus of sorts, confident that none of his students would be able to figure out a solution. Vicente and I, alternately top students from week to week, attacked the problem with an almost maniacal competitive zeal. He worked in the library, I in the cafe. We dared not declare defeat. We dared not collaborate, and so the next morning we both rushed into our professor's office, each having independently arrived at the correct solution, much to the astonishment of our teacher, who stared, partially amused, partially surprised, at the two of us. The mass of equations and proofs on his desk, we soon learned, were identical.

"Great minds think alike," Vicente remarked.

"Perhaps," I said. "But then again, great minds do get some sleep instead of staying in the library all night."

Vicente's smile broadened.
"Nevertheless," our professor interjected, "this is superb work. Both of you should consider a PHD. I would be happy to write recommendations. I am not kidding. Your dissertations could truly fill in some gaps in the current scholarship."

Vicente and I began a relationship shortly after this encounter. Our courtship was not very long and we were married within six months. Vicente went on to the PHD program after we graduated. We also both lectured at the university we attended. I held a full time position and Vicente a part time role as he worked on his PHD. I also worked as an advisor for a few local banks.

Our honeymoon and first years of marriage were spent partly in the university basement, with my groom filling entire blackboards with his mathematical poetry.

Upon the birth of our daughter and Vicente's successful thesis defence, we decided that the Philippines would not be the best place for us to expand our family. We wanted more opportunities. So we applied to immigrate to Canada, our applications got accepted and we sold everything we had, permitting all of us to immigrate to Canada. I can still remember gazing out the plane's window, looking down at the country we were leaving. We exchanged our monsoons for snow, our sandy beaches for cool lakes. Canada is a lovely country, and yet it is so difficult to succeed here, especially with education and intelligence.

When we arrived in Toronto, we of course possessed little money. The application paperwork and plane tickets depleted our resources greatly. However, we were optimistic since we assumed that we could find work. So, we set out to apply to colleges and universities in Toronto.
Mainly, this is a depiction of my first few interviews or conversations with representatives for these institutions:

"You studied in the Philippines, is that correct?"

"Yes, I earned Master’s degree there," I answered.

"That is all very good, but did you work in Canada ever?"

"No."

"So you have no Canadian experience?"

"I only came a couple of months ago. No, I have no Canadian experience."

"I am sorry, but without Canadian experience, I am afraid I cannot offer you anything. May I suggest a recertification or bridging program?"

"Recertification, bridging program? Does my certification from the Philippines mean nothing then?"

"I suppose you could take some intermediate classes if you will be bored in the foundation levels, but there is really no comparison without Canadian experience."

The only Canadian experience Vicente and I had was rejection after rejection. Our degrees were worthless. Our professional qualifications, our dissertations, training, and great mathematical minds signified nothing in this strange, new land where we found ourselves. I do not know what I deemed more cold: the Canadian winters or the Canadian people interviewing us for jobs. Though I have no proof of discrimination, I would have ventured to another part of the globe had I known that my accent or complexion were unwelcome.
Despite my fluent English and Catholic upbringing, I never became a Canadian in the truest sense of the word. I hear that many of my bosses routinely invite each other and even some sales associates to parties or picnics or some sort of gathering like that to socialize. I imagine that people arrive in their luxury sedans with a bottle of wine as a gift for the host--the children neat and well-behaved, the man polished and assertive, his wife stylish and graceful. The group, comfortably middle class, can laugh while snacking on canapés in the garden. They eat off the best French china. Even the dogs feast on designer dog food. Off course I could be totally wrong about how this transpires…

However, these people are my colleagues, my bosses and not friends. We never receive invitations to their events. Granted, Vicente and I do not have a cottage ourselves, although we would like to do so someday. I hear this is a true Canadian experience. However, these cottages are simply beyond our financial resources and we may never be able to afford one.

After being unable to find work, Vicente decided that he would attempt to earn Canadian certification, in the hopes that he could finally do what he loves best, teach economics. He was such a talented instructor. While my husband pursued completion of recertification courses and bridging programs, I in turn had to begin working to support our family. We needed money. We even accepted welfare assistance for a while. And, this is not something we are proud of. The Gap was hiring at the time, and so I took the position as a survival job. It was supposed to be short-lived: Vicente would start work in economics, which would then allow me to gain my recertification. Vicente schooling process took longer than we imagined. In total, he expended several years on receiving training for material with which he was very familiar already. At the end of it all, he only landed a part-time professorship at Centennial College and a small career college downtown. As for me, returning to school will have to wait.
I have waited for ten years, and I am still waiting. My daughter is learning French, and has a facility for math, which is heartening. I wanted to have a second child but we cannot afford it so that dream is also dead. I once had a facility for mathematics and economics, still do, but wonder each time I sell a pair of short shorts whether anybody can take this idea seriously after all this time. Perhaps Filipino education differs too greatly from Canadian education?

I wish I had known before coming to Canada. I could have been more prepared then, but nobody volunteered any information. Even after we arrived, community organizations geared to assisting people like Vicente and me did not help us. Their advice failed to clarify or simplify anything. We often resorted to independent research over reliance on government services whose workers seem to enjoy their sinecures and could care less about the overwhelmed, confused foreigners freshly off the plane. If I had known ... Well, it is hard to say.

I sometimes feel we made a mistake. Every now and then, the urge to depart, to leave and to return home visits me. Selling hoodies at the mall falls short of the exciting and challenging environment offered by some of the leading finance firms out there.

Success can be viewed differently I guess. It really depends on why you came, where you aspire to go, your ability to work and triumph over the system. It depends on whether you have people depending on you at home and on whom you depend. I myself pray to the Virgin Mary every morning in a little shrine off our bedroom. I know she can hear me, even if Canada cannot. Success depends on many things, and right now a potential promotion to management depends on how well I try to fit into The Gap.
5.2.4 Ching Hao

My name is Ching Hao. I am an underemployed, but highly educated Chinese immigrant living in Canada. My decision to move to Canada begins with the stories I heard from my cousin who returned from Vancouver in 2001 after studying at Simon Fraser University. Upon his return he told me stories of the endless possibilities available in Canada. After a great deal of deliberation I applied to immigrate to Canada, believing that there would be a world of opportunities for my family. Three years after applying, my wife, daughter and I were finally accepted and we moved to Toronto in 2004. To date, I have been shocked by the lack of work available for someone with my credentials.

I was born to an established middle class family in China. I was a diligent student and became an aeronautical engineering professor at one of the major universities in Shanghai. Five years later I assumed a prominent consulting position with the Chinese Space Agency. I led a very productive life in China. Not only was I always successful and busy, but I managed to maintain a great relationship with my parents and extended family. I earned a great salary, lived in a nice apartment and made my family very proud. I was also very active in the scientific community.

I had many friends who had relocated to Canada in the hopes of finding more opportunities. When I was in contact with them, they seemed by all accounts to be living great lives. I know now that this was not always true and in fact they lied about their circumstances. Because of the great stories I heard about Canada, including the stories from my cousin who had studied in Canada, I was encouraged that life there would be fuller and more satisfying than life in China. On top of this, I had a beautiful daughter with my wife, but I wanted a larger family. In China I could only have one child.

Before making my decision to move to Canada, I had also contemplated moving to the United States. However, I was concerned that I would be obligated to adopt American culture which I was not particularly fond of. An immigration recruiter from Canada whom I spoke with before making the decision to move, informed me that immigrants in America are encouraged to
give up their cultural identities and traditions in favor of American values. He said that Canada on the other hand was a place where immigrants were welcomed into a ‘cultural mosaic,’ which preserved their own values and beliefs. Further, he said that Canada seemed to sustain a diverse population of immigrants with a strong Asian presence in larger cities. Many of the recruitment materials which he provided contained enthusiastic reports of Canadian life, written by cosmopolitan Chinese immigrants. These publications further offered me the assurance that there would be a welcoming and established community for me in Canada.

I encouraged my wife to consider moving and outlined the benefits it would bring to our daughter’s future and our chances of having more children. Although my wife was hesitant in the beginning she too was persuaded by the documentaries on Canadian life which I had secured from the immigration recruiter. She had seen the images and promises of jobs, school and a better life in Canada, and wanted these things for our family. Further, the possibility of having more children excited her. She remembered the suffering and shame that her parents had gone through when they were forced to surrender her younger sister to an adoption program.

As you can see, the decision to move was not based on any one thing but on a number of opportunities which we believed was not possible in China. I felt confident that with my educational background, work experience and professional references I would have no problems securing a professor position within a year of my arrival in Canada and taking advantage of the great opportunities that awaited us.

So it was with a great deal of surprise when I discovered that my prestigious Chinese education was not be recognized by Canadian universities. After arriving I learned the truth about some of my past colleagues. They were in fact not doing as well as they said they were. Many were not working in prestigious positions like they held in China. Further, they were unable to help me find work. They had made promises to me which they were in no position to fulfill. In the beginning I struggled to make sense of my new reality. I tried to put things in perspective as much as possible, and I told myself that I needed to work as hard as possible to
achieve the same success I once had in China. I visited immigration centers, attended job fairs, sent resumes and called potential employers with little success.

I was a respected professional in my country, a professor working with consulting responsibilities with the Chinese Space Agency and now I am nothing.

I work the night shift at a local gas station in Toronto, and now spend my days studying at Centennial College to get a certificate in computer networking. I have given up on the dream to work as a professor or engineer in Canada. I have come to realize that I would have to complete 6 to 8 years of schooling over again. This is financially impossible for me and my family. However, there is one thing that gives me hope. Although I often think about returning to China, I don't regret coming to Canada. My wife and I now have another son and another daughter. We now have three children. This was not possible in China.

I want my children to live here, and I know they will appreciate it. I want them to realize the opportunities in Canada that I was not able to realize. I do have some concerns about Canadian life for my children. I worry that maybe because they are Chinese and not White, they may not get all the opportunities than other White children may get. I worry that maybe if I was White and if I spoke perfect English maybe I would have more opportunities. I am not sure how much I should worry about this. Even though I worry, there is nothing I can do about it anyways. I just try to encourage them as much as I can to work hard and study hard.

5.2.5 Kennan

My name is Kennan. I was born in Sri Lanka and studied economics at university. I currently reside in Rexdale, a neighborhood to the north west of Toronto. I have found sporadic employment in the city, but I have felt isolated and marginalized ever since my arrival in this country. In some respects things are better for me here. My world is constant and predictable. Canadian society is safe and I no longer fear for my safety. I have been unable to find the type of
work that I want. Presently, I volunteer with a community center in Rexdale and I work full time at the Price Chopper grocery store as a general laborer. My training as an economist in Sri Lanka has done little for me here. I find myself faced with financially impossible alternatives of sustaining a low paying service job, or returning to school with classmates a decade younger than me and incurring student loan debt in the process.

I was born to a large family in Sri Lanka. I was the youngest of five brothers and two sisters. My father studied briefly at university but to support our family. He was a successful merchant in town but often reflected on the life that might have been available to him had he remained in school. I have only very hazy memories of this early stage of my life, which was interrupted in 1983 by the civil war. Although my immediate family emerged unscathed from the conflict, we were displaced from our home to a village hundreds of kilometers away. It took almost a decade for my father and mother to reestablish themselves and their business. This is because throughout the conflict, my family was forced to seek protection as the battlefronts abruptly shifted throughout the country. We eventually settled in a community which was far from political instability, and my parents enrolled me in school. My father was a tremendous influence for me during these years. He encouraged me constantly in my studies. In retrospect he was motivated by a mixture of reflection on his own life and a desire to secure a prosperous future for his youngest children. My eldest siblings were enrolled in school when the civil war began to unfold in 1983, and consequently their educations were severely interrupted. The financial burden my family faced in the midst of all its disruption meant that my older siblings had to work at the expense of their educations. A great deal of the hope in my family rested on my younger sister and I. We were young enough, and lucky enough, to study uninterrupted after our family was resettled and reestablished. I suppose these formative years had a lot to do with my eventual decision to study economics. I was intimately familiar with the challenges my family faced in managing their finances at home. I had first hand experiences of scarcity and
difficulty, and I wanted to understand the economic circumstances which challenged my family so fundamentally.

My parents struggled to support my education and I never took this for granted. I studied political science and mathematics during my first two years of university, but settled on economics and graduated with high standing. I remained close with my supportive family and also cultivated close relationships with my professors. Because of these close relationships with my family and professors I was able to set up a mentorship program for teenagers back in my village. This made my parents very proud. While I remained passionate about economics, I also felt great about providing guidance to others. I happily assumed the role of guidance counselor with my home university and back in my village. I was making a difference… I never really felt the need to take a wife at an early age and therefore I focused on my career and my charitable work.

I was always aware of the ongoing civil war and finally decided I wanted to leave Sri Lanka. I applied to immigrate to Canada, and while the process was long and often suspenseful, I was eventually accepted. I have lived in Canada for the past 5 years. Life in Canada has been difficult- I originally settled in Calgary, Alberta. A city I thought would be great for me since as part of my research prior to moving to Canada, Calgary was repeatedly mentioned as one of the strongest economies in Canada with lots of prospective jobs. I attempted for several months to find a paid guidance counselor position at a Calgary school. Unfortunately, the public school board in Calgary requires guidance counselors to have a teaching degree from an accredited Canadian university. Hence I would have had to go through a lengthy and costly certification process. I explored the idea of volunteering at a centre for troubled youths but I was not very motivated to do this in Calgary. In Sri Lanka I was motivated to help youth whose lives had been broken up by the civil war and resulting poverty. While I am sure there are many poor families in Calgary, I felt less of a responsibility to children in Calgary than those in Sri Lanka. Sometimes I regret my decision but I cannot change the past. Maybe volunteering would have helped me feel
more a part of the community but I did not feel comfortable at all. I felt disconnected and isolated from my new city. When I reflect on my time in Calgary, I think I was very aware of my strong Sri Lankan accent and that held me back a lot when I first moved there. I really did not want to speak to anyone because I thought maybe they would think I was stupid. Even though I tried to find work, I am not sure if I did everything I could because I felt so uncomfortable speaking because of my accent. Even when I visited the grocery store and I would ask for assistance and people would always request that I repeat myself. They did not seem to understand what I was saying. You know that really affected me. I was never a shy person and all of a sudden I became very shy and conscious of my accent and brown skin. People made fun of me and that made things worst. Once I even over heard some teenagers making fun of my accent at a gas station where I worked for a while-I felt invisible. I would even try to make conversations with people I came in contact with but very few seemed interested in talking to me.

I eventually decided to move to Toronto after living in Calgary for one year. I had been in touch with a few people from the Tamil community in Toronto and I thought the move would bring better work opportunities. Six year later I have not had better luck. I felt even more lost in Toronto. The people I knew did not have contacts at colleges or universities and they did not seem to know of other Tamils who have these types of contacts either. I eventually enrolled at a community college with a bridging program for international educators. I enjoyed the program and met many other immigrants who were having experiences that were similar to mine. I made lifelong friends with some of the people I met but upon graduating from the program I still was unable to find employment in a college or university. I am also still single and have not taken a wife. I cannot financially support a family and would like to be in a better financial position if I take a wife.

In addition to working full time at Price Chopper, I have been working as a volunteer guidance worker at a local community center in Rexdale. I am finding enjoyment in that and
slowly I am beginning to build my self confidence again. I am positive about the future and hope someday to return to Sri Lanka to visit my family.

5.2.6 Yuri

My name is Yuri. I am from Barbados, and I live in the east Toronto neighborhood of Leslieville. I have been in Toronto since 2008. Canadian life has been exciting for me. I love my community. I have many close friends, and I am living with a wonderful Canadian man. The food and arts scenes here are vibrant, and the diversity of people in the city is astounding. I have lived in many places in my life including London, Chicago, Minnesota, and briefly Seattle, yet there is something unique to this city which keeps me here. I feel more of a kinship with this place than any other in which I've lived. Yet in spite of my heartfelt sense of belonging I have yet to find a way to establish myself professionally in Toronto. Something eludes me and I struggle every day to find a way to reconcile my love for this place with the barriers I face as a Canadian immigrant.

My professional training has been diverse and rigorous. I was born in Barbados and attended a well respected private school. I went on to the University of the West Indies at Cave Hill where I studied sociology and human geography. I was awarded a commonwealth scholarship and took a Master's degree in sociology at the University of London. I matriculated into the doctoral program, which was partially funded, but I assumed a good deal of debt to complete my education there. I returned to the University of the West Indies and took on a professorship, in part to repay my loans, and in part because I was eager to return to my family. My research was extremely successful, but I was eager to continue my training, so I left Barbados and assumed a post-doctoral appointment at the University of Minnesota with a
leading researcher in my field. I stayed in Minnesota for two years where I lectured and developed research projects which centered around urban planning and 'Great American Cities'. Many of my projects were inspired by the planning history of Chicago, and when my post-doc ended, I moved on to another temporary position at the University of Illinois, Chicago. At the end of my time in Chicago I returned to my department in Barbados where I worked for five years. In between a rigorous lecture schedule and an active international conference circuit, I applied my research on American cities to Caribbean case studies. In 2006 the tone of my research shifted to studies of multiculturalism and urbanity. My research led me to considerations of Toronto as a preeminent example of cities which successfully foster multicultural communities through innovative urban planning, and in 2008 while on sabbatical I relocated to Toronto to conduct field work.

My time in Toronto has been wonderful in many ways. I arrive in the city at the beginning of the summer. I was enchanted by the diversity of my community, and I reveled in the ways in which one neighborhood seemed to integrate seamlessly into the next. I made a number of warm and outgoing friends and among them I met my current partner, Carlos. Carlos works as an artist and graphic designer in the city, and we have been living together since 2009. In many ways, it is on account of our relationship that I have decided to settle in Canada. When my sabbatical ended I was faced with the possibility of an interminable time apart from him. He was making enough through his design work to support both of us, and I anticipated that I would be able to find a permanent teaching position at one of the universities or colleges around Toronto, so I applied for an indefinite leave from my teaching responsibilities in Barbados and applied for official immigration status in Canada.
On account of my diverse academic credentials my application was readily accepted by the Canadian government. The speed with which my application was processed gave me some assurance that I would be able to find meaningful teaching work in Canada. In hindsight, my confidence was misplaced. I assumed that the Canadian government had some understanding of the relative employability of different degrees and skill sets. Since arriving though, I have been forced to confront the fact that sociology departments at universities in and around Toronto are inundated with too many job applications to process. Not only is the market saturated, but I believe that my status as an immigrant automatically puts me at a competitive disadvantage. I also believe that employment priority is consistently given to Canadian applicants. These are for applicants who were born and educated in Canada. There are also many prestigious grants and scholarships which I am automatically ineligible for because I am not employed at a university. These awards function within the economy of the university as special markers of success and preeminence. Like the GRE or the MCAT in the United States, these scholarships give academics who come from a variety of departments the ability to prove the value of their research. Ideally, the federal board of evaluators doesn't discriminate based on the relative 'prestige' of different individuals, and thus, in principle, these awards serve to give an objective measure of the value of different research projects. But they only function this way for professors presently employed with a university. As a result of my status as an unemployed immigrant automatically disqualifies me.

Scholarships and grants aside, the university seems to have responded to the oversaturation of the job market with a number of dubious shortcuts which complicate my struggle as an immigrant. In the face of a field of equally qualified applicants, admissions boards increasingly resort to personal connections and professional contacts to sort through their
applications. The sociology community is insular enough in Canada that a graduate student usually has connections with any professor at U of T through one or two degrees of separation. Social and professional networks such as 'linked in' or academia.edu can be helpful in terms of their ability to counteract this situation. They allow new academics to broadcast their credentials to a wide market of admissions boards, but at the same time, they serve to consolidate and reinforce preexisting networks of connections. I have created an academic profile on both of these networks, and have received some interest in my academic profile, but my network of professional contacts is mostly centered around academic communities in Barbados and England. Consequently, academic departments are much less likely to stumble onto my profile than they are with a Canadian sociologist.

I have tried to establish myself outside of virtual networks through concrete social relations, and I have had some success there also. After working odd jobs for several years, mostly in the services sector, I was able to secure a position as a field researcher for a public housing advocacy group in Toronto with the recommendation of the chair of my old department. The advocacy group is closely related to the sociology department at York University and the planning school at Ryerson. As a general rule the group hires from this body of graduates. Consequently, I have had the opportunity to connect with professors in these respective departments, and graduates from these programs. I know when new lecturer positions open up before they are announced, and I have had the competitive advantage of applying for them before they are presented to the open market. My position has also furnished me with a new field of online connections. I have started to uncover academic connections between professors at York and my home department in London. This has motivated me to seek out recommendation letters from professors from the University of London which I had previously overlooked. I am
attempting to rethink my approach to applications. Since I'm at a strategic disadvantage, I have to be as tactical as possible. In spite of these leads though, I have had no successes.

For the most part other graduates can sympathize with my position. The job market is competitive for everyone here. But I get a bit of extra sympathy on account of the fact that I was designing and leading studies five years ago, whereas now I am tasked with collecting research for others. My associates do what they can, and they are always on the lookout for potential job openings as well as research funding for me, but I am automatically ineligible for the majority of funding through the government, and greatly disadvantaged in job competitions.

My position is not particular among qualified immigrants. Many immigrants come to Canada with skills that are suited to understaffed industries, such as the public health industry and fields of engineering. While Canadian society would surely benefit from integrating these new Canadians, problems with certification as well as diverse international standards prevent their seamless integration. In my case, while my skills are sought after in certain industries, my ideal professional field is over-saturated with applicants. There are hundreds of North Americans applying for sociology positions at major research universities like U of T.

Some of the job counselors I have spoken with since my arrival in Canada emphasize this fact, and maintain that since it is hard enough to secure a tenured position as a Canadian student, I should simply invest my energies elsewhere. But I came to Canada with the expectation of equal opportunity, and equal opportunity is something I am entitled to expect. The assertion that I should settle for second class opportunities is repugnant to me. I am happy to keep my work as a field-researcher for now, and to mine the possibility of new academic connections, but by no means am I giving up on my struggle.
5.2.7 Judy

I moved to Canada with my daughters in 2006. Our plane arrived in Toronto and we settled in Milton. The story of how we got here is long. It's always difficult to identify the origins of a particular decision, especially one as life changing as my decision to move here with my daughters, so I will just begin from the beginning.

I was born into a middle class family in the Guyanese city of Georgetown, to two supportive and encouraging parents. I was the youngest child in the family—I have two older brothers who still live in Georgetown. We lived in a nice neighborhood, and I had many friends growing up. Both of my parents worked as teachers at the local high school. We lived close by, and I spent a good deal of time there. I was very active in school life. I was an athlete, and I worked as a tutor for younger students. My parents were my main role models growing up, and from an early age I knew that I wanted to become a teacher one day. My family and my instructors at school were very supportive of my ambition, and when it came time to go off to university, I had an easy time enrolling and paying for my studies. I entered an undergraduate program at the University of Guyana. I did well in my studies and made friends easily. Life was good for me then. My passion was English. I volunteered for my parents around school during the summers, and began to think about life as a teacher after university.

Toward the end of my undergraduate degree I met a man named Claude. Claude and I dated for about a year, and eventually decided to get married and start a family together. Claude studied finance at university, and got a well paid, but very demanding job as an accountant.

I worked part time as a teacher at the school with my parents, but left the job after less than a year when I became pregnant. While I wanted to teach again, we had enough money for me to stay home and raise our first daughter while Claude worked. Within six months I was pregnant again, and gave birth to another daughter. I love my daughters, and wouldn't trade the time I had raising them in their early years for anything in the world, yet I couldn't help but
resent the fact that I was made to stay at home and fulfill such a traditional role. I didn't realize it at first, but Claude held a very traditional view of marriage and family. Claude and I had a very caring relationship at first, but the stress of his work, and my resentment of my home life began to strain our relationship. We began to fight a lot at home.

My mother retired from work at around this time, so she began to help out with my children. I worked out an arrangement with Claude where I would return to school to pursue a part-time Master's degree in English, splitting the responsibility of raising my children with my mother. This compromise allowed me to pursue my ambitions of a teaching career, while preserving the traditional home life Claude wanted. Two years later, I graduated at the top of my class, and I was offered a teaching position at the university. I had made a lot of good connections during the course of my Master's, and I taught several writing classes. I had a great opportunity to pursue the career I had always wanted.

Throughout my Masters, and in spite of our compromise, the rift between Claude and I had widened over these two years. We separated for several months and I brought my daughters to live for a time with my parents. I never reconciled with Claude, and within the year we divorced. It was at about this time that things began to look bleak for me, and I began to seriously consider a move to North America. Though I was consistently employed at the university, I found it impossible to find the assurance I needed to raise my daughters. My work was always on a contractual basis. There were no openings at any universities in my area for permanent English professors. I was also tired of depending on my parents, who had always looked forward to their retirement. I tried to figure out different ways of living independent of them, but found that the options weren't available to me. I also began to think about the opportunities that my daughters, who were four and two at the time, would have waiting for them when they grew up. I couldn't have asked for a better or more supportive childhood, yet in spite of everything I found myself in a very vulnerable situation. I didn't want my daughters to experience the same disappointments I had experienced in the Guyana. It was at about this time
that I started seriously considering the possibility of immigrating to another country.

I started researching the immigration process in the United States, but a friend at the university suggested that I consider Canada as well. During her early twenties she had lived in Toronto for a summer with her aunt and uncle who had emigrated from Guyana several decades before. She had a lot of fond memories from her stay there, including time with a large Caribbean community. She also suggested that it would be easier for a qualified applicant with a strong education to make the move to Canada. It was also a practical matter: Canada's developed social programs would offer a lot to help a single mother get established. So I began researching Canadian life. My family felt mixed about my decision, especially my mother, who had grown very attached to my children, but they were as supportive as they had always been.

I submitted an immigration application at the Canadian consulate in Georgetown and began to think concretely about the move. I also began to investigate different ways in which I could apply my professional experiences to the Canadian work force. I was apprehensive about the move to Canada for a number of reasons, but my friends and colleagues assured me that with my credentials and experience I wouldn't have any trouble establishing myself in Canada. I was also assured by the various recruitment materials the Canadian consulate provided for me. They were full of accounts of happy and successful immigration stories. Before I knew it, I had been accepted by the Canadian government.

In 2006 I moved with my daughters to Canada. We settled in Milton, Ontario, a smaller suburb just outside of Toronto. Milton was at once more affordable than areas within Toronto proper and there were also several organizations which supported the integration of immigrants in the community. We began renting a small apartment that we paid for out of my savings, and with support from my family. I spend several months attempting to find part-time work while I looked for a job teaching English at a college or university.

Finding temporary work was a lot more of a challenge than I had expected. In spite of my years of experience as a teacher, and my advanced degrees, I had difficulty finding even the most
menial work. I found several websites which advertised positions in and around Milton, but there was no teaching work available. I resolved to find work before my ability to support myself ran out. So I began to apply for service sector jobs, in kitchens, or as a part time cleaner. The few times I was invited for interviews my interviewers stressed the fact that I was overqualified for the positions I had applied for—they wanted employees for the long-term, and didn’t trust that I would stay around. I found myself in a sort of double bind. On the one hand I was overqualified for work which was available to me, while the work I actually wanted wasn’t advertised or available.

I realized that my job-search strategies might not have been leading me to everything that was available, so I contacted one of my colleagues from Guyana, and asked for a list of Canadian colleges and universities in my neighborhood. Many of the universities he sent back to me were scattered across Ontario, at distances which had been hard to imagine. The few which were close to Milton had waiting lists which were hundreds of applicants long according to one administrator I spoke with. On top of that, they limited their hirings to applicants with degrees from Canada and the United States. I was disappointed, and desperate to find work in the meantime.

I realized that a major obstacle in my search for work in the community was a consequence of the fact that I didn't have any local contacts. In spite of my isolation, I eventually found a position at a local school through an online job bank. Through the same service I found another job as an office clerk. Between both jobs I was able to support my family’s expenses.

Though I was able was able to find work, my daughters were having their own issues with their move. My daughters were homesick and missed their friends and social lives. Although my girls excelled academically, they were shy and introverted at school. I was happy with their academic success, but wanted to make sure they were enjoying a social life that complemented their studies. I spoke with a school guidance counselor and took her suggestion to
visit the area’s multicultural settlement agency to see what activities or services were available to new youth in the community.

I visited the Halton Multicultural Agency and enrolled my daughters in a community after-school program for new immigrants. After several weeks I became closer with the coordinator, and began offering English lessons to ESL immigrant children several days a week. My involvement as a volunteer at the agency made a strong impression on the program managers. After a few months of dedicating My free time to the agency, the director created a position for me as a counselor for at-risk youth. I currently hold a position as an at-risk youth counselor, which pays $18 per hour at 35 hours per week.

Although it is not the job I had envisioned when I relocated to Canada, I'm content with my pay and I feel more dignified in this position than I did in my past employment as a cleaner and as an office clerk. Further, the networks of friends and contacts I've established through my participation in the Halton Multicultural Agency function to alleviate some of the challenges I face as a single mother. I’m also more familiar with the process of accreditation for immigrants attended bridging programs, and I've established relationships which might lead to new jobs in the future. Yet I still worry about my family’s well being. My time in Canada has been a mixture of unexpected disappointments and surprising possibilities.

5.2.8 Abeni

My name is Abeni. I am 36 years old, and live in London Ontario. I emigrated from Libya to Canada in 2007. I love my country and I will always be Libyan. I have a very good family, a husband of many years and an intelligent son. I have had a very difficult time adjusting to Canadian life and finding work. My Libyan education and work experience has not been recognized by Canadian employers or universities and both my husband and I have struggled to provide for my family. My search for a job has been long and disappointing and I am presently
unemployed. I often remember my life in Libya with mixed emotions. I am so very grateful for my life in Canada but I miss my family I left behind and I am disappointed that I have not made them proud.

Although circumstances in Libya were always difficult, in many ways I was lucky. I worked for a number of years as a physics professor at one of the leading universities in Libya. I was even promoted to an important administrative role in the university. For a young woman this was a huge accomplishment. Shortly after my promotion there was a noticeable shift in governance at my university and other Libyan. There was widespread suspicion of new policies that were being implemented. Many of my colleagues and friends alleged that bribes from our present government and foreign investors were to blame. It was widely believed that some foreign corporations brought their business to Libya on account of minimal government supervision. It was also claimed that these companies would pay the government, and instead of passing its profits on to the rest of us, the government and its officials would keep everything for themselves. This formed an ugly collaboration between government and businesses, where some government officials had progressively more and more incentives to 'conservatize' our country, and businesses had progressively more incentives to invest in Libya. Corruption had always been a fact of life in Libya, but things seemed to be getting worst. Most of the professors at the university were enraged but there was little we could do. The accusations of government bribery, murder and rape was widespread. The government did not take such accusations lightly and began using illegal methods such as kidnapping, and intimidation to silence criticism and any signs of protest. In my role as a university administrator I felt divided between two obligations. On the one hand I was a representative of the government. Not only was I encouraged to support new policies, but I was ordered to actively discourage dissent among the university faculty and
students. I also knew that I would be held doubly accountable for my actions if I chose to speak out against the government. On the other hand I had obligations to my family and my students. I saw the injustices around me every day and wondered if I could stand idly by and do or say nothing. Hence, in spite of my role as a government official, I chose to encourage my students and other faculty to voice their concerns in class and amongst themselves. In retrospect that was not a good thing to do at the time.

In response to both my stance and those of several fellow faculty members, we became targets of the government. We were constantly monitored and we all became very concerned for our lives and the lives of our family members. The government even ordered all national universities to ban rallies to ensure that no public student demonstrations against the government could take place. Many students were arrested or temporarily detained, and I spent several weeks altogether in police custody. While I had no direct experience of 'disappearances' it was rumoured that other outspoken officials at other universities had been kidnapped by the government.

The conservative officials at my university took other measures to control my public dissent. After a brief council hearing my tenure was revoked and my position with the university was terminated. I still had the support of many of my colleagues but there was little they could do to save my position. I also received threatening visits from the police, and phone calls which suggested that my life was in danger. My husband and I recognized the severity of the situation, and decided that we would have to leave Libya for the safety of ourselves and the future of our child. Based on our credentials my family and I were granted relatively straightforward entrance to Canada. We went through the regular channels for immigrants.
Our time in Canada has been very trying thus far, although we are grateful for the opportunity to live here. My husband and I had some saving from our work in Libya and for almost a year we survived on our meagre savings, while we both tried to find work at colleges and universities. This proved to be a much greater challenge than I had expected it to be. In Libya I was well connected with many prominent families in both the academic and business world. My friends and associates would invite me on with new projects almost weekly rate. In Canada, on the other hand, I have no connections. While I have met many Libyan people, none of them are connected with business in Canada. I also feel I overestimated the ties and connections my associates in Libya had to Canada. During my first six months I set about meticulously contacting any former business acquaintance who might have been connected in some way to Canadian life. This exhaustive process did not yield a single interview or meeting in London. While several calls led to opportunities in some smaller towns, the cost of relocating to these communities is too much for my family to bear right now.

For a time I found a full time job as a teller at a Money Mart. I found this position through a local online job bank. While my manager was initially sceptical about hiring me on account of my 'over-qualification' for the position, he has hired other qualified immigrants in the past and understands that with the difficulties Canadian society presents to re-certification, it is not likely that I will be leaving in the near future.

For now my wages support my family while my husband is back at university. Our daughter is enrolled at a reputable public school and is taking classes in French and English. She has good friends, many of whom are the children of recent immigrants, or immigrants themselves. My husband is also looking for work and we are receiving social assistance. I am not very proud of this and I don’t want to talk about it at this moment. In the near future I will surely
find myself back at university, retraining for the Canadian position I expected when I moved here.

5.3 Family Break Down and Isolation

5.3.1 Neime, 35

I grew up in a difficult country, but I had a good life. I was fortunate enough to have been born to parents who were able to provide for and protect me. I have seen so many children who were not so lucky. Many of my childhood friends disappeared before they were teenagers, and I knew that I would never see them again. As I’ve said, I was lucky. I remember the political unrest as my country struggled to establish democracy, I remember days and weeks where the water supply was shut off, but I was safe, I was fed, and I was loved.

My parents always encouraged me to do well in school, and I did. I worked hard throughout school; I earned top grades, won numerous awards, and was generally recognized as an outstanding student. When it came time to apply to university, I applied to world-renowned universities in England. My parents were supportive, but worried about the costs associated with such a prestigious institution. I remember waiting anxiously for acceptance letters. I remember the minute that I received a letter from one of these English universities as though it was yesterday. Not only was I offered acceptance, but the university also offered me a full scholarship. I could not even describe how elated I was, how proud my parents were.

Over the course of my studies in England, I earned a graduate degree in sociology. Immediately upon my completion of my degree, the top university in my home country offered me a position as a professor. Happy for the chance to return home, I accepted. I enjoyed my career immensely. I am passionate about furthering knowledge, both through my own research
and through teaching. I really flourished in that environment. When I look back on those years now, I think it was the happiest time of my life.

It was at this university, too, that I met my husband. One of the workshops I had organized focused on the sociological implications of health care systems. He was studying to become a physician at the time. He apparently heard about the workshop and decided it might be interesting. After my talk, he approached me to further discuss the subject. We quickly connected. I loved talking with him—I think we were both drawn to each other because of our passions. We were both so dedicated to our work, to knowledge, to learning. When he finished medical school, he set up a practice as a family physician and asked me to marry him. I was unbelievably happy. It wasn’t long before we were married.

When I found out I was pregnant with our first child, my husband and I were thrilled. I wanted to give my child a good life, filled with opportunities for happiness and success. As I thought about our future as a family, I grew increasingly worried. Even though my husband and I had the means to take care of our child, there are so many risks in this country. I remembered how one of my closest friends as a child disappeared one day. We were only ten. There was no word about where she went or what happened to her. I cried for days and days, thinking she must have died. When I was fourteen, I passed her on the street. She had been kidnapped and forced into child prostitution and, due to poverty, abuse, and shame, would likely never escape. This fate is not uncommon here. Child prostitution is still a significant problem, especially for children who grow up in poverty.

As I thought about the horrifying possibilities, I realized that I wanted to move. When our first child was born—our eldest son—I spoke to my husband about my concern and my
desire to leave. Luckily, he shared my concerns and thought moving was a good idea for our family. We decided to move to Canada for a number of reasons. We were impressed with the country’s health care, with its abundant educational opportunities, and with its reputation of welcoming immigrants. We settled on Toronto. We knew it was a huge, busy city, as well as very multicultural. We thought those two characteristics would bode well for our employment prospects.

My husband and I decided that he should move first so that he could find a job, establish a house, and earn some money for myself and our son to join him. His departure, I know, was difficult for him—it must have been incredibly hard to leave his wife and new-born son—but it was incredibly difficult for me. I had to continue working and take care of my baby. Shortly after my husband left for Canada, I found out I was pregnant again. Our respective lives were hard, but the fact that we were apart was even harder. It wasn’t until after the birth of our second child, my daughter, that I was finally able to join him. I was thrilled to finally be able to see my husband again.

My excitement was short-lived. In his five years in Toronto, he hadn’t been able to find gainful employment. He tried for over a year to find a job as a physician, but nobody would hire him. They claimed he needed retraining. Frustrated—and unable to afford the expensive retraining process—he started looking for other jobs, jobs for which he was significantly overqualified for. It took him another six months to find a job working at a gas station, so that by the time my children and I were ready to move to Toronto, he hadn’t saved enough money to take care of us there. It took him another year still to save enough money to find even a small one-bedroom apartment for our family.
My first priority, after moving, was finding work. Immediately upon my arrival in Toronto, I had devoted myself to applying for jobs. I felt ready for the job market, as I had made significant preparations before moving: I had several research projects in progress, I had strong letters of reference from the university at which I had worked, and I had an interesting and cogent portfolio. I knew that some immigrants faced difficulties in finding jobs, but I thought I might escape this particular barrier, as I had earned all of my degrees at various prestigious universities in England. I knew that the Canadian labour market was critical of education that was received in developing countries, but I thought that I was safe from that particular discrimination. I also knew that many immigrants were hindered in their job searches by their difficulty with the English language, but I spoke English fluently. Given my preparations, my readiness, and my language proficiency, I was not worried about finding a job.

My arrival in Toronto, however, was marked by emotional turmoil. When my children and I joined my husband, he was a different man. The change was so drastic that it was like I didn’t even know him. He was moody and irritable, often yelling at us for no reason. At other times, he was completely withdrawn. Sometimes he would go days without speaking to us. I could tell he was deeply depressed by his inability to resume his former career, which he had loved so much. I tried to talk with him about it, I suggested that he seek counselling, I thought of ways he might be able to find another job in his field. It became clear to me that he had given up hope entirely. A year after I moved to Canada, our marriage ended.

The dissolution of our marriage was so hard. I felt as though I lost not only my husband but my best friend. When we separated, I was four months’ pregnant. I knew that the separation was the best decision not only for me but for my children as well, but I was incredibly worried about the prospect of being a single mother to three children while looking for full-time
employment. I was lucky and blessed to give birth to my youngest son, but his birth came at a very difficult time in my life.

When my husband and I separated, I needed to be able to support my children on my own, so I started looking for other types of work. I applied to office jobs and managerial positions and was still unable to find work. As my financial situation worsened, I became desperate. I continued to look for opportunities at every college and university in the area. I applied for every job position I could find. I never received a single interview. I decided to call and try to speak with the deans and other people in administrative positions. Despite my polite persistence, nobody was willing to speak with me. The only response I would get would be from somebody’s secretary, who would advise me to send in my resume — which, by this point, I had already done several times. I visited job fairs, attended workshops, and took every recommendation suggested by immigrant resource centres, but nothing led to a position. The suggestions made to immigrants at these various resource centres are not helpful to professionals. I feel that these resource centres are very much geared towards immigrants who are not doctors, lawyers, or professors. These centres seem to only help immigrants find menial, tedious work. They did not know how to help me.

Eventually, I took two part-time jobs at Walmart and McDonalds so that I could pay my bills. Many of the people I work with do not even have a high school education. These jobs are utterly mindless. My wages cannot even compare with my former income. I have to work over sixty hours a week in order to make ends meet. I feel like nothing but a statistic to this country — another immigrant who couldn’t get a job in her field forced to work for minimum wage. I am disgusted with my employment.
The only place I could afford was just outside of the city. I didn’t learn until after our move that this area is known to be dangerous because of gang activity. One evening, when I came home from work, there were several gang members arguing in the street. One man pulled out a knife. In response, another man pulled out a gun. I ran as fast as I could inside my house to make sure my children were safe. My eldest son told me that he had seen these people before, outside of his grade school. I cried and held him close to me, and made him promise to never go near or speak to these people. I don’t think he understood why I was so sad. I felt as though I had let my family down. My husband and I moved here to provide a better, safer life for our children, and I felt as though we just couldn’t get away from danger, from violence, from worry. I felt so ashamed of myself as a mother.

I worry constantly about my children. I worry that violence might break out, and that one of them might get caught in the fray. I can’t afford to stay at home and spend more time with them — if I work any less, I won’t be able to afford groceries. I wish that we could move to a safer neighbourhood, but I cannot take the time off work, nor can I afford the costs of moving. I am trying to set some money aside to do this in the future, but it has been immensely difficult. This life in Canada has taken everything from me — my career, my marriage, my financial security — and I don’t want it to ruin the lives of my children.

5.3.2 Maryam

I will always love my home country. I have many fond memories of my childhood, particularly of spending time with my family. I was always very close with my parents. They recognized at an early age that I was bright. They knew I was a talented and capable child. I was lucky to have parents who were so supportive. They were very poor, and could do little to
assist me, but they loved and supported my ideas, my goals. We lived up in a small town outside of the country’s capital city. My parents knew that I wanted to learn, but opportunities for education – particularly for girls – were few and far between where we lived. When I was very young, they sent me to live with my aunt and uncle in the capital so that I was exposed to more opportunities.

I missed my parents terribly, but I loved school. I loved learning from an early age. I was an obedient ward of my aunt and uncle, but they were very strict. I think they wanted to make sure that I was protected, as it was a big city and a new environment. As I grew older, they were more concerned that I should find a husband rather than that I should pursue my education. I know they came from a place of love and concern, but it was difficult, at times, to manage. When I would visit my family they would lavish attention upon me, but reiterate my aunt and uncle’s desires. They wanted me to be safe and looked after.

As I neared the end of my high school education, I became aware that a son of my aunt’s friend was interested in meeting me. To please my aunt and uncle, and my parents, our families met. He was a student at the local university. When we first spoke, what I remember the most, even to this day, is the way in which our minds met intellectually. He was so interesting, and so interested in me. I was intrigued by him. Sometime later, much to the pleasure of my family, he and I were wed. I was happy to be wed to him. He was a kind, loving, and supportive husband. In the few years following our wedding, I gave birth to two children, a son and a daughter, who were the light of our lives.

When he had finished his education, he began working as a civil engineer. Our children were just beginning their initial education. I mentioned to him that I might like to study at the
local university. I was nervous as to his reaction, but he thought it was a good idea, and that we could make it work as a family. By this time, my father had passed away and my mother had come to live with us, and with her support and assistance with the children I was able to attend university. I enrolled as a major in chemistry with a minor in French. I was lucky – the work, the theory behind the science classes somehow came naturally to me. I am sure I would never have been able to complete my work without my mother’s support, particularly with two young children, but I felt as though I was meant to study this material.

Upon completing my graduate degree, I was immediately offered a job by the university. They had been so pleased with the work I had done as a student and wanted to keep me at their institution. Since my children were older, and since much of my research could be done at home, I accepted. My husband and mother remained not simply content with my decisions but supportive of them. I enjoyed my work more than I could have ever imagined. It was fascinating, and I do not think it is immodest if I add that I was recognized many times for my accomplishments and advancements in my field. The several years I spent working at this institution, contributing to knowledge, and raising my family were the best time of my life.

Again, as I have said, I will always love my country. But I was extraordinarily lucky. I was able to avoid many situations which befell others. Freedom of speech and expression are not readily enjoyed, particularly under the latest political regime. Political dissidents have a way of disappearing. Executions often take place without warning, let alone explanation. The authorities do not follow principles of accountability or transparency. It can be a very dangerous place to live. I was lucky to have avoided the many misfortunes that can befall a person, particularly a woman, living in this country.
My husband’s brother was not so lucky. He had become involved with an organization that promoted stricter political and legislative accountability, as well as political adherence to international human rights codes. My husband and I were deeply concerned about his brother, but he could not be dissuaded. He was convinced that his actions were just, that his cause was noble. We would never disagree with him, but we begged him to see the costs. One morning, he had disappeared. My husband came home from work in a frenzy. He told me that his brother had been arrested and detained by the authorities. That night will never be erased from my mind – it is somehow both a vivid memory and a blur. Not only was my husband’s brother likely to be executed within days, but the authorities were likely going to come after my husband and our family. We had to leave immediately. My husband, my mother, my two children and I left the country that night.

We travelled for some time. I think the stress of travelling under such circumstances was too much for my mother, and not long after we left our home country, my mother passed away. It was a terrible time. The only thing for my family to do was to find a new home. My husband and I settled on moving to Canada. We decided to move to Montreal; since I was fluent in French, we thought this might allow us to integrate into the society. I thought it would be relatively easy. My credentials, at this time, were fairly impressive — I had nearly a decade’s experience as a professor at a reputable university. Despite my language proficiency and my qualifications, we were unable to find work in Montreal. I had submitted applications to all the local universities and colleges, only to have them all rejected. Unfortunately, my husband and I were running out of money. We couldn’t afford to pay our rent. Our only option was to move to Toronto to live with my a family friend, who was generous enough to share her house with us. Six months after our move to Montreal, we had to move again.
My two children did not want to move. My son, who was then in still in his teens decided to stay in Montreal — he said that one move had already been too strenuous. My husband and I could not persuade him to come with us, despite the fact that we wanted to stay together as family. But my son insisted that he could not handle another move. My daughter, who was then still in high school, had no choice but to move with us, as she could not support herself. After our move to Toronto, my daughter became deeply depressed. Even though she was once a stellar student, her grades plummeted, and she became very withdrawn. My husband and I were deeply concerned about not only her emotional wellbeing, but also her academic future.

My husband, too, became depressed. He and our son had always been close, and I think my husband suffered greatly at their separation. My son did not have enough money to travel — nor did my husband or I — so we saw him very rarely. In addition, my husband could not find work in his field — he had been a civil engineer — and he was forced to take a job as a taxi driver. He was miserable. He worked up to twenty hours a day for a fraction of his former salary. Occasionally, a customer would yell racial slurs at him.

My own job search, I think, was affected by my difficulties with the English language. Even though Canada is officially a bilingual country, and even though I speak French fluently, I found that knowledge of English was significantly more important. When I arrived in Canada, I spoke English fairly well, but not fluently, and I was told that I spoke with an accent. After our move to Toronto, I enrolled in a class intended to help immigrants with their English. The class was useful, but I also felt that it was rudimentary — it did not teach the language at a level that would allow someone to hold anything more than the most basic of jobs. I would have loved to take another class at a higher level, but the first class was already quite expensive, and I could
not afford to take another. Instead, I did my best to improve my language skills on my own — I read, I listened to radio programs, I tried to speak English as often as I could. My English improved significantly as a result of my efforts, but I would often encounter words I didn’t understand, and I knew that, to native Canadians, I still spoke with an accent.

I applied to every local college. Only three called me in for an interview. During the first interview, I felt like the interviewer had already made up her mind against hiring me before I had even walked into the office. In the middle of the second interview, I had to ask my interviewer to explain what he meant by a particular phrase. I could tell he was not impressed. The third interview led to the position that I currently hold. I wish I could say that I was thrilled to have finally found employment, but my job feels like such a step down from my former career. I work a few hours a week at a college, assisting another professor with one course to first-year students. I miss the research that I used to conduct. I miss mentoring graduate students and guiding them in their studies. I find this job immensely unsatisfying. I am barely making any money. My husband and I were unable to help our daughter pay for her tuition when she applied to university. She had to take out a student loan, and will be in significant debt when she finishes her degree. I desperately hope that she can find a better job than my we were able to find.

Throughout the time that my family and I have lived in Canada, I have enrolled in countless workshops for immigrants, including training sessions and further English proficiency courses. Despite my efforts, I am still unable to find a better position. I recently applied to the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education to do a second PhD, hoping that it might allow me to find a teaching position at a university. My husband and I argue about this issue constantly. He thinks that it is a bad idea; I think it is the only chance I have at finding a better job. I’m not sure
how we’re going to finance this degree — I may have to apply for a student loan, like my daughter. I don’t think my marriage will survive my return to school but I don’t have a choice.

5.3.3 Radha

As a child, my parents did everything they could to give me as many opportunities as they could. Because of our country’s significant overpopulation, access to quality education was very difficult. The schools were overcrowded and under-resourced. It was often difficult to hear the teacher over the noise of so many other classmates. Interaction between the student and the teacher was nearly impossible. My parents knew that these conditions made it very difficult for a child to get a good education. They decided to supplement my education as much as they could. When I wasn’t in school, I was home-schooled. My mother would go over my schoolwork with me until my father got home from work, at which time he would give me more advanced problems to work through. I suppose they were lucky I was such a cooperative pupil – I was eager to learn more, especially about science and mathematics. I was lucky, too, to have such generous parents – it must have been exhausting for them to take responsibility for my education in addition to everything else they were responsible for.

As a result of their efforts, I developed a strong, keen work ethic. By the time I was in high school, schoolwork came naturally to me. Not only was I able to teach myself the day’s lessons, but I was often able to work through the more advanced problems on my own, referring to my father only when I had difficulty with a particular idea or theory. I knew that I wanted to continue my education and attend university – and my parents’ schooling had instilled in me a love of education that I would not otherwise have had. The educational system in our country was an oppressive environment to learning, but my parents showed me that I could love it. I
wanted to educate others – I wanted to be able to instil that same passion, that same devotion in other people.

When I had finished high school, I knew that I wanted to continue my education. I had my sights set on becoming a professor. I was a bit nervous when I learned that my family had arranged for me to marry the son of a close family friend. I was concerned about the implications of marriage on my career – what would my husband expect of me? Would he be supportive of my goals, or would he expect me to devote more of my time to our home and to him? Luckily, it turned out to be an excellent match. He and I had known each other as children and, after meeting again, discovered that we got along quite well and were very compatible. He, too, loved and valued education. He was an architectural engineer and had recently been hired by a well-known and respected company. Shortly after our wedding, when I mentioned my plans to continue studying at university, he was nothing but understanding, loving, and supportive of my goals.

With the support of my family and my new husband, I began studying biology and mathematics at university. I loved my studies immensely and worked diligently. When I was nearly finished my undergraduate degree, I learned that I was pregnant with twins. My husband and I and our families were absolutely overjoyed! I decided it would be best for me to take some time off school so that I could be with our children. I gave birth to one son and one daughter. They were beautiful, healthy babies. Every moment I spent with them was precious to me. A few months after their birth, though, my parents approached me and told me that they would give me whatever assistance I needed with the children so that I could resume my education. I did not want to part with my children, but I knew that I needed to finish my education and establish a career for myself in order to provide for them.
With the love and support of my parents and husband, I resumed my studies. By the time I finished university, I had earned two graduate degrees – one in biology and one in mathematics. My parents were overjoyed by my accomplishments – and so was I. To make matters even better, shortly after I graduated I received a call from a very prestigious university and found out that, upon strong recommendations from a couple of my professors, I was offered a tenure-track position teaching mathematics. I could not have been happier – this was such a fortunate time in my life. I accepted the offer and began to work for an amazing institution. I adored my work, my family, my life.

However, I had been growing nervous about the future of my children. I was afraid that, because my husband and I both had demanding careers, we would not be able to provide the supplementary education that my parents provided me in order to compensate for the insufficiencies of the school system. Also, I received a letter from a family friend who had moved to Canada ten years ago to raise her children. From our correspondence it was clear that she felt as though she made the right choice for her children – that they were happier, safer, and had better educational and occupational opportunities. I also knew that, because my husband and I both had demanding careers, we would not be able to provide the supplementary education that my parents provided me in order to make up for the insufficiencies of the school system. When I proposed the idea of moving to my husband, he was immediately opposed. He was very traditional and wanted to remain in our native country to raise our family. He was deeply upset at the idea of raising our children away from our parents and our families. He thought it would be damaging to our children for them to have little to no contact or involvement with their families, their heritage. We argued for many nights over this question. It was actually beginning to put a strain on our marriage.
Then a tragedy occurred. My sister-in-law had recently given birth to her second child, a beautiful baby boy. He was the light of our family. He looked exactly like my husband. One morning, the baby became violently ill. My sister-in-law and her husband could not ease his sickness and knew he had to be taken to a hospital. Unfortunately, the health care in our country is nowhere near able to cater to the massive population, and people often have to travel a significant distance to get to the nearest hospital. When my sister and her husband were rushing to the hospital, they encountered such traffic and congestion on the way there and could not get through. The roads were just so crowded – there were too many people. They did everything they could – at one point my brother-in-law was pushing through the crowds with his son in his arms. His child, his only son, died as he held him before he could make it to the hospital.

The family was devastated. My husband was in shock. He could barely speak for days. One day, he came out of his study and told me that he had changed his mind – that he wanted to move. He told me he never wanted that to happen to his family. When we explained why we were moving to our families, they understood. With a mixture of sorrow and relief, my husband and I and our two young children moved to Toronto. Although our first apartment was modest, to put it lightly, we knew what we wanted and were willing to work towards our goals. We imagined owning a nice house in a good neighbourhood. We dreamed of sending our children to university – our son was already beginning to show interest engineering, and my daughter had inherited my love of science. We knew it would be difficult, but we were determined to make this life work, to realize our goals.

My first goal in Canada was to find a job, so I immediately began the application process. I scoured university websites, attended trade shows, and visited open houses at various colleges. Not once did I receive a call back for any of the positions for which I had applied. Instead, I
only met other unemployed immigrants desperate for work. One woman, who had worked as a radiologist in her native country, told me she had been looking for a job without success for over ten years. I began to worry — what would happen to my family if I couldn’t resume my career? I needed to start earning money. I accepted a job at a clothing store working for a family friend. The work was dull and I craved the intellectual engagement of my former profession. I continued applying for positions that were better suited to my skills, my interests, and my education in the hope that I would someday find a similar position. In the meantime, however, I needed to work to support my growing children. Even after I accepted this menial position at the clothing store, money was always tight, and my husband and I worried constantly about whether or not we could afford the coming month.

Over the course of my search for a job, I learned about a bridging program for internationally trained teachers. I thought it might make my resume more attractive to employers by giving me Canadian training and experience, so I applied. I was thrilled when I learned that I had been accepted. I thought I was finally free of my tedious job at the clothing store. I dreamed of going back to teaching — maybe initially at a college, and then later at a university. When I learned that I was ineligible for the bridging program, due to the fact that I had already been in Canada for seven years, I was devastated. I didn’t understand how a program put in place to help immigrants could be so restrictive. I knew many other immigrants who had been in Canada for as long or longer than myself. Most of them didn’t learn about bridging programs for several years. I was so frustrated by my ineligibility — it felt as though the one path that might have led to a job was closed to me. At this point, I had been applying for jobs, internships, and training programs for years without any success. I began to lose hope that I would ever be able to resume my former career.
Eventually, I began tutoring high school students in math and biology, two subjects that once gave me such joy to teach and to research. I continue to tutor and to work at the clothing store. My income is a fraction of what it used to be, but it is the only work I can find. My son is about to start university, and my daughter plans to attend in two years, so I need the income to help them with their university education. It is difficult enough just to pay the bills. We have to live in a run-down apartment in an unsafe area of the city. I wish we could move, but we can’t afford the costs of moving, and I can’t take the time off work. We are lucky to be able to put food on the table.

I wonder what my life would have been like if I had not moved to Canada. I wonder if I would have been happier, if my family would have enjoyed a better life, if my children would have had better opportunities. I knew that moving to Canada would be difficult, and I had expected that it might take me some time to find a similar job, but I never expected for my every effort to be rejected. I miss my former career every day. Working in the clothing store and even as a tutor feels like such a waste of my talents and my hard work. I never imagined that my vocational abilities would be reduced to such pitiful labour. Where I was once proud of my career, I am now ashamed to tell my friends and family back home what I do for work. I often wish we had never moved.

5.3.4 Pancham

My name is Pancham. I was born in Mumbai India to a very poor family. Through some twist of fate, I have lived a long and eventful life. It is a life that I was proud of back in India and I am still grateful for the opportunities that I have been given. However, I have had many
challenges and disappointments. Ever since I could remember, my world has been a world of poverty and struggle and my struggles continue to this day.

My father died when I was very young and my mother was never the same after my father’s death. As a result, I was overwhelmingly dependent on myself and my brothers as I grew up. To help support the household, I held a lot of odd jobs when I was younger. One of my jobs was as a cleaner at a private Australian school when I was thirteen. This job eventually led me to a new and unexpected life.

At the end of each school day I would come in to clean the classroom after all the other students had left. While cleaning one day I met one of the English teachers at the school named Audrey. I had seen her often in the past. She spent her after school hours with Indian children. I often wondered if she had children of her own, because she was always at the school. Audrey was very friendly, and would offer for me to join the other children. In the beginning I was reluctant to accept her offers. After all, I was there to work and make money. She was persistent and each day it was like she was looking out for me and waiting to speak with me. She told me that as a school teacher, she believed every child had the right to an education. She also told me that I was destined to occupy menial labour positions for the rest of my life, unless I could secure an education. One day I decided to come early to meet with Audrey and the other Indian children. It was a lot more fun than I originally thought and I was a fast learner. After several months of meeting like this, Audrey spoke with the private school’s director and asked if it was alright if she taught me basic lessons along with the other students at the school. The director, who in hindsight was supportive and open minded, expressed that as long as my attendance did not disrupt the experience of the other enrolled students, or my work as a cleaner, then it was okay. I guess Audrey saw potential in me, because after that meeting with the director, she really
started pushing me to take on more school work. She often gave me school activities and tests to take home and she would always follow-up to ensure they were completed correctly. Although my English was still very basic at the time, Audrey was able to determine from my coursework that I had a natural talent for mathematics and statistics and encouraged me to take more advanced Math classes. I really excelled. I would study for long hours at the school and would often continue long into the night when I returned home. I felt important... I felt alive and I was full of hope for the future. Everyone at the school was aware of my progress and knew that high performing students lead to a better reputation and international recognition for our school.

Eventually, and with the help of Audrey I was able to secure a scholarship to a great university based on my academic performance. This was life altering for me, as it gave me a chance to create the future that I had begun to envision.

My early capacity as a mathematician never left me as I continued on to university. I chose to pursue mathematics as my major, with a minor in statistics. In hindsight, I realize that part of my decision to study math derived from the fact that math is a universal language. I believed that through math I could find success not only in my home country, but also outside of India if I wanted to relocate in the future.

In university, I was able to meet people from all over the world, which developed my appetite for different cultures and broadened my sense of what the world had to offer. In addition to the scholarships that I received, I also worked as a teaching assistant in university to make extra money. While assisting professors I developed strong professional contacts, and enjoyed teaching. I also had several articles published in reputable Indian mathematics journals. I realized that a career as a professor was not only my calling, but it was also available to me if I desired to
pursue it. I completed my undergraduate with first class honours, which not only admitted me to a Masters program but secured me a scholarship which allowed me to live comfortably.

In my Masters program I continued work as a teacher's assistant and private tutor. I became very close with one of my students, a beautiful and creative woman named Rajini. We began to see one another outside of university and began a relationship. My program was arduous, but I established more professional contacts and produced several new publications. I also collaborated closely with the director of the mathematics department. I completed my final exams for the Masters program with flying colours, and produced a unique and well received thesis. On account of these successes, and my extensive record of publications, I was offered a professor position for the university and accepted it.

Ranjini and I solidified our relationship, and I became close with her established middle class family. With her father's approval we were married and began a family of our own. Ranjini and I had four sons together and lived comfortably. I worked for close to ten years in a comfortable teaching position in a leading research university. Throughout my professorship I took on roles outside of teaching and research. I began to work with international students. I created a well established exchange program for the university to attract international interest and students. I also researched many North American cultural idiosyncrasies and prepared a cultural and social awareness program for Indian students studying abroad. I loved learning about new cultures and I enjoyed giving Indian students a chance to travel while pursuing their studies. When I heard of the students’ experiences while travelling I wanted the same for my children and began creating plans to move abroad. My wife shared my enthusiasm for our move. She was very interested in Canadian life, and had several connections with North America which bolstered her excitement. We moved to Canada in April 2003 with ten years worth of savings,
respectable educations, and reputable employment histories. We decided to relocate to Oshawa, to make sure that I was close to universities for potential professorships which I expected to secure easily. My wife stayed at home while our children attended a local public school.

Over the last eight years, we've discovered that life in Canada is very difficult. In-fact I never imagined that my life in Canada would be like this. It is unbearable for me and my family. I have been unable to secure employment as a professor and have discovered that in spite of my past publications and my role facilitating the international program at my home university, my Indian degree is unrecognized. I have been told time and time again that I need Canadian education and work experience but I have been unable to secure either. I have attended many bridging programs and over 100 workshops for immigrants and still cannot find good work. I have tried everything. My life is hard...

I now work at Tim Hortons as a cashier and store help. I work long hours to try to earn enough money to support my family. I live a double life. You see, after trying to find work for five years and seeing the disappointment and embarrassment for my family, three years ago I told my wife that I had indeed found a job as a professor at a downtown college. So, every day I get dressed like a respectable professor. I then drive to a nearby gas station, I change into my Tim Horton’s uniform and I head off to work. Every day I remember my Australian teacher Audrey and wonder what she would think of me now. The guilt of lying to my family and the disappointment of my failure is sometimes too much for me to bear. I often think of ending my life but I remember my children and I have hope that they will have a better life in Canada than I have had. I am now working almost 70 hours a week at two separate Tim Hortons. My wife questions me about the long hours but I quickly shut her up. I have become very isolated from
my family and I don’t really engage in conversations with them because I am too afraid that they may find out the lie that I am living.

The stress that I face every day has had a negative impact of my health. One year ago I found out that I have high blood pressure. I have not told my family. I take medication every day and I am hoping that I can stay healthy enough to support my children. I look at my face in the mirror and I don’t recognize me. I look like I have aged and I feel like a 60 year old man. I was once so full of hope for the future and now I am a broken man unable to provide a good life for my family. I have now given up hopes of finding employment as a professor. I have accepted my fate and I have accepted that I will never be able to teach at a college or university again.

On account of the amount of time I spend working, the lack of a supportive community where we've settled, and the fact that the children spend their days at school, Rajini feels isolated and misses the social life she had with her friends and family in India. The children enjoy Canadian life since they are young, but are unaware of the challenges Rajini and I face together. I don’t really know what the future holds for us...
Chapter 6

The New Narrative: The Job Search Experiences of Racialized Immigrants

6.1 Introduction

As stated throughout this study, the objective of this research project is to investigate the job search experiences of racialized internationally trained educators seeking to re-enter their professions in Canada. Recent studies, such as Green and Worswick (2004) and Aydemir and Skuterud (2005), have demonstrated that racialized immigrants in Canada face significant discrimination in the Canadian job market. Current cohorts of immigrants are discriminated against in interviews, and their foreign credentials and work experience often go unrecognized by employers. Nonetheless, popular discourses on racialized immigrants in Canada tend to lay blame on the perceived deficits held by immigrants. Giroux (2004), for example, identified “pervasive neoliberal discourses [that] place responsibility for the aforementioned social problems squarely on the individual, contributing to the myth that Canada is a land of opportunity for newcomers, who, if unsuccessful, simply have not worked hard enough” (p. 1).

In general, the dominant discourse in Canadian society maintains that individuals born and educated in Canada are better candidates for employment than those born elsewhere.

The collection of counter-stories that forms the empirical basis for my study help to further the body of anti-discrimination research that has developed over the last several decades in Canada. Specifically, my analysis demonstrates that experiences of racism, name discrimination, language discrimination and other forms of discrimination are pervasive in the job-search experiences of racialized immigrants in Canada. At the same time, my study demonstrates the shortcomings of existing research. The majority of recent critical studies fail to
capture both the extent of discrimination faced by immigrants in contemporary Canadian society, as well as the intricate nuances which characterize their experience. This is because—as demonstrated during the review of existing literature—the majority of current research into immigrant experiences and outcomes in the job market continues to rely on quantitative methodologies. Social theorists, critical of quantitative methodologies, have compellingly argued that quantitative research disproportionately emphasizes isolated factors of study, instead of examining the context-specific meanings of social practices (Flick, 2006, pp. 12 – 13). The research I have developed attempts to correct some of the shortcomings of this tradition.

Building on the work of recent scholars such as Cho (2010), Duchesne and Stitou (2011) and Skogen and Mulatris (2011), who attempt to analyze discrimination against Canadian immigrants through qualitative methodologies, my research explores the detrimental impact of structural and social biases against immigrants through story telling. The counter-stories of my study’s participants present a valuable opportunity to examine the everyday manifestations of discrimination in Canadian society and to influence and even perhaps correct prevailing public opinion.

My research refutes the dominant discourse that writes, talks, and attributes blame to the immigrant. In place of this dominant discourse, my research contends that discrimination, both in systematic and explicit forms, plays a greater role in contemporary Canadian society than previous scholarship has acknowledged. Further, analysis of the stories I have compiled in this study reveals the extent to which the discrimination faced by racialized Canadian immigrants is not the result of single factors—such as race, accent, non English names and culture—but is rather the cumulative and overlapping result of multiple factors. Intersectionality, the theoretical program that has sought to describe this interaction, can and should be applied to the example of
racialized immigrants in Canada. As leading intersectionality scholars such as Crenshaw (1993) and Blackwell and Naber (2002) point out, any systematic attempt to combat and overcome discrimination in a society will be inadequate if the intricate network of intersecting discrimination is overlooked. While previous moments in anti-discrimination literature might have tried to isolate and analyse the relationship between job-search success and singular factors of discrimination, an intersectional theoretical approach emphasizes that conflicts which appear as isolated incidents of discrimination, such as name or accent discrimination, are often intensified and transformed in their connection with race. Ultimately, the counter-narratives in this study clearly illustrate the various practices of discrimination that are active in Canadian society.

6.2.1 Introducing Qualitative Evidence

The intense feelings of disappointment, regret and discouragement apparent in each of the stories in this study form the voice of a repressed counter-discourse that emerges below the picturesque narrative of Canadian multiculturalism. Earlier in this study, I detailed Canada’s evolution to perceived racial inclusion, including the promotion of multiculturalism after 1967. The unfortunate reality faced by the immigrants who took part in this study is that they are somehow excluded from what is promoted as Canada’s open invitation to join a rich and accepting multicultural society. Based on the stories it is clear that Canada’s message of inclusion may be only meant for select groups.

For the purposes of this chapter I have organized my accounts into thematic sections. These thematic sections demonstrate the ways in which the individuals in my study were discriminated against, as well as the consequences of this discrimination. In the following
sections, entitled “Explicit Experiences of Discrimination” and “Systemic Discrimination,” I outline the experience of both explicit and implicit forms of discrimination reported by the participants. Within the section entitled “Consequences of Implicit and Systemic Discrimination” I provide a thematic breakdown of some of the results of discrimination, namely the experience of alienation/disconnection from Canadian society, the breakdown of family structures, depression and the loss of self worth and identity. In varying degrees these experiences are the result of the implicit, systemic and explicit discrimination narrated by my study’s participants. These sections provide an opportunity to engage with the direct struggles faced by these individuals. The accounts of the participants in my study provide a much needed corrective to the prevailing discourse surrounding the racialized immigrant experience.

6.2.2 Explicit Experiences of Discrimination – The Intersection of Race and other Experiences of Discrimination

As is evident throughout the stories told by the participants of my study, many forms of overt discrimination are still practiced in Canadian society. Previous scholars have argued that discrimination plays a fundamental role in determining the possibilities of racialized individuals in Canada. Gilmore (2007) determined that racialized immigrants have a lower workforce participation rate than their white immigrant counterparts. Similarly, Reitz (2007) determined that racialized immigrant professionals earned less in comparison to their Canadian-born counterparts in the 1990s than in the 1970s and 1980s. The quantitative research provides strong evidence that discrimination plays a constitutive role in the determination of job-search outcomes for racialized immigrants in Canada. Yet while statistical evidence plays an essential role in providing proof of discrimination in Canada, the everyday experiences that generate such statistical trends are often overlooked. The narratives of my study’s participants provide detailed
illustrations of Gilmore’s and Reitz’s research. By understanding how discrimination enacts itself in the daily lives of Canadian immigrants, lasting and meaningful social changes can eventually begin to take hold in Canadian society.

Taking a look at explicit acts of discrimination provide a compelling introduction to the challenges of racialized immigrants in Canada. Kennan, for example, recalled that he was subjected to ridicule based on his accent and appearance while working at a gas station in Calgary. As a result, Kennan suggested that in interactions with strangers he felt stupid and hesitant to speak. Kennan stated “I really did not want to speak to anyone because I thought maybe they would think I was stupid... I felt so uncomfortable speaking because of my accent… people would always request that I repeat myself.” In Sri Lanka, Kennan recalled, that he presented himself with confidence and self assurance. In contrast, life in Canada for him was continually characterized by a desire to withdraw from public interactions. According to Kennan, experiences of explicit discrimination—such as those encountered at the gas station—legitimated his choice to withdraw from society. He described growing increasingly self consciousness, both about the way he spoke, and about his racialized appearance. Kennan stated “I was never a shy person and all of a sudden I became very shy and conscious of my accent and brown skin.”

Another participant, Taksheel, reported similar explicit experiences of discrimination. More egregiously, Taksheel related that his experiences of explicit discrimination took place during the job-search experience itself. Taksheel recounted a story of sitting down with an interviewer who spent several minutes attempting to correctly pronounce his name. From Taksheel’s perspective, the interviewer’s attention to his name was less motivated by cultural generosity or hospitality than by annoyance. Taksheel recounted that the interviewer “asked me how to spell both my first and last names. When I told him, he replied that the spelling he had
been given from his receptionist was incorrect. I could tell that he was growing increasingly hesitant to hire me simply because of my name.” Taksheel suspected that his failure to secure a job with the company was a direct result of his non English name. Taksheel’s perception is supported by a number of existing studies. Scholars such as Oreopoulos (2009) and Bertrand and Mullainathan (2004) proved in separate studies that characteristically ‘ethnic sounding’ names significantly limit job prospects in the United States and Canada. Oreopoulos found that for job seekers with traditionally ‘black-sounding’ names, the likelihood of securing a call for an interview was effectively halved. According to Oreopoulos, individuals with names from Asian, African and Eastern European countries are all liable to experience similar name discrimination. Undoubtedly the fact that Taksheel’s did not receive a job-offer can be explained by other factors—Taksheel may have been in competition with more suitable applicants. Nonetheless, the interviewer’s visible discomfort suggests that the very form of name-discrimination identified by Oreopoulos was likely an influential factor.

Another participant, Wasim, reported comparable experiences of discrimination during job interviews. Wasim recalled that during the single interview she managed to secure for a position at an educational institution, the interviewer stopped several times to ask her to repeat words she had used. Wasim remembered that the interview made her feel both embarrassed and frustrated. She suggested that her job interviewer gave the impression “that he was not remotely interested in my accomplishments or my abilities. Despite the fact that I have a good command of the English language, I could tell that all he heard was my accent.” As Alboim and McIsaac (2007) suggest, accent and language proficiency can be some of the most intimidating barriers faced by immigrants in interview scenarios. The non-recognition of Wassim’s English left the interviewer less receptive to her credentials. Also, Creese and Kambere (2007) concluded from
their study of African immigrant women with advanced degrees in English that employers have a tendency to underestimate the communication skills and organization of individuals who present an accent. Creese and Kambere further suggested that as a result of the exclusion of individuals based on factors such as accent, other important job-search assets, such as confidence and social engagement, are often diminished. Other responses from the study’s participants illustrated that fear over racial discrimination extended beyond personal concerns and experiences, and included fear for the future of children and family.

For the majority of participants of my study, discrimination was a fact of life. Overwhelmingly, the participants also reported that fear of discrimination—and the shame it brings—was socially and professionally inhibiting. Explicit experiences of discrimination had a lasting effect and led them to withdraw from society and to second guess their decisions to immigrate to Canada.

6.2.3 Systemic Discrimination

In distinction from explicit discrimination, which at times can be more readily identified, systemic discrimination is a force that is often masked in everyday life and in the workplace. Henry and Tator (2005) emphasize this point by suggesting that Canadians are under the illusion that racism does not exist in Canada. Canadians “ignore the harsh reality of a society divided by color and ethnicity,” and instead choose to believe that equal opportunity is available to everyone (p. 1). According to Henry and Tator, while Canada has removed from its collective memory, “the racist laws, policies and practices that have shaped their major social, cultural, political and economic institutions for three hundred years” the legacy of this history plays a constitutive role in the formation of the present (p. 1). Evidence of this history is widely available in existing
literature. Agocs and Jain (2001), who attempted to analyse the experiences of racialized individuals in the Canadian workplace, concluded that “it became impossible for the researchers – whatever their racial background – to ignore the presence of racism, no matter how much some of us may have wanted to believe that we now live in a colour-blind world” (p. 14).

Systemic discrimination was widely reported among my study’s participants. Judy, originally from Guyana where she trained as an English teacher, settled in Milton, Ontario hoping to secure a job in her field. Instead, in an illustration of systemic discrimination, she was blocked from employment by the premium placed on Canadian credentials and the non-recognition of internationally obtained credentials. Judy reported that she spent months unsuccessfully attempting to find part-time employment at a college or university. Her credentials were undervalued and unrecognized both in the professional job market, as well as the service sector. Failing to find academic employment, she even reported difficulty finding menial work. Ultimately, Judy felt excluded from the life in Canada that she had expected because “the few (universities) which were close to Milton … limited their hiring to applicants with degrees from Canada and the United States.”

As we have seen from Judy’s account and other stories, the non recognition of some racialized immigrant’s credentials and work experience provides a convenient alibi for latent prejudice in Canadian society. Many of the participants in my study reported sending countless resumes to colleges and universities with extremely limited responses. The experiences of immigrants such as Pancham provide a picture of systemic discrimination in Canadian society. Pancham, a mathematician originally from Mumbai had been in Canada for several years and was unable to find work in his field. Pancham reported that in the eight years he spent in Canada he was unable to find an academic job, principally because his credentials went unrecognized.
Pancham stated that in spite of his varied accomplishments—such as past publications and teaching experience—prospective employers repeatedly turned him away because they could not recognize his degree. From the immediate perspective of some of my study’s participants, their failure to secure interviews can easily be interpreted through a narrative of ‘inadequate credentials,’ instead of a narrative of discrimination. This is because the job-search experience is sufficiently anonymous and impersonal that in many cases prejudice and discrimination can be effectively disguised. Yet despite attempts to disguise or ignore such biases, they are inarguable there. With organizational values and practices influenced by a legacy of discrimination in Canada, it is a logical assumption that the individual behaviours of some employers may not favour the immigrant in the hiring process. As Agocs and Jain suggest, “a world of normative whiteness is not a colour-blind world, but it is a world in which the pressure to deny, to ignore, to refuse to know, and to be complicit in everyday racism are tremendously strong” (pp. 14—15).

Within the literature, authors such as Dei (2008) have suggested that everyday discourses surrounding the premium placed on Canadian credentials harbour discriminatory biases. According to Dei, matters of policy provide a convenient excuse for double standards that prevail in Canadian hiring practices. Hence, the non-recognition of past education and work experiences can be seen as a form of employment discrimination. Corroborating Dei’s work, Reitz (2001) concluded that “the situation of non-recognition of foreign professional or trade credentials becomes a serious form of employment discrimination when immigrants who are licensed to work in a particular field in their country of origin are refused a parallel license for work in Canada” (p. 9). Such challenges are intensified in the academy, where tenured jobs are limited. In Canada it is often difficult for immigrants to meet basic job requirements without encountering discriminatory industry standards and bureaucratic conventions (Reitz, 2000).
6.3.1 Consequences of Implicit and Systemic Discrimination

While the above examples present a number of experiences of discrimination and disenfranchisement, the personal consequences of these experiences are often not clearly stated in existing literature. The following four sections elaborate three themes that were common in the experience of immigrant jobseekers in Canada: “Alienation and Disconnection from Canadian Society,” “Family Breakdown,” and “Depression, Disenchantment and Loss of Self-Worth.” In many cases the consequences of systemic and explicit racism in Canadian society entailed consequences that were not limited to the job search experience, but rather impacted all aspects of individuals’ lives.

6.3.2 Alienation and Disconnection from Canadian Society

One of the most pernicious effects of explicit and systematic racism in Canadian society emphasized by my study’s participants was a widely reported sense of alienation and social disconnection. Scholars have argued that social exclusion serves to distance racialized individuals from the acceptance in the mainstream. Social isolation in the work place leads to fewer access to job opportunities and diminished chances of promotions (McDonald, Lin, & Ao, 2009). Participants such as Amihan described regular social exclusion in the workplace that negatively impacted their career opportunities.

Relatedly, Saloojee (2003) argued that there is a fundamental connection between social exclusion, labour market integration and citizenship. Citing Gore (1995), Saloojee identified social exclusion as a “process of disintegration” in the relationship between an individual and society. This disintegration impedes the integration and mobility of workers in the labour market, and as a result, creates long term unemployment for unskilled and immigrant workers. Saloojee
argued that in the Canadian context the link between social exclusion and citizenship is based on the “degree to which individuals from racialized or marginalized communities encounter structural and systemic barriers and are denied or restricted from participating in society” (p. 2). The author agrees with other researchers of this topic who have unanimously concluded that measures of racism are manifested in the Canadian labour force through rates of employment, rates of unemployment, income differentials and employment segregation. Much of the modern day research related to social exclusion points to the existence of identifiable social structures that work together to create factors that deny people of color access to society’s resources.

As is evident from the stories, the majority of the participants in my study felt that they had not been able to realize their goals and ambitions since immigrating to Canada. As a result, many of my participants described feeling alienated and disconnected from society. Participants reported that they were forced to accept survival jobs, and to live in the cheapest neighbourhoods in the Greater Toronto Area—which more often than not coincided with high crime neighbourhoods. Neimi, for instance, related that because of her limited financial means, she was forced to settle in a dangerous neighbourhood on the outskirts of Toronto. In addition to numerous unexpected encounters with gang violence, Neimi also found herself cut off from important social services that are abundant in wealthier neighbourhoods. Amenities such as public schools, libraries, and informal social networks that exist in more affluent regions of Toronto are inaccessible to Neimi. Further, a simple sense of security and safety was absent in her home life. Neimi recalled worrying that violence might directly affect her family. Nonetheless, Neimi recounted that her subsistence livelihood left her with neither the time, nor the resources to find a more secure neighbourhood. She stated “I wish that we could move to a safer neighbourhood, but I cannot take the time off work, nor can I afford the costs of moving.”
As Neimi’s narrative suggests, many immigrants are faced with situations where they feel completely hopeless. As alienation and disconnection from wider Canadian society intensifies, immigrant access to social networks and social capital diminishes. Saloojee cites Walker and Walker (2007) who defines social exclusion as “…a comprehensive formulation, which refers to the dynamic process of being shut out, fully or partially, from any social, economic, political or cultural systems which determine the social integration of a person in a society. Social exclusion may therefore be seen as the denial (non realization) of the civil, political and social rights of citizenship” (p. 2). Saloojee maintains that within the Canadian context there is a link between social exclusion and what he terms the non realization of citizenship. He argues that this association is based on the “degree to which individuals from racialized or marginalized communities encounter structural and systemic barriers and are denied or restricted from participating in society” (p. 2). Mitchell and Shillington (2002) explain that social exclusion is emerging as a major issue in Canada. Their research supports the conclusion that there is a correlation between race and poverty in Canada. Their research also supports the notion that social exclusion due to racial discrimination is not only negatively impacting racialized immigrants but also Canadian society more broadly. In particular, they argue that social exclusion has become a major threat to social cohesion and to Canada’s economic prosperity.

As mentioned before, these stories of alienation and deprivation are inconsistent with the integrative multicultural image that Canada portrays to the world. Lack of Canadian work experience and the possession of credentials obtained in the applicant’s country of origin no doubt complicate the job search experience of racialized immigrants in Canada. In addition they are accompanied by a cluster of other identity markers, including skin color and accent that represent an undercurrent of racial discrimination in the Canadian labour market. My research
suggests that the isolation from jobs, social capital, and social networks is the result of many overlapping and co-determining factors of discrimination.

**6.3.3 Family Breakdown**

It is evident from the narratives compiled in my study that Canada was often experienced as an exclusionary and uninviting place for some of the participants. As previously mentioned participants reported feelings of alienation from Canadian society. Importantly, in their alienation from normative Canadian society, participants lost opportunities and resources that are widely available to many Canadian citizens. While the extent of exclusion reported by some of my study’s participants is no doubt difficult to comprehend, another possibly more tragic experience reported was the breakdown of immediate and extended family relationships. The thematic analysis of the participant narratives in my study revealed that strong family networks often succumbed to the challenges the individuals experienced, leaving participants alienated, not only from wider Canadian society, but from their most intimate networks and resources as well.

Recent scholarship, such as Wong (2008) has indicated that the resources of both immediate and extended family can be instrumental in the settlement of new immigrants in Canadian society. Family can offer access to employment possibilities, housing, and informal knowledge of a receiving society that is not offered by governmental settlement authorities. Roberts, Frank and Lozano-Ascencio (1999), for instance, demonstrated that within the context of Mexican immigration in the United States, transnational family ties provided access to resources in healthcare and education that would have been otherwise unavailable to recent immigrants. This conclusion is developed by Matthews (2002) who argued that the social networks that are contained in family can offer gateways to larger communities for new
immigrants. These larger communities promise many of the same benefits that familial networks offer, only their informal assistance structures are more comprehensive and more resilient. Consequently, the breakdown of family ties also serves to sever new immigrants from wider social networks and social capital resources.

Maryam, a predominantly French speaking participant in my study, presented a job-search narrative that demonstrates a compelling example of the support structures that are offered by family. Maryam relied on friends and family for emotional support and job search opportunities. She initially settled in Montreal, but the non-recognition of her education and work experience prevented her from finding stable employment. Maryam explained the challenges she encountered in her marriage due to the stress associated with moving to Canada. Maryam recalled that when work was unavailable in Montreal, she moved in with a family friend in Toronto. While Maryam’s job search experience in Canada had been difficult, the existence of family and her involvement in communities linked to her country of origin provided her with informal support networks which helped to cope with the challenges she was experiencing. Recalling Wong, the fact that that Maryam was able to maintain such connections despite relocating across vast distances is a testament to the possible uses of transnational networks.

While Maryam’s narrative suggests both the value of family another one of my study’s participants, Neimi, illustrated a complete family breakdown. The limited employment opportunities available to her and her husband in Canada directly resulted, according to her interpretation, in the deterioration of her marriage. Neimi described that her husband had immigrated to Canada a year before she did, hoping to establish himself economically and socially in Canada as a practicing physician. Neimi recounted that her husband hoped that the challenge of relocation would be easier for his family if he could secure housing and a steady
income in Canada. Unfortunately, owing to the non-recognition of his internationally obtained training and work experience, Neimi’s husband was unsuccessful in his attempts to translate his medical degree into a professional livelihood in Canada. Neimi recalled that as a result of her husband’s inability to secure employment, she felt that when she eventually arrived in Canada to meet him, he was a completely changed person. Both as a result of his changed temperament, and of the challenges of securing work herself in education, Neimi divorced her husband. In addition to the emotional toll of divorce Neimi reported that divorce robbed her of the opportunity to develop her career, or to adequately raise her family. Instead of struggling to raise two children on a joint income, Neimi and her husband are now tasked with the same responsibilities across two households. The added strain of such immediate economic burdens taxes the resources that are required to sustain a professional job-search. Further, Neimi and her husband no longer have access to joint social-networks, but must instead establish professional and social contacts independent of one another. While such costs are difficult to quantify, it is clear that Neimi’s opportunities in Canada are further limited by the breakdown of her family.

As the stories of both Maryam and Neimi attest, family breakdown can deprive Canadian immigrants of one of their most valuable informal resources. The social capital that is contained in immediate and extended family relations can serve immigrants through valuable job connections, home care support structures, and financial assistance. The loss of social capital and social networks in the case of family breakdown deprives Canadian immigrants of an important recourse when official social programs such as bridging programs and immigrant reaccreditation resources fail. The qualitative counter-stories which I have collected here, in this case surrounding issues of family, suggest the diverse and often overlooked outcomes that result from various forms of discrimination in Canadian society.
6.3.4 Depression, Disenchantment and Loss of Self-Worth

Among many of my study’s participants, perceptions of personal failure as a result of the aforementioned issues were reported to have lead to the internalization of stigma, as well as to the questioning of self-worth and identity. Further, discrimination at the level of everyday interactions was compounded by the lack of success that many of my participants reported in securing jobs in their professional fields. As previously stated, many participants were forced to accept survival jobs in the service industry simply to put food on the table and to pay rent. Generally, the well educated professionals that participated in my study had abandoned flourishing careers in their home countries, and were now forced to reconcile their former identities with their current prospects. Before immigrating to Canada, practically all of my study’s participants anticipated the possibility of career advancement. They also hoped to secure the long term future of their next generation by passing on to their children all the possible advantages, values and traditions made possible by their decision to immigrate. However, in immigrating to Canada, many of them ended up with precarious employment, and were forced to locate their families in dangerous and isolated neighbourhoods. Trapped in jobs with low pay, they were frequently forced to take two jobs and work graveyard shifts. They were unable to properly raise and supervise their children, and watched the possibilities they had anticipated disappear. With the loss of self-worth, they no longer saw themselves as role models for their children.

Participants such as Pancham reported disastrous experiences in the Canadian job market, with depression as a direct outcome. Pancham, unable to reconcile the expectations of his family with his employment prospects, related that he leads a double life, convincing his family that he has a respectable professional career while working in the food services industry. Like many of
the other immigrants profiled in this study, Pancham asserted that the guilt and shame of his current position is driving him into a state of depression and despair. Further, Pancham reported that his sense of disappointment and failure has led him to contemplation of suicide.

Radha, once a professor with both biology and mathematics graduate degrees, described working at a clothing store, as did Amihan, a mathematician and economist. Their narratives communicated feelings of low self-worth that conflicted with their former identities. Radha reportedly felt that her talents, opportunities, and hard work were wasted in her current line of work. Radha expressed that “Working in the clothing store and even as a tutor feels like such a waste of my talents and my hard work. I never imagined that my vocational abilities would be reduced to such pitiful labour. Where I was once proud of my career, I am now ashamed to tell my friends and family back home what I do for work. I often wish we had never moved.”

Although the overwhelming majority of participants in my study reported negative outcomes in their job-search experiences in Canada, with results including loss of self-worth, depression, family breakdown and alienation, the resources available to integrate internationally trained immigrants into Canadian society appeared to be both limited and ineffective. Startlingly, the thematic analysis of the participant narratives in my study reveals that many internationally trained immigrant educators feel even less competitive in the Canadian job-market after several years of residency than they did upon their first arrival. This indicates that instead of training immigrants to take active roles in the professional economy of Canada, conventional training is failing to address the systemic barriers to their employment. The following sections endeavour to demonstrate that bridging programs, in their current configuration, provide an inadequate resource to new immigrants, and a misguided answer to systemic discrimination.
6.4.1 Bridging Programs

Bridging programs are a social service designed to provide immigrants with the knowledge and skills required to gain access to employment in their field at a level commensurate with their background and skills (Austin, 2008). Through systematic and comprehensive programs involving teaching, assessment and other supports (including mentorship, counselling, job placements, workplace support and occupation-specific language training) bridging programs are intended to help immigrants meet certain requirements to re-enter their professions in Canada. To achieve this goal, bridging programs take many forms. Organizations providing these programs may offer a variety of training options such as in-class courses, work placements, internships and profession-specific language training. In addition to training, bridging programs may also provide counselling and assessment services to help immigrant job seekers compare their work skills and aptitude against local employer expectations. Bridging programs are run by various governmental, non-governments, and private organizations, as well as information and consultation services and educational institutions. Many of these programs are partially funded by the federal, provincial or municipal governments. For example, the Ontario government has financially supported over 145 bridging programs in more than 100 trades and professions (Austin, 2008,). Many of the participants from my study reported having attended bridging programs or knowing of others who have. Although some of them had positive results, the majority were dissatisfied with the opportunities available to them.

6.4.2 Challenges with Bridging Programs

As previously stated, immigrants are usually advised to enter bridging programs to acquire skills that will make them better suited for employment in Canada. As is evident
throughout this research, most of the participants attended various bridging programs in the past, but these programs were not successful in helping them find employment. During the course of this study, the overwhelming majority were still searching for employment at the post secondary level. One of the study’s participants, Maryam, lamented that while she had completed countless workshops and bridging programs—concentrating both on her profession as well as her language abilities—she has still yet to find employment. Another participant, Taksheel, shared his disappointment with bridging programs when he suggested that several costly programs yielded no job placements. As demonstrated throughout this study, in many ways bridging programs are not fulfilling their desired objectives. Although the reasons surrounding the unemployment of racialized immigrants are undoubtedly complex, some authors suggest that the problems and issues tied specifically to bridging programs are at least partially responsible for the poor job search outcomes of immigrants (Wayland, 2006). For example, it has been argued that there is no national standardized model that has been developed for bridging programs. Furthermore, this lack of national standards means that each province has developed discrete frameworks and guidelines for the bridging programs located within its jurisdiction (OECD, 2006, p. 140). The end result is that the proverbial wheel is reinvented over and over again by distinct organisations.

In addition, the lack of standardization in the industry often translates into the non-recognition of bridging programs between provinces. For example, an individual who has completed a bridging program in Alberta may come to Toronto only to find their training inadmissible by provincial regulatory standards.

Another pervasive issue relates to the high cost of certain bridging programs. Since immigrants assume many substantial expenses in the process of moving, the costs of bridging programs often result in the inability of participants to meet every day financial needs. Further,
as demonstrated throughout the stories, in order to simply cover basic expenses, new immigrants to Canada often need to find any form of employment. As a result, the amount of time required to complete the bridging programs may be extended indefinitely, a factor that can contribute to both reduced financial success and general discouragement. Also, some immigrants are simply unable to undertake bridging programs as they cannot afford them.

Wassim recounted that when he was unable to afford the high cost of bridging programs, he was forced to resort to a student loan. In general, loans for bridging programs were common among the participants in my study. Since many internationally educated racialized immigrant educators come to Canada with limited savings, they must resort to loans to secure reaccreditation. Wassim had mixed success with the bridging program. While he secured a part-time academic internship through a program, Wassim reported that when his internship was over and he notified the chair of the program that he would like to continue teaching, he was informed that he was not qualified for the position because he did not possess a Canadian master’s degree.

Another major weakness in the framework of most bridging programs is their disproportionate focus on recent immigrants. Longer-term immigrants receive much less support and may even be barred from applying to programs because of the length of time they have already lived in Canada (OECD, 2006, p. 135). Radha, a former teacher, found herself numbered among those disqualified from a bridging program because of her longer residency in Canada. While she was admitted to a bridging program for internationally trained teachers, she found out later that because she had already been a resident in Canada for seven years she was ineligible for the program she had selected. Some authors have proposed that providing information to immigrants while they are in their home countries may alleviate the challenges they encounter after arriving in Canada. As a consequence, providing information about bridging programs in
advance could help to prepare immigrants for the possibility that they may need to obtain some form of retraining (McIsaac, 2003, Wayland, 2006). The absence of this information during the pre-arrival process can result in immigrants not being able to take advantage of the programs that exist. One participant of the study, Neime commented, “I knew many other immigrants who had been in Canada for as long or longer than myself. Most of them didn’t learn about bridging programs for several years.”

Lastly, it is well known that most bridging programs do not directly involve employers. However, it has been noted that the most successful bridging programs, in terms of demonstrable results, are those that involve potential employers. (OECD, 2006, p. 139) Very few bridging programs, however, make the direct involvement of employers a key component in their planning strategies and training efforts. One of this study’s participants, Taksheel, felt that employers remained relatively disconnected from bridging programs. For Taksheel, this absence suggested apathy both on the part of employers and bridging program administrators.

6.4.3 Bridging Programs as Placebo

Having outlined some of the deficiencies of bridging programs as they exist today, it is important to revisit the argument that entrenched intersectional discrimination plays a constitutive role in the experience of many immigrants in Canadian society. As previously stated, both racism and ideology are predominantly reproduced by social practices, especially by discourse. If this explanation is in fact seriously considered, then one of the most significant issues for immigrants is the attitudes and beliefs of prospective employers about immigrants. Utilizing Gillborn’s (2006) theory of policy as placebo provides an explanation for continued use of bridging programs as the main solution to challenges faced by immigrants in Canadian
society, despite evidence that they may not be meeting their desired objectives. The superficiality of policies is a central tenant for Gillborn in his paper entitled ‘Citizenship education as placebo’. He recognizes some policies as tokenism and a façade meant to deflect criticism of the treatment of racial groups. In fact, authors like Joshee (1995) believe that policies such as Canada’s ostensible multiculturalism maintain racial inequality in Canadian society. She argues that although cultural diversity policies have been meant to address issues of immigrant integration, multiculturalism policy contradicts itself by claiming the importance of cultural diversity and then denigrating the programs that were intended to achieve its objectives. Similar criticisms have been directed towards employment equity policies in Canada. For example, Goldberg (2004) outlines a few reasons why employment equity policies may have little impact. First, she takes issue with the Employment Equity Act and views its stated purpose of achieving equality in the workplace as being empty, vague and difficult to enforce. In addition, she believes that the nature of the act does not focus on the meaning of equity and only requires employers to comply if their company will not be caused undue hardship. Most importantly, Goldberg recognizes that the legislation requires employers to only produce an equity report but there are no significant ramifications for failing to comply with equity legislation. She also sees no specific agency with a mandate to enforce equity offences. Dei (2008) writes that at the axiological level, the ideas of “treating everybody the same and social justice for all are heralded” (p. 26). He believes that these understandings actually complicate racism because the real material and political effects and consequences are masked. Henry and Tator (2005) contribute to the discussion by stating, “public sector agencies conduct extensive consultations and then fail to translate their knowledge into substantive initiatives” (p. 2).
In applying the same theory of policy as placebo to bridging programs, I argue that by offering bridging programs, attention is deflected from the systemic issues that may be causing the failure of immigrants in Canadian society. In the face of overwhelming evidence that points to a rising number of immigrants living in poverty in this country, it can be assumed that bridging programs have had little impact on the employability and socio-economic positioning on those who have taken them. Such a fact brings to the forefront the concerns that bridging programs may continue to bear as little fruit as other policies. Taking into consideration the argument that someone born and educated in Canada is often viewed as a better candidate for employment based on existing prevailing discourse, bridging programs for immigrants may not be the solution to ending immigrant woes.

This discussion chapter presented the pervasive discrimination that many immigrants experience, both in the job market and in Canadian society in general. Whether discrimination is explicit or systemic, its effects are lasting and substantial. While in places the twelve narratives that comprise this study uphold the popular belief that success and opportunity are available to immigrants in Canada, the majority of my study’s participants described profound negative challenges and acute marginalization. Among the participants in my study, explicit experiences of discrimination were not limited to single discrimination factors, but rather multiple intersecting factors. Compounding the challenges encountered in an unreceptive and hostile job market, many of the participants in my study reported that bridging programs and related employment assistance programs had little to no positive impact on their job search experience. It is clear from the above analysis that Canadian society must endeavour to fundamentally restructure its relationship with racialized immigrant educators.
Chapter 7

A Future for Racialized Immigrants in Canada

7.1 Conclusions and Considerations

As I contemplate the stories told by my study’s participants, I am reminded of a favourite poem of mine written by Samuel Taylor Coleridge in 1798 entitled *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. A line in the poem that for me most aptly portrays the common desperation expressed by my study’s participants bemoans “Water, water, everywhere, Nor any drop to drink”. The racialized immigrants in my study resemble the Mariner through the effects they endure in a land of plenty where opportunity is there for the taking, but not for them. The albatross around each of their necks presents a constant and inescapable barrier to personal success. Much like the Mariner, they remain longing for a distant homeland and isolated in a new land that resembles only slightly the welcoming ideal that was promised to them as earlier they planned their new lives.

My research into the experiences of racialized internationally trained educators seeking to re-enter their professions in Canada confirms many of the existing assumptions in the growing anti-discrimination literature. However, more importantly, my research also points to deficiencies and shortcomings which have gone unrecognized in recent scholarship. As noted during the theoretical framework chapter, recent theoretical approaches such as intersectionality, transnationality and integrative anti-racism have provided scholars with the intellectual guidance needed to improve and develop their governing assumptions regarding discrimination and marginalization of immigrants, yet very few known Canadian studies have attempted to apply these theoretical approaches to the study of racialized immigrants.
In spite of this deficit, recent tendencies in Canadian journalism in particular and popular consciousness in general, have brought the immigrant plight into mainstream discussions. As Goldberg (2006) emphasized, in the last decade major Canadian newspapers have attempted to draw attention to the experiences of ‘PhD taxi-drivers’—a cultural coinage that refers to highly skilled professional immigrants who have been marginalized by poor settlement programs (p. 91). Royson (2005), of the Toronto star, writes that in coming decades it is important to “help make Toronto the destination of choice for highly skilled immigrants, not home to the world’s most educated taxi drivers” (p. 2). Such expressions suggest the growing enthusiasm in Canada for more research into the experiences and challenges faced by Canadian immigrants in the settlement process. At the same time, I have argued throughout this research that in spite of these developments, the notion of the “PhD taxi drivers” may feed into existing stereotypes about immigrants. I believe that my study has dug deeper and helps to attach emotions to statistics or anecdotal terms like the notion of the “PhD taxi driver”. Due to the extensive time I spent with the participants, I was able to present truths about the experiences of internationally educated racialized immigrants in Canada that had never been developed in an academic context. Achieving this would have been impossible with quantitative research. Indeed, I wish to continue to tell their stories as there are many more chapters of their lives that are left untold. For example, a more thorough understanding of the role of transnational communities could offer new solutions to old questions surrounding belonging and inclusion in Canadian society. Theorists such as Vertovec (2009) and Levitt (2001) have emphasized that recent transformations in global culture have occasioned a decline in the role of the nation state in determining the lives and practices of immigrants and other ‘transnational’ individuals. Within the global economy, according to transnational theory, social bonds developed through
transnational family ties and transnational religious traditions offer alternative support structures to those offered by the state. Many of my research participants described their love for their birth countries, the connection to family members left behind and the connection they felt with other immigrants who could identify with their challenges. They also spoke about the support they received from immigrant social structures. I propose that with better understanding of the role of transnational communities, it might be possible to encourage the formation of transnational support structures to offset some of their challenges, including the feelings of exclusion and isolation expressed by some this study’s participants.

Further, I strongly believe that my study can serve as a valuable resource for Canadian policy makers in coming decades, especially in relation to recent theoretical examinations of ‘hospitality’ in the context of racialized immigrants. Derrida (1997) presented ‘hospitality’ as the paradoxical practice of welcoming the ‘other.’ It is a practice which develops, according to Derrida, in both a restricted and an unrestricted form. Reformulating Derrida’s position, Stronks (2012) asks: “Does hospitality start with an unquestioned welcome? Or does hospitality imply that the alien should be interrogated? Is hospitality given to another person before he identifies himself and before it has been established that he is a subject, or a subject of law?” (p. 75). Within the context of immigration and integration policy, we can ask whether hospitality towards immigrants should provide a welcome that contains the ‘unconditional promise’ of the same rights and privileges as a citizen, such as equality and freedom of opportunity. Or should the immigrant be welcomed conditionally, with qualifications, restrictions, and regulations? (Kelly, 2011, p. 197). Kelly (2011) suggested that while international codes of rights grant unqualified privileges such as the “right to self-determination” and the free pursuit of “economic, social and cultural development” to all people—including citizens and non-citizens—within practical
political terms this often proves impossible. Specifically, “within a democratic system such as a liberal-democracy this commitment to self-determination and freedom is subject to conditionality, hindering the freedom, in particular, of those who fall outside of the body-politic” such as immigrants (p. 197).

Such conflicts are manifested in the contemporary Canadian political example. The Canadian multicultural belief implies an ‘unrestricted hospitality’ which includes the ethical promise that Canadian society will not only accept immigrants, but also strive to confer on them complete rights to self determination such as economic, social and cultural freedom. Yet at the same time, multiculturalism also implies a restricted form of hospitality since immigration policies and support programs are developed in accordance with the economic and political priorities of the state. In my opinion within Canada’s contemporary neo-liberal framework, immigrants are often welcomed according to what is most economically and politically viable, not what is most ethical.

In coming years, Canadian society will continue to negotiate the forms of hospitality it chooses to extend to immigrants. As the qualitative research in my study suggests, there ought to be an ethical obligation in Canada to take further steps toward the welcoming and inclusion of all immigrants. According to Skogen and Mulatris (2011), unrestricted hospitality is predicated on the “ability to maintain empathy” and “human dignity” between individuals and their hosts. Westmoreland (2008) has emphasized, it can even be said that “ethics relies on hospitality so much that one cannot speak of ethics without speaking of hospitality” (pp. 2-3).

I have also argued throughout this study that decades of multiculturalism policies have not benefitted racialized immigrants and do not target the real causes of the immigrant woes
during the job search process. Hence, I believe that it is important for current and future policy makers to encourage the development of a society predicated on the principles of hospitality. That is, placing the success of immigrants not only on the individual but also on members of Canadian society. Recognizing that the success of every Canadian irrespective of race is often dependent on how welcoming and how understanding other members of society are to their needs. This understanding provides an opportunity both to assist immigrant communities, and to furnish them with the tools to realize their expectations of life in Canada. In addition, as educational institutions and other power-holders in Canadian society develop their understanding of immigrant educators through qualitative studies such as mine, new avenues will be opened for dialogue and understanding. By forging a more in-depth account of the emotions that accompany challenges encountered by racialized internationally trained immigrant educators in Canada, barriers to dialogue and understanding will potentially soften and Canadians may begin to feel comfortable in extending a level of hospitality towards immigrants that embraces their collective impact on nation-building in the twenty-first century.

In my opinion part of a new discourse related to how immigrants in Canada are welcomed and allowed to take up full citizenship can take its roots from discussions that have occurred throughout the history of mankind as individuals have variously contemplated the human condition. And part of that contemplation has centered on a given society’s treatment of those who are not native-born. The New Testament letter to the Hebrews 13:2, for instance, states “Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels”. And during Passover, Jewish families set a place for Elijah in case he comes, but also as a symbolic gesture of open hospitality. These prescribed accommodations for hospitality evoke a fear in the believer that anything less than an unconditional adherence to acceptance of strangers could
evoke the wrath of their individual Gods. In a broader philosophical context, Immanuel Kant’s
third article for a perpetual peace declared “The Law of World Citizenship Shall Be Limited to
Conditions of Universal Hospitality” (p. 334). Kant viewed this to be a world right and
postulated that “the human race can gradually be brought closer and closer to a constitution
establishing a world citizenship” (p. 335). Kant believed that universal hospitality was the right
of every human being and that it was the right of the stranger not to be treated as an enemy. He
added “One may refuse to receive him when this can be done without causing his destruction;
but so long as he peacefully occupies his place; one may not treat him with hostility” (p. 334).
Derrida (2001) clarified that Kant placed limits on the right of residence of the visitor and that
this right “must be made the object of a particular treaty between states” (p. 21) and that by
prescribing hospitality as a law subjected it to dependence on state sovereignty.

Derrida (2002) declared hospitality to be “inconceivable and incomprehensible” (p. 362),
and in his 2000 production *Of Hospitality*, he pronounced the law of hospitality to be a paradox
that was both “pervertible and perverting” (p. 25). Derrida believed that absolute hospitality
could not possibly materialize in limited terms or under the jurisdiction of a system of laws. If an
individual extends hospitality because he or she is duty-bound, or due to adherence to a law, then
absolute hospitality has not occurred. Zlomislic (2004) elucidated “If we decide that everyone
will be able to enter my space, my home, my city, my country, my language then there is a
chance that the worst may happen” (p. 5). He suggested that to accept hospitality as an ethical
societal-value brings risk, with the understanding that the ‘other’ can arrive unannounced with
the host unprepared, but fully willing to extend welcome and to accept whatever consequences
that may unfold in doing so.
If Canadians are enticed to examine more closely this nation’s current treatment of immigrants in relation to immigration policy and process, it would behove them to look first towards current world situations that appear to reveal an underbelly of human nature far removed from a Kantian ideal. Examples are not difficult to find. In the modern day context, Rosello (2002) contended that Europe, and especially France, share with the rest of the Western world an inclination to view racialized immigrants as suspect and deserving of contempt, with the issue of immigration emerging as an unsavoury political football. Jelloun (1999) expressed his deep regret over a growing racist undercurrent in France that he felt transgressed a fundamental and telltale mark of civilization in terms of hospitality to the stranger that he concurred with Kant to be a universal right. With the irony of his selected title, *French Hospitality*, not wasted on his readers, Jelloun confronted racist issues that are in full bloom in France ranging from specific conflicts between Islam and Judeo-Christian thought, to the general distain rained down upon non-European minorities across Europe today. He expressed dismay over a modern France in which a political party such as the National Front could make broad gains in voter support based on a platform that clearly espoused racist views that very often settled on the immigrant as scapegoat for all forms of economic and societal malaises besetting the nation. Saunders (2012) writing in Canada’s Globe and Mail cited 20 percent of the electorate in France as ready to support Marine Le Pen, leader of the National Front, based on views verging on Holocaust denial while promising to eliminate immigration to France and to create a veritable fortresses at her borders. Jalloun’s (1999) plea to policymakers at the end of his book focused on the need to stop the invention of laws to restrict hospitality and instead place energy towards the development of policies that form links between morals and the rights of all citizens, immigrants and native born, to acceptance and equality.
What can Canada learn from the European circumstance relative to treatment of racialized immigrants? Should Canada be painted with the same racist brush as that used to portray the lack of ethical stance attributed to the West in the treatment of racialized immigrants? As suggested in a number of instances in this dissertation, a new discourse surrounding the lived experiences of the Canadian immigrant holds prospect as studies like mine accommodate their voice. Amidst the rhetoric heard throughout Canada celebrating the positive effects of its multicultural heritage, this voice, strengthen by an informed collective, I believe can succeed in affecting a revised impression of Canadian hospitality, and ultimately, an enlightened perspective on the part of politicians and their policy making focus. The threat to Canada’s reputation and long term economic health inherent in a failure to self-analyze and/or failure to recognize the mistakes of other Western nations is immense. In France today, fear mongering has given rise to radical views seized upon and encouraged by a racist fringe that could ultimately lead that country to a level of intolerance and subsequent action to match the insalubrious outcomes created by the worst of history’s despotic national leaders. Inspired by great thinkers from the past, a Canadian hospitality discourse can materialize that is fitting to a world that is globalized far beyond Kant’s 18th century conception of earth bound citizens who he stated “by virtue of their common possession of the earth, where, as a globe, they cannot infinitely disperse and hence must finally tolerate the presence of each other” (p. 335).

A full acceptance of immigrants or the undertaking of unconditional hospitality by a particular nation represents a perilous risk for any and all supporters whether they are part of an enlightened construct, or one of a number of courageous individuals. The current political climate and sustained unrest in France over immigration practice detailed above would bear this out. Nevertheless, visionaries invariably materialize within society to shoulder a cause that is
right for humanity, often as they and others reel from a precipice that houses the dark side of human nature. And as is often the case, stimulus for forward thinking emanates from educators and scholars within a society who manage to see through the emotional clutter and facilitate change. A major ally of societal change throughout the history of nations has been post-secondary institutions. Although the current state within Canadian post-secondary institutions would not reflect unconditional hospitality à la Kant, genuine discussions that resemble the tip of an iceberg are taking place. I recently attended a conference for educators and industry hosted by the Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC) billed as Colleges and Institutes Supporting the Integration of Immigrants into the Canadian Labour Market. Various initiatives in support of the settlement and welfare of the Canadian immigrant were profiled including a Federal program entitled The Canadian Immigration Integration Program (CIIP) that features an overseas orientation for perspective immigrants to the Canadian labour market, and dialogue related to a holistic approach to serving immigrants which would include both financial and inclusive emotional/life support to regain former esteem and societal status. If one were to view this conference as a sign that the post-secondary education sector in Canada is beginning to tip towards a state of unconditional hospitality, one would be encouraged, but at the same time realize there is a long way to go. Full hospitality from Canadian educational institutions would mean full recognition of educational credentials completed in the applicant’s country of origin, would fully support financially and emotionally the immigrant and family through a transition stage, and would advocate for the immigrant within the labour market and provide ongoing coaching once a job is acquired. This would see an end to bridging programs with more focus placed on support for transnational communities and initiatives that educate all Canadians of the socio-economic impact of discriminatory practices. Hence, full hospitality would encourage the
unconditional acceptance of racialized immigrants in Canadian society. To sustain this message, studies such as mine represent important parts of an emerging societal conscience related to the treatment of the Canadian immigrant that holds promise to ultimately force Canadian citizens and institutions to accept human accountability for those to whom we extend invitation, but fail as hosts.

This study asked questions specific to the job search experiences of racialized internationally trained educators who have immigrated to Canada, and as a consequence, chronicled stories of individuals who dared to dream of a better life for themselves and their families in a country reputed as fair and accepting, only to bear the devastating effects of discrimination and exclusion. The unfortunate reality begs us to focus on the fact that a richly endowed and talented segment of the Canadian population remains inexplicitly suppressed and unable to unleash a collective potential that they know in their hearts they richly deserve to achieve and given the opportunity, would generously give to their new country. To fully understand the spectrum of the immigrant’s plight, the study placed past and present immigration policies at the centre of the discussion. As is demonstrated throughout this research, the larger set of immigration policies, which in the Canadian context includes integration policies, are directly connected to what can and cannot be done in a sector like post-secondary education. Hence, a discussion on full hospitality and the immigrant’s plight cannot occur in a silo and cannot occur without first understanding how wider immigration policies past and present impact immigrant integration. For example, Joshee and Johnson (2007) explain that policies are not constructed and do not exist independently of each other. They use the notion of a policy web to explain how policies are connected to one another. The authors state that the rings of the web represent the different levels where policies are made on multiple levels and in multiple forms. Rings are
connected by cross-cutting threads. This represents the idea that different policies may share an area of focus but may not necessarily be complementary. They go on to state that the points where the threads meet the rings represent policy texts that have been constructed as a result of historical struggles. Keeping the notion of the policy web in mind, I reiterate that the findings of this study must be understood within the wider context of Canadian immigration policies. The process of change will be hampered if as a society we do not first understand how national immigration policies play a central role in Canadian society and affects the policies of core institutions like educational institutions.
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