

Disposable Qualifications, Disposable Lives:
Examining the Labour Market Experiences of
Foreign-Educated Racialized Immigrant Women

By

Lisa Chinchamie

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Department of Social Justice Education
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
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Abstract

This qualitative research study examines how the Labour Market Integration (LMI) site constitutes a site of ongoing colonial violence and spirit injury, where race plays a central role in legitimizing the politics of credential recognition, in which Foreign Educated Racialized Immigrant Women (FERIW) are evicted from the category “qualified” in Canada. My analysis draws upon concepts of racial capitalism and structural violence to locate the acts of eviction that FERIW are subjected to within the LMI space in Canada and the consequences and impacts of this eviction. I argue that racialized immigration on the move to Canada represents the human face of Canada’s ongoing nation-building and economic policy agenda. The LMI space reinforces and reproduces the colonial racial hierarchical order in Canada. Based on qualitative interviews with 12 FERIW, I explore how within the LMI space, racialized immigrant women are stripped of their foreign credentials, discursively framed as unqualified and deficient, and repurposed as a source of cheap labour within the political economy. Delegitimization carries severe material and socio-economic consequences. The intersectionality of race, ethnicity, gender, class, and immigrant status results in FERIW becoming “ghettoized” into low-paying, precarious, low-end jobs, and, for many of these women, low income and poverty. This work represents a decolonial work articulated through anti-colonial and feminist anti-racist theory, to present a nuanced historical account of the experiences of gendered racialized immigrant labour within global and local structures that look very similar to the old structures of colonialism.

Dedication

I dedicate this work to the incredible participants of this study whose voices and narratives help empower this work. Thank you for trusting me with your stories and counter-knowledge. Your strength and resilience inspire me. And to countless other racialized immigrant women professionals who are navigating life in a paradoxical space of welcome and non-recognition in Canada.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The overweening, defining event of the modern world is the mass movement of raced populations, beginning with the largest forced transfer of people in the history of the world: slavery. The consequences of which transfer have determined all the wars following it as well as the current ones being waged on every continent. The contemporary world's work has become policing, halting, forming policy regarding and trying to administer the movement of people. Nationhood—the very definition of citizenship—is constantly being demarcated and redemarcated in response to exiles, refugees, Gastarbeiter, immigrants, migrations, the displaced, the fleeing, and the besieged. The anxiety of belonging is entombed within the central metaphors in the discourse on globalism, transnationalism, nationalism, the break-up of federations, the rescheduling of alliances, and the fictions of sovereignty. Yet these figurations of nationhood and identity are frequently as raced themselves as the originating racial house that defined them. (Morrison, 2012, p. 10)

In this chapter, I outline my reasons for undertaking this study and provide a background to the study, including a current snapshot of immigration in Canada. I describe my statement of the research problem, introduce the objectives of the study and my research questions, and identify my location in the study. I also discuss the significance of this study. This chapter concludes by describing the thesis layout and structure of the chapters.

1.1 Background to the Study

This study examines the labour market experiences of Foreign-Educated Racialized Immigrant Women (FERIW), whose credentials are from their countries of origin, to better understand the relationship between foreign credentials and labour market integration and outcomes for immigrant women and the impacts of their labour market experiences on the lives of these women. Canada is discursively framed as a country of immense wealth and promise, where immigrants are welcomed and valued for their diversity—a country with multiculturalism

enshrined as an official state policy and narrative. According to the Government of Canada (2023a),

Immigration is an important part of the government of Canada's plan to keep our economy growing. If it weren't for immigrants, many employers would have trouble finding enough qualified workers to fill available jobs. This is because Canadians are living longer and having fewer children. There are more people retiring than there are young Canadians entering the job market. This also means there won't be as many workers paying taxes to support our social services, such as pensions and health care.... The majority of immigrants who come to Canada are selected for their ability to contribute to our economy. When immigrants succeed, Canada succeeds. (1m:0s to 1m:41s)

Therefore, it is critical to ask, are immigrants really “succeeding” in Canada? On the one hand, Canada is a member of the G7, representing the top global economies, and is perceived as one of the world's most developed and affluent countries. Canada has the tenth-largest economy in the world and basks in its international reputation for being an inclusive, liberal, and welcoming country. On the other hand, 10 of the 12 participants I interviewed for this study were not working in their profession. Over the period 2001 to 2016, the number of newcomer university-educated immigrants working in jobs requiring a degree decreased from 46% to 38% (Statistics Canada, 2022).

For immigrant women, the differences in labour market outcomes are typically more extensive when compared to both immigrant men and Canadian-born women. In 2017, the employment rate for immigrant women compared to their Canadian-born counterparts was 72.0% compared to 82.0%, and their unemployment rate was almost double at 7.2% compared to 4.3%. For newer immigrants, the situation is even worse. Newcomer immigrants, identified as being here for five years or less, face even greater hardships in labour market outcomes and experience higher unemployment rates. In 2017, the unemployment rate for newcomer immigrant women was 8.5% (Statistics Canada, 2018).

1.2 Research Context and Statement of the Problem

Racialized immigration on the move to Canada represents the human face of Canada's ongoing nation-building and economic policy agenda. The state's neoliberal immigration policies serve as a strategic tool for nation-building (Chatterjee, 2015; Green & Green, 1999; Ku, 2012). Just as imperialism was deemed essential for sustaining capitalism, immigration is the fuel required to sustain neoliberal globalization, the contemporary iteration of capitalism, and is considered critical to maintaining and expanding the Canadian economy (Arat-Koç, 2012; Choudry & Smith, 2016; Syed, 2015). The Canadian state relied on approximately 300,000 immigrants annually for the period 2016 to 2021 to sustain its economy. This number increased sharply to close to 500,000 in 2021/2022 (Government of Canada, 2023b; Harald, 2014).

Canada benefits from one of the highest immigration rates in the world, with Asia representing the largest source of immigrants, followed by Africa (Statistics Canada, 2022c). Immigration is seen as vital to fuel growth and prosperity in Canada. In 2019, over 80% of Canada's population growth resulted from permanent and non-permanent immigration, with around 75% of immigrants being admitted under the economic class category (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, 2023, Quick Facts section, para. 3). Immigrants contribute to Canada's economic growth and the rich diversity of culture and civil society. Immigrants also offset the declining birth rates in Canada, with 2019 birth rates being the lowest rate ever recorded (Statistics Canada, 2019). In charting the course for Canada's economic recovery from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, Canadian officials are relying on current and future immigrants to lead the recovery. It is anticipated that Canada's population growth will come to rely exclusively on immigration by early 2030 (Mendicino, 2020, p. 5).

Immigrants flock to Canada based on its global reputation as a just and liberal democracy that values freedom, diversity, and equality. National immigration advertising and promotional campaigns illustrate multiculturalism in action—beautiful, appealing pictures of diverse individuals and families beaming and happy to be in the *Land of the Free and Fair*. All the participants in this study described being attracted to Canada because of its reputation of being a place where everyone is welcome and has an equal opportunity to succeed: a place where their children would have a bright future.

According to the National Advisory Council on Poverty (2020), approximately 3.98 million people live in poverty in Canada (p. 15). Racialized people, including immigrants, disproportionately live in the poorest neighbourhoods, and racialized women continue to earn less than men even though they have higher education levels. Racialized immigrant women earn considerably less than Canadian women—over 38% less (Drolet, 2022). The situation is worse for recent female immigrants. In medicine, law, and teaching, only one-quarter of immigrants educated outside Canada work in the fields in which they are trained (Statistics Canada, 2014). In addition, newer female immigrants with a university degree are 14.5% more likely to be unemployed than Canadian women with a degree (Statistics Canada, 2015). Furthermore, recent immigrants have the highest rates of shelter poverty at 31% (Statistics Canada, 2018).

In light of this alarming landscape for racialized immigrant professionals, this study explores how the labour market integration (LMI) space constitutes a site of ongoing colonial violence where race is weaponized to legitimize the politics of credential recognition. Through neoliberal gatekeeping practices to control access to professions, FERIWs are evicted from the category of *qualified* in Canada. I examine how the foreign credentials of racialized immigrant women in Canada are made disposable through non-recognition in the Canadian labour market and explore how this constitutes a form of violence that is being inflicted on these immigrants by the Canadian state. While violence is typically associated with physical harm, it is essential to recognize its multiple contextual meanings. Adopting Galtung's (1981) notion of structural violence as "the systematic exclusion of a group from the resources needed to develop their full human potential," this study designates the LMI space as a site of violence where FERIWs suffer the invalidation, dispossession, and *disposing* of their credentials and identities. The LMI site is embedded within hierarchical colonial structures and systems that perpetuate colonial violence against racialized bodies. This deskilling and eviction constitute violent acts, dislocating FERIWs from their personal and professional identities. Colonial violence is reworked, rewritten, reproduced, and perpetuated through institutional structures of settler colonial states (Razack, 1994; Thobani, 2007).

Within the LMI space, this violence determines whose credentials are valid and whose are deemed disposable. Employing a Fanonian lens to analyze race and colonial violence, this study contextualizes the violence of eviction and its impacts on FERIWs as multifaceted including psychological, structural, systemic, epistemic, and spiritual violence enacted on both the bodies

and psyches of FERIW. As Fanon (1967) argues, “violence under colonialism is a deeper, cultural, epistemic, and discursive phenomenon that supports the internal consistency of colonial power” (cited in Ruiz, 2019, p. 237). Fanon further highlights that colonial violence is borne out of racialized exploitation and denigration, such that “what divides the world is first and foremost what species, what race one belongs to” (p. xiii). Similarly, Mbembe (2003) characterizes the “living death space” of necropolitical violence emphasizing that colonial violence is ongoing manifesting in new shapes and contours including racialized forms of economic devastation and exploitation embedded within the global economic order. Within this space, sovereign power determines life and death through direct and indirect forms of violence, including exclusion and eviction, where racialized immigrant labour is repurposed for the neoliberal economy and state. The ongoing violence that FERIW encounter in the LMI site in Canada has to be located within the historical and contemporary colonial racial capitalist system, currently signified by neoliberal globalization. The colonial racial capitalist system has historically been deeply connected to death including the “living death” spaces of the plantations (Agamben, 2003). Disposable populations have historically been a feature of racial capitalism (Darian-Smith, 2021) and continue to be a feature of contemporary neoliberal capitalism. FERIW’s disposable credentials and lives are a function of the racial political and economic order.

Aligned with the violence of ongoing colonial practices, through “border imperialism” (Walia, 2014, p. 8), the LMI site functions as a physical and discursive border that prevents many immigrant professionals from crossing over into high-skilled jobs due to their raced credentials. Within this contested border space, a pervasive form of violence is inscribed on the bodies of FERIW, manifested through processes of deskilling and retooling for the low-skilled, cheap labour economy. Borders have become highly contested and complex sites of contestation, militarization, exclusion, and fortification (Maestri & Hughes, 2017; Walia, 2014), as globalization has spurred the global movement of people within and across territories. Borders function as both physical demarcations and conceptual constructs, and the “texture” of borders has increasingly shifted over the last number of decades (Walters, 2006, cited in Maestri & Hughes, 2017, p. 634). Borders have increasingly become patrolled through bordering practices, including walls, surveillance, violence, and incarceration. At the same time, borders “increasingly operate at the scale of the body” (p. 634) not just through surveillance and control but discursively through differential inclusion and labour market exclusion. Within the LMI space, borders function as sorting mechanisms, reinforcing hierarchical inclusion and

determining the rights of individuals who are differentially integrated into the nation, including skilled, unskilled, immigrant, and *Canadian* (Anderson et al., 2009; Reitz, 2001).

By positioning the LMI site as a space of ongoing colonial violence, and integrating Walia's (2014) work on border imperialism to examine the violence of the LMI border space, I demonstrate how borders are inextricably linked to notions of space and who can access and occupy space. Space functions to produce marginalized subjects, typically discussed in the literature about the proliferation of camps, ghettos, and detention facilities but also the spatiality of "unwanted mobilities" in the form of migrants, refugees, and immigrants expelled from the LMI site (Maestri & Hughes, 2017, p. 626). The rights and privileges of "Citizenship is indeed inextricably and irreducibly spatial, and strongly linked to the material and discursive dimensions of different geographical places" (p. 626). In Canada, race, gender, class and ethnicity serve as organizing principles to produce desirable and undesirable subjects and race "continues to be 'mapped', both materially and symbolically, onto Canadian cities" (Teelucksingh, 2006, p. 1) and onto racialized bodies within the LMI space. If, aligned with Fanon's historical racial schema (Fanon, 1986, as cited in Ahmed, 2007b), race and space are mutually constitutive, with space reflexively shaped by colonialism and race, then FERIW are prevented from entering the high-skilled labour market space (HSLM) space. They are evicted from these spaces. I label the picture-perfect, marketable version of Canadian multiculturalism, food and festival diversity, which is discursively portrayed through state narratives and policies while reinforcing who belongs and who is an outsider within the nation (Bannerji, 2000; Razack, 2005).

1.3 Learning Objectives

Analyzing the labour market experiences of FERIW, whose intersectional identities adversely impacted their settlement experiences in Canada, this study specifically sought to:

1. Gain an in-depth understanding of the intersections of race, ethnicity, immigrant status and credentials with the established systems and practices of credential recognition within the Canadian labour market.
2. Critically assess the role of the Canadian state and its historical state formation within the larger context of historical and contemporary forms of capitalist accumulation by dispossession in the ongoing marginalization of FERIW within the LMI site.

3. Understand how credential dispossession impacts the socio-economic, health, and well-being of FERIW and the broader impacts on their settlement and integration in Canada.

1.4 Research Questions

The central questions this study seek to answer are:

1. Does race and ethnicity impact and legitimize the system and structure of credential recognition and, thus, labour market outcomes in which foreign-educated racialized immigrant women are evicted from the category of *qualified*?
2. How does this dispossession of the credentials of foreign-educated racialized immigrant women constitute a form of violence that is being inflicted on these women by the Canadian state?
3. What is the impact of the devaluation and commodification of the labour of foreign-educated racialized immigrant women on their lives?

1.5 Subject Location

My entry point into this study is rooted in my immigrant experiences in Canada as an East Indian woman from the formerly colonized country of Trinidad in the Caribbean. I chose this research, but this research also chose me. My day-to-day lived experiences, personally and professionally, allow me to experience and examine how tropes, such as insider-outsider, diversity, multiculturalism, and visible minorities, manifest themselves in the politics of immigration, citizenship, and accreditation. I worked with, volunteered with, and advised other racialized immigrant women through my past role in student services at a major university in Toronto and through volunteer teaching with immigrant and refugee groups. During my employment, I would interact with many racialized immigrants who came to inquire about the availability of programs that would facilitate their ability to practice their professions in Canada. This included medical doctors, psychologists, and teachers. The reality was always the same. In many cases, they would be required to start over and retake their degrees from a Canadian institution, to have a reasonable chance to work in their profession. The experiences of family and friends reflected similar realities. I found this incomprehensible and unjust. In my volunteer work with

newcomers, the experiences were similar. Immigrant settlement agencies (ISAs) are spaces of frenzied activity, emotions and energy. One of the most pressing concerns and needs of newcomer immigrants is how can they practice their professions in Canada. The tapestry of my history and experiences has provided me with in-depth knowledge and insights about the experiences of FERIW navigating the labour market space in Canada.

The situation for racialized immigrants is deteriorating rapidly in Canada and even more so for racialized immigrant women. The creation of a gendered, racialized underclass of immigrants in Canada, through the mobilization of gendered immigrant labour for capital accumulation, needs to be situated within the context of the structural economic violence unleashed upon these women through the deskilling and dispossession of their credentials. In Canada, my identity is imposed. I am labelled a visible minority. I was never familiar with this terminology until immigrating to Canada. I do not fit neatly into one of the demographic boxes. Sivanandan (1982) tells us that “racialized groups wear their passports on their faces” (cited in Thobani, 2007, p. 101). My passport is read on my face as Indian, Sri Lankan, Bangladeshi, or Pakistani—imposed identities. I occupy an in-between space in Canada, neither belonging nor not belonging: what Homi Bhabha (2012) has referred to as “unhomeliness” (p. 9), which many immigrants experience as they carve out new identities and spaces in the diaspora. Questions relating to being labelled an immigrant and a visible minority, like so many other racialized citizens of Canada, despite residing in Canada for decades, have driven this research. The disconnect between accepting immigrants into Canada, and simultaneously invalidating their credentials continues to be deeply unjust and constitutes a human rights violation. We urgently need to challenge these practices and, more importantly, to resist and eliminate them. I undertook this research to better understand the violence that was being inflicted on racialized immigrants within the LMI space. It became crucial for me to examine how a country that is self-styled as a beacon of democracy, human rights, equality, and diversity, could be actively engaging in the devaluation and deskilling of immigrants, subjecting many to poverty and marginalization.

Dionne Brand’s (2005) words are apt here, also being a native of Trinidad:

And on the sidewalks, after they’ve emerged from the stations, after being sandpapered by the jostling and scraping that a city like this does, all the lives they’ve hoarded, all the ghosts they’ve carried, all the inversions they’ve made for protection, all the scars and marks and records for recognition—the whole

heterogeneous baggage falls out with each step on the pavement. There's so much spillage.

We wear and carry our heterogenous selves, identities, and experiences when navigating life in fixed and new spaces as racialized immigrants in Canada. The aesthetically pleasing contours and language of diversity and multiculturalism deployed in Canadian state narratives and celebrated by the citizens of its *imagined community* attract and trap many racialized immigrants into performative state-sanctioned diversity. State-sanctioned diversity functions as a tool to manage and control immigrant communities, reproducing and reinforcing hierarchical colonial structural inequities (Bannerji, 2000; Dua et al., 2005; Thobani, 2008). Anderson (2002, as cited in Teelucksingh, 2006, p. 5) argues that one of the factors contributing to the enduring significance of race as a key societal organizing principle is that the ability to racialize bodies continues to be a critical mechanism for maintaining White political power. Similarly, Henry et al. (2017) assert that “the process of racialization is the *modus operandi* of racism” (p. 4). I would underscore that the power to mark bodies as different and inferior underpins the global economic system. Racism and capitalism are deeply intertwined and have deeply connected histories. The rise of capitalism in Western societies, particularly during the colonial era, coincided with the transatlantic slave trade and the exploitation of Indigenous Peoples (Lumba, 2021; Valdez 2021; White, 2020). The world economic system was and continues to be sustained by and interwoven with racialized forms of exploitation and inequality. Race, gender, and ethnicity are mapped onto the LMI space, shaping and delimiting opportunities for FERIW who are evicted from the LMI space because of their racialization.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study represents more than an academic journey. It constitutes a decolonial, social justice, human-rights-inspired academic and political project that seeks to promote systemic change by challenging and disrupting the status quo that strips FERIW of their *raced* credentials and confines them to the unskilled and low-skilled labour market. My use of an integrative discursive framework consisting of anti-colonial and anti-racist theories advocates for social transformation through an “action-oriented strategy” to confront and unearth “racism, White power, and White privilege” (Dei, 2008, p. 477). The oppositional knowledge that participants shared along with the recommendations described in Chapter 8 underscore the action-oriented, political project that this study constitutes.

This study builds on the existing body of literature on the labour market experiences of FERIW and makes an important contribution to the research on the health impacts stemming from the deskilling of professional immigrant women—an area that has received limited scholarly attention to date. This work makes two original contributions to the field of labour market integration studies. It identifies the deskilling and dispossession of FERIW's credentials as colonial violence and positions this violence within the context of ongoing colonialism. The second original contribution of this research is through its framing of the violence of credential dispossession as spirit injury, which adversely impacts the essence and psyche of FERIW. This work also contributes to the LMI literature by examining how the LMI site functions as both a physical and discursive border of violence that shuts out FERIW through the dispossession of their raced credentials, expertise and identities.

1.7 Organization of the Thesis

In this introductory chapter, I stated why I undertook this research and described the research problem. I also located myself in the study. Chapter 2 historicizes the labour market experiences of FERIW by tracing its roots to the origin of Canada as a White settler nation and its history of exclusionary immigration and nation-building. Chapter 3 explores the LMI literature, in the context of the socio-economic challenges FERIW encounter. Chapter 4 introduces the discursive framework employed in this study. In Chapter 5, I introduce the research methodologies and methods used in this study, including data collection and analysis techniques. The participants of the study are also introduced in Chapter 5. In Chapters 6 and 7, I present and engage with the research data and findings of the study. In Chapter 8, the final chapter, I summarize the research and present my recommendations, and conclusion.

1.8 Glossary of Terms

- *Credentials*: Credentials typically refer to academic or educational qualifications and or certifications such as degrees, certificates, and diplomas. Credentials can also mean professional certification or licensing for particular occupations.
- *Foreign*: I employ the term foreign rather than international to mean external, connotating strange and different, not belonging, from somewhere else.

- *Foreign-educated*: Refers to immigrants who have received their education and professional training from their country of origin, typically seen as an undeveloped or Third World country.
- *High-skilled labour market*: High-skilled work typically requires specialized training, professional certification, university degree(s), and professional experience in a field or trade. The Department of Employment and Social Development Canada has developed a tiered, hierarchical structure to categorize skilled labour for immigration purposes, the National Occupational Classification. High-skilled work is typically classified within the top five tiers including (a) senior management; (b) business: finance and administration; (c) natural and applied sciences, (d) health; and (e) education and law occupations (Choi et al., 2021).
- *Labour market integration*: Refers to immigrants' ability and access to participate in the labour market, and work in jobs commensurate with their skills and credentials (see Guo 2019; Huot et al., 2016).
- *Othering*: Producing strangers who do not belong because of factors such as race, ethnicity, culture, nationality, language, accent, and immigrant status compared to a national subject who is White and a true citizen of the nation (see Bhabha, 2012; Spivak, 1999).
- *Racialized*: A process that imbues social and thus racial meanings to skin colour and bodies that are non-White, ascribing racial identities to bodies and dividing groups according to factors, including skin colour, ethnicity, culture, nationality, and language, and marking them for unequal treatment (see Ahmed, 2002; Dei, 1996; Henry et al., 2017).
- *Whiteness*: The normalization and valorization of White racial identity, which becomes a stand-in for superiority, an ideal, dominance, privilege, and rewards (see Dei et al., 2004).

Chapter 2

Canada's Colonial Past

How does multiculturalism reinvent 'the nation' over the bodies of strangers?

How does the act of 'welcoming the stranger' serve to constitute the nation?

How is the 'we' of the nation affirmed through the difference of the 'stranger cultures', rather than against it? (Ahmed, 2013, p. 95)

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I historicize the experiences of Foreign-Educated Racialized Immigrant Women (FERIW) by tracing the origins of Canada as a White settler nation and its history of exclusionary immigration and nation-building. I explore the state's exclusionary immigration policies over the decades since Confederation and the establishment of a colonial racial hierarchy that shapes all aspects of the state, from political subject formation to the racialized gendered labour market and the creation of parallel communities with Whites entrenched at the top of the hierarchy. I engage with notions of race, ethnicity, and culture relating to racialized labour, nation formation, and differential citizenship; the feminization of raced labour within the neoliberal capitalist system; and the racialized feminization of poverty through neoliberal deskilling and retooling.

2.2 A White Settler Nation is Born

Canada's immigrant population's socio-economic realities and status need to be situated within Canada's history of settler colonialism. The mythical *creation* of Canada constituted a racist settler colonial project on the Land and lives of Indigenous People. The colonial encounter is always violent and racial, as Fanon (2004, as cited in Thobani, 2007) reminds us:

Colonialism created an order based on absolute violence, Fanon argues, an order that relied on the transformation of the "native" into a "thing," an object of exploitation. The colonial encounter gave rise to new species of men, the native and the settler. He also argues that the colonial encounter was structured as a racial one: the violence necessary to bring into being the colonial order fashioned and propagated a racial order. (pp. 37–38)

Benedict Anderson (2020) describes nations as *imagined communities*. The imagined community is socially constructed by a community of people who deem themselves citizens of that community, sharing a deep-rooted solidarity and political and social culture and willing to die for the community, even though most of the citizens will never meet each other. Anderson attributes the emergence of print capitalism and secularization as two of the forces ushering in the material conditions for the dissemination and cultivation of shared ideas and solidarities leading to nationalism and imagined communities. Aligned with Anderson's concept of a socially constructed "imagined" community, Said (1979/2003) contends that the Orient "was almost a European invention" (p. 1). Europe *imagined* and *invented* the Orient and the Oriental in diametrical opposition to itself. Knowledge about the Orient arose from the West's consciousness and its power to depict, define, and dominate the Orient and its people.

I wish to engage with these two notions of imagined communities and the power to invent the Other in relation to Canada as an imagined and invented community forged through settler colonial violence with the British and French colonizers undertaking a systematic campaign of Land accumulation by dispossession against the Indigenous population (Harris, 2020; Krysa et al., 2019; Perzyna & Bauder, 2023). Much of what has been written about the history of Canada and its relationship with Indigenous people has been by and from the settlers' standpoint. The power to depict and define the Indigenous Other was a powerful tool to help install a colonial racial hierarchical structure, casting the European settlers as the true citizens of the nation, and the Indigenous population as primitive and violent. Canada's attempts to revise and integrate the histories of Indigenous People into the mosaic and story of Canada continue to omit and *invisibilize* the violence carried out against Indigenous People, the same kind of violence Fanon (1991) describes as one of the tools necessary to bring colonialism into being. Wildcat (2015) describes the campaign and strategy of "elimination ... [by the settlers as genocide] to destroy, contain or modify Indigenous societies so that a settler society can build on Indigenous territories, while also seeking to 'erase' or 'extinguish' the status of settlers as colonizers" (p. 394).

The settlers' colonial violence and dispossession were legitimized through their power to define themselves in opposition to the *native* inhabitants of the Land—the civilized and superior Europeans in opposition to the primitive and savage *natives* (Barker, 2009; Perzyna & Bauder, 2023; Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2006). While colonialism adapts and

transforms across contexts, the ideology of race, racism, racial hierarchies and violence remain central to the workings of colonialism. Colonial violence is justified through a binary logic of civilized versus uncivilized, with the Europeans cast as the former and Indigenous and racialized people as the latter (Barker, 2009; Thobani, 2007; Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2006). When members of the Nisga'a' and Tsimshian leadership presented their territorial claims to the British Columbia Premier in 1887, they were told, "You were little better than the wild beasts of the field" when the Europeans first came to the Land (Woolford & Benvenuto, 2015, p. 381). Beginning with the British and French colonial settlement in Canada, Indigenous People have been subjected to systematic colonial violence to destroy their communities, culture, and Land, including "residential schooling ... sporadic and small-scale massacres, forced removals, negligent disease spread, prohibition of cultural practices such as the potlatch, welfare-state child removals, the sterilization of Aboriginal women and the ecological devastation of indigenous territories" (Woolford & Benvenuto, 2015, p. 374). The legacy of Indian Residential Schools and the trauma they inflicted on Indigenous children and their communities were referred to as cultural genocide by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report (Woolford & Benvenuto, 2015). With the release of the Commission's report and recommendations of 2015 came the gruesome news that 6,000 Indigenous children had died in custody in Indian Residential Schools (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015).

Huseman and Short (2012, p. 216) speak of "a slow industrial genocide" being carried out against the Indigenous communities of the Treaty 8 Region in Alberta because of the development of the tar sands and the ecological violence being waged against these communities. These communities are being displaced from the Land to facilitate industrial mining and extraction, which results in toxic products seeping into the water, Land, and wildlife that sustain Indigenous communities (Huseman & Short, 2012). The Canadian settler colonial project is ongoing, shapeshifting, intersecting, and colliding with and diverging from other colonial state formations, including racialized immigrant subject formation, which will be described next.

2.3 Overview of Immigrant Labour in Canada

Immigration is foundational to Canada's identity and has earned a reputation for being among the most welcoming countries for immigrants and refugees, especially following immigration

liberalization policies in the 1960s. Historically, Canada's immigration policies have served a dual purpose to reproduce the White European identity of the nation and to meet economic objectives (Bauder, 2008; Green & Green, 1999; Matas, 2016). These dual objectives continue into the present. From the 1870s to 1913, immigration policies and targets were aligned with economic policies, including the completion of transcontinental railways and fostering growth and development in the Western parts of the country through immigration (Bauder, 2008; Green & Green, 1999; Matas, 2016). During this time, racism and discrimination were central principles of Canadian immigration policies and during this era, immigrant source countries were formally classified into preferred and non-preferred categories. Matas (2016) describes "racism as Canadian immigration policy" up to 1978 (p. 93).

The period 1906 to 1929 saw the creation of the inaugural immigration framework to regulate the flow of people into the country, creating additional restricted categories of immigrants, formalizing the procedures for deportation and expanding the authority of the government to unilaterally determine admission into the country (Green & Green, 1999; Troper, 1993). The 1910 Immigration Act further consolidated the racist and discriminatory essence of Canada's immigration policies, aligning with the state's dual objectives for labour and preserving the Whiteness of the nation. The 1910 Act effectively empowered the state to legally discriminate against immigrants based on race, ethnicity, and country of origin. Immigration from the preferred classes from Britain and Western Europe was extensively promoted and pursued. Immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe, deemed the non-preferred classes, were tolerated when needed to meet economic goals and restricted otherwise (Green & Green, 1999; Troper, 1993). As Matas (2016) notes,

The Cabinet invoked this power on numerous occasions.... Asians were prohibited from immigrating to Canada in 1923. Although exceptions were initially made for Asian farmers, farm labourers, and domestics, those exceptions were eliminated in 1930. (pp. 114–115)

During this period, Chinese migration was tolerated to meet economic targets. In 1858, the gold rush in British Columbia attracted thousands of Chinese nationals from China and the United States, where they had immigrated after the discovery of gold in California (Li, 1988; Wong, 2017). In the 1880s, Chinese labourers were allowed entry into Canada to work on the Canadian Pacific Railway linking British Columbia to eastern Canada. They were only admitted into the

country because they were a source of cheap labour and were paid considerably less than White labourers for the same work (Li, 1988; Wong, 2017). The presence of Chinese labourers resulted in increasing tensions with the local White residents of the community who saw Chinese workers as a threat to their existence and community. By the time the British Columbia section of the railway was completed in 1885, an estimated 700 Chinese labourers had died due to dangerous working conditions (Li, 1988; Wong, 2017). The exploitation of cheap labour from China was primarily made possible by expanding Western capitalism in China. According to Li (1998), many Chinese labourers who left to work in Canada did so due to China's economic and social upheavals because of Western capitalism's expansion and exploitation of the Chinese economy that fuelled political and economic instability.

In the period leading up to and following World War I, Canada's immigration policies continued to be characterized by racist principles and provisions shaped by nation-building and economic goals. The following events demonstrate the ongoing centrality of race in Canadian immigration policies. The Royal Commission of 1885 was appointed to investigate the growing calls for restrictions on Chinese immigration to Canada due to public anger directed at Chinese immigrants working on the Canadian Pacific Railway (Li, 1998; 2016; Wong, 2017). As the railway construction ended, community members, including business owners and politicians, incited public anger against Chinese labourers aligning them as diseased and dishonest (Fernando & Rinaldi, 2017). The Commission concluded with the imposition of the Chinese Head Tax to be paid by each person seeking admittance into Canada. Since cheap Chinese labour was still needed, the Head Tax ensured a steady but restricted supply of labour while imposing a fee for entry to Canada. The Chinese Immigration Act of 1923 was also referred to as the Chinese Exclusion Act (Cho, 2002; Li, 1988; Wong, 2017). James (2008) describes the complete erasure of the contributions and presence of Africans to nation-building, including slave labour in the early part of the 17th century. In the early part of the 20th century, a limited number of Black Caribbean immigrants, predominantly men, were allowed to work in the coal mines in Nova Scotia. They encountered extensive racism and stereotyping, including the construction of Blacks as better suited to handle the heat of the ovens in the steel plants than Whites (Calliste, 1994; James, 2008).

2.4 Post-World War I

Following World War I and the ensuing post-war reconstruction, Canadian industries faced labour shortages. Business leaders demanded increased immigration to meet the labour needs of the economy (Green & Green, 1999; Troper, 1993). In a speech to the parliament in May of 1914, Canadian Prime Minister Mackenzie King reaffirmed the dual objectives of Canada's long-standing immigration policies: White nation-building and economic growth.

The policy of the government is to foster the growth of the population of Canada by the encouragement of immigration.... With regard to the selection of immigrants, much has been said about discrimination. I wish to make quite clear that Canada is perfectly within her rights in selecting the persons whom we regard as desirable future citizens. It is not a "fundamental human right" of any alien to enter Canada. It is a privilege. It is a matter of domestic policy.... There will, I am sure, be general agreement with the view that the people of Canada do not wish, as a result of mass immigration, to make a fundamental alteration in the character of our population. Large-scale immigration from the Orient would change the fundamental composition of the Canadian population. (Richmond, 1967, p. 3)

Canada would continue to recruit immigrants from the *preferred races*, namely from Britain and northern Europe, while continuing to restrict immigrants from southern and eastern Europe as economically necessary (Green & Green, 1999; Troper, 1993). Exclusionary legislation that had been in place for some time, such as the *Chinese Exclusion Act* of 1923 and the *Continuous Journey Regulation* of 1908 (Matas, 2016), ensured that non-Whites were kept out of Canada to preserve the racial purity of the nation. The *Continuous Journey Regulation* was added to the Immigration Act in 1908 to further restrict non-White immigration, by barring immigrants from landing in Canada who did not come directly and by continuous journey from their country of origin (Chen, 2015; Dua, 2007; Matas, 1985). When this policy was established, it was not possible for Indians to travel to Canada by a single continuous journey from India. In 1914, it was used to deny landing to 400 East Indians aboard the Komagata Maru in Vancouver. The passengers who were all British subjects challenged the continuous passage regulation, unsuccessfully. They were confined to their ship for months and, in time, forced to return to India (Kaur, 2012). These examples of race-based exclusionary immigration policies

underscored one of Canada's central foundational principles: preserving the White European identity of the nation through its institutions and policies.

2.5 Liberalization of Immigration

Canadian immigration policies underwent a major overhaul in the 1960s and 1970s. Overt racist regulations were eliminated in the 1967 *Immigration Act* which created a significant shift from immigration based on preferred and non-preferred races, ethnicity, and nationality (Fernando & Rinaldi, 2017; Green & Green, 1995; Harald, 2014; Troper, 1993). The more equitable immigration system sought to align Canada with the liberal thinking and aesthetic that unfolded on the global stage after World War II. For the first time, the 1967 Act legally outlined the main objectives of immigration policies, which included promoting diversity and non-discrimination, family reunification, and promoting Canada's economic, cultural, and demographic objectives. The Act of 1967 also introduced the Point System, which established a core foundation of immigration policies that continue to the present day. The point system provided a seemingly objective scale of criteria for applicants to be evaluated for immigration, including age, education, work experience, language proficiency in English and/or French, labour market demand, and having family in Canada (Harald, 2014). The regulations established three principal categories of entry for immigrants:

1. The independent class was allowed entry solely based on the point system
2. Sponsored entry for those who were the immediate relatives of Canadian citizens and permanent residents
3. A nominated class

Distant relatives of Canadian citizens and those nominated by a family member and assessed on some of the point system criteria could apply for immigration within the nominated class. Further changes to immigration were implemented in 1976 with the introduction of a new *Immigration Act*, including the provision for refugees as a separate category for entry into Canada (Fernando & Rinaldi, 2017; Harald, 2014). The 1976 Act established the family, refugee and independent classes.

The liberalization of immigration resulted in a radical transformation of the face and colour of Canada, by allowing non-White immigrants into Canada, including those from Africa, Asia,

India, and the Caribbean (Agnew, 2016; Green & Green, 1995; Harald, 2014). Scholars attribute Canada's immigration transformation to a variety of reasons. Europe's reconstruction following World War II caused a great demand for labour resulting in Canada's inability to secure its preferential supply of immigrant labour. The economy was rapidly expanding, and skilled labour was needed to sustain and expand production. In addition, the global political and social landscape after the war had changed. A liberal international order emerged in the post-war period. The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* was adopted in 1948 by the newly created United Nations to recognize and enshrine the right of every person to live in freedom, equality, and dignity (Agnew, 2016; Harald, 2014). Canada was a signatory to the declaration and a member of the United Nations. The universal impetus for rights and independence taking place at that time, including the civil rights movement for equality for African Americans and the rise of independence and nationalist movements including in Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean, meant that Canada would have been isolated and out of step with this changing political and social landscape if it was not a signatory (Agnew, 2016; Harald, 2014; Thobani, 2007). Within Canada, the *Bill of Rights* (Agnew, 2003; Fernando & Rinaldi, 2017) was signed in 1960 and represented the first federal law to guarantee and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms. Canada wanted to be seen as a forward-thinking, progressive nation aligned with the international community on human rights and freedoms (Bennett, 2021). Against this global backdrop, Canada recognized that it could no longer openly adhere to a White ideological worldview and race-based exclusionary immigration policies. Thobani (2007) contends that:

Many scholars of immigration have pointed out that the elimination of overt racial distinctions in immigration policy and citizenship during the 1970s was a pragmatic response to changing global economic conditions that had less to do with idealistic commitments to a cultural utopia and more with the country's growing need for labour. (p. 146)

Despite immigration liberalization, the *creation* and cementing of Canada as a White nation had already been secured through its institutions and laws. At its very core, Canada remained a racist nation. The trappings of liberalism and diversity were adopted to allow Canada to operate on the global stage to align with the changing global, political, and social landscape. However, a colonial racial hierarchical structure had already been established which reflected, reinscribed,

and rewarded the true citizens of the nation from those who were Outsiders. Race continues to be the central differentiating principle along which immigrants and other racialized people are stratified (Bannerji, 2000a, 2000b; Block & Galabuzi, 2011; Krysa et al., 2019). As Thobani (2007) argues:

Racial difference, as a system of hierarchy within the Canadian socio-legal system constitutes the national, the Indian, and the immigrant as different kinds of *legal* beings. In the process, it also constitutes them as different kinds of *human* beings at a symbolic level, ascribing to them different characteristics and values as intrinsic aspects of their (quasi)humanity. These fundamental categories of Canadian nationhood, born in the violence of the colonial encounter, have been institutionalized and sustained by the relations of force still invested in them. (p. 28)

Raced-based exclusionary immigration policies had solidified White nation-building. Even when immigration was finally liberalized in the 1960s and 1970s to allow entry to the non-preferred races, the state apparatus and infrastructure had already been established to reproduce and preserve the colonial race-based hierarchical structure (Thobani, 2007, p. 147).

2.6 Multiculturalism as State-Approved Diversity

Under Pierre Trudeau, Canada adopted an official policy of Multiculturalism in 1971. The Canadian Multiculturalism Act became law in 1988, legally enshrining Canada's commitment to the promotion of a multicultural and inclusive society (Bannerji, 2000a). Multiculturalism functions as a strategic mechanism for nation-building mechanism and the nation's favoured self-descriptor, domestically and internationally. Pierre Trudeau's government viewed multiculturalism and the liberalization of immigration to allow in large numbers of non-White immigrants as vital strategies for nation-building, capitalist economic growth, and the creation of a liberal democratic state (Bannerji, 2000a, 2000b; Harald, 2014; Krysa et al., 2019). Canada had *imagined* itself as a White European nation, brought into being through settler colonialism, race-based exclusionary immigration policies, and race ideology. From Confederation to the present day, a colonial racial hierarchical order has been installed, in which the English and French settlers occupy the top strata. Aligned with Anderson's (2020) notion of nations as *communities of imagination*, socially and culturally constructed by the citizens who feel part of that

community, Ahmed (2007a) describes how nations can *reinvent* themselves through the multiculturalism apparatus whereby cultural *Others* are allowed to enter but their differences serve to reinforce the Whiteness of the nation. Multiculturalism provided the ideology and apparatus for Canada to reimagine itself as a liberal democracy, constructing and curating an international image as a progressive and cosmopolitan nation, welcoming people of all colours and nationalities (Bannerji, 2000a, 2000b; Thobani, 2007). A place where their differences and diversity could be preserved and celebrated. An official multiculturalism policy underscored the tolerance and benevolence of the nation, guaranteeing that all Canadian citizens are equal, have the same rights and responsibilities, and have the freedom to retain and celebrate their ethnic customs and culture. Canada was proclaimed the Land of immigrants and cultural diversity.

The reality for immigrants differed significantly from the utopian multicultural discourses parlayed into the national aesthetic of what defined the state. Multiculturalism served as a tool for control and management of the nation's immigrant population (Bannerji, 2000a, 2000b). Multiculturalism celebrated diversity while simultaneously solidifying and highlighting differences against the White normative national subject, thus preserving, and reinforcing the racial, colonial structure of the Canadian state, what Henry et al. (2006) labelled "democratic racism" (p. 19). Multiculturalism was used as a strategy to manage and mitigate tensions between the state's English and French citizens, serving to divert and marginalize the claims and rights of the Indigenous People. Immigrants were valued for their labour and given conditional inclusion, rights, and privileges in a colonial hierarchical structure at the cost of Indigenous People's rights and claims (Bannerji, 2000a; Harald, 2014; Thobani, 2007).

Diversity and multiculturalism in Canada effectively operate as mechanisms of power, masquerading as equality, inclusivity, and tolerance. Bannerji (2000b) reminds us that: "Canadians have been living in a historical and current environment of political colour coding, even or mainly when forging a liberal democratic politics for the country as a whole" (p. 545). Within this "colour coding", state-sanctioned diversity is more about cultural and ethnic festivals and food than racialized immigrants' material socio-economic and political rights and standard of living. Racialized immigrants' discursive representations and political classifications are central to their racialization and Othering. First labelled as non-preferred races and then, when it was no longer politically expedient to emphasize race due to the changing and liberalizing political landscape, the emphasis and essentializing of culture crystallized into the monolithic

and erased, but visible, label *immigrant*, and then visible immigrant, to further highlight skin colour, to demarcate non-White immigrants from the White ideal citizen, and their “politically minor” status (Bannerji, 2000b, p. 545). Multiculturalism facilitates the ongoing racialization and colonization of immigrants by conflating race with culture to make visible the Outsiders within the nation while celebrating and nurturing cosmetic diversity. Racialized immigrants’ cultural and racial subjectivities were produced and imposed within a hierarchical framework, where a White Canadian identity held a privileged position at the top, accompanied by a corresponding hierarchy of political rights and rewards.

2.7 What is in a Name: Multicultural Racism

Multiculturalism, as a mechanism of control over racialized immigrants, ostensibly granted rights and inclusivity to multicultural Others while, in reality, solidifying the hierarchical racial power structures within the state. One of multiculturalism’s prime mechanisms of Othering was the “naturalized political language” it constructed for racialized immigrants (Bannerji, 2000a, p. 31). The Canadian state defines the bureaucratic category of immigrant as:

a person who is, or has ever been, a landed immigrant or permanent resident. Such a person has been granted the right to live in Canada permanently by immigration authorities. Immigrants who have obtained Canadian citizenship by naturalization are included in this group. (Statistics Canada, 2022b, para. 2)

The term used officially, socially, economically, politically, and culturally to categorize and demarcate people not born in Canada is an imposed identity. By its very naming and differentiating, it produces a racializing language to depict and discursively frame racialized immigrants as Others.

The state’s ideological and institutional powers have constituted its non-White citizens as the cultural Others within multiculturalism, with a cultural language to fix and frame their cultural, socio-economic, and political subjectivities. Many immigrants celebrate and welcome state-sanctioned multiculturalism. They believe it facilitates their cultural integration in Canada by allowing them to celebrate and retain their social and cultural practices. They have adopted and reproduced the language and terminology imposed on them by the state. Activists in the immigrant community have co-opted and repositioned the language as a form of resistance

(Bannerji, 2000a; Thobani, 2007). However, there are severe material consequences to having a cultural Other subjectivity in Canada. Dei (2017), in describing Blackness and Black identity, notes that “blackness” is socially constructed, discursive, and imagined, the realities of anti-black racism in societies structured by White privilege means “there is also a materiality to Blackness and Black identity” (p. 16). Racialization exists within relations of power and domination. It constitutes racialized immigrants within structures and systems of power, including the historically racialized and gendered political economy in which racialized immigrants comprise the bulk of cheap labour to serve the Canadian colonial capitalist system.

Race and ethnicity, integrated and reworked into a language of cultural differentiation and Othering, continue to structure and stratify the hierarchical labour market, impacting labour market integration and outcomes for racialized immigrants, including marginalization. If “minorities are socially constructed entities in societies, and the label implies the imposition of an inferior status” (Galabuzi, 2006, p. 31), then for FERIW, the marginalization is compounded, as immigrant women are discursively *produced* even before they arrive in Canada, socially constructed in the White Canadian imaginary, and depicted in the labour market as ethnic, cultural, traditional, inferior, and low skilled (Arat-Koç, 2012; Galabuzi, 2006; Ng, 1996). The term *immigrant woman* is a racialized term and defines immigrant women as “a labour market category and as commodities” (Ng, 1996, p. 3), constructing a racialized immigrant woman as a “woman who does not speak English or who speaks English with an accent; who is from the Third World or a member of a visible minority group; and who has a certain type of job (e.g., a sewing machine operator or a cleaning lady)” (p. 17). This discursive construction engenders deskilling and thus material and labour market consequences for these women, including racism, marginalization, precarious housing, health, and lives. The power of macro-level state discourses to shape and reproduce political and socio-economic realities for racialized immigrant women resonates with Foucault’s (1980) work on the power of discourse to produce, transmit, and reinforce power and subjectivities.

2.8 Feminization of Raced Labour: Making of a Visible Gendered Class

Sarah Ahmed (2007a) discusses the notion of happy multiculturalism and its portrayal as a happy object. This cosmetic multiculturalism is exemplified by the multiculturalism of ethnic festivals

and foods. This state-sanctioned version promotes the diversity it has engineered, showcased through state apparatus that produces and sustains discursive depictions of the welcoming nation. This food and festival multiculturalism is effectively race reworked and reimagined as an exotic culture to be deployed as needed. Within cosmetic multiculturalism, immigrants provide exoticism and difference to the Canadian mosaic and culture, to be consumed and commodified for the difference they embody. As bell hooks (2015) contends, the Other is fetishized and discursively portrayed as different and exotic:

From the standpoint of white supremacist capitalist patriarchy, the hope is that desires for the “primitive” or fantasies about the Other can be continually exploited and that such exploitation will occur in a manner that reinscribes and maintains the status quo. (p. 22)

The dominant national subject was produced as White within the colonial racial order established from the time of Confederation. The multicultural apparatus and ideology hold up and reinscribe differences against the unmarked White subject. Multiculturalism produces conditional belonging and, simultaneously, exclusion, where the cultural Others of the nation exist both within the physical boundaries of the nation but at the same time are marked as visible and immigrant. The framing of difference away from race to culture and ethnicity has relegated racialized immigrants to Outsider status within the national space. Immigrants occupy a paradoxical space, wherein they play a pivotal role in the economic apparatus of the nation while remaining peripheral to the political economy. The racializing labels of immigrant and visible immigrant within the racial colonial order have produced a racialized gendered labour market in which racialized immigrant women are deskilled and repurposed for cheap labour. Bannerji (2000a) notes that discourse diversity is not merely wording but “creates and mediates practices, both conceptual and actual, of power—of ruling or governing” (p. 36).

During Canada’s exclusionary White-only immigration policies, immigration of families was restricted according to gender, race, and class; Europeans were highly desired and welcomed to settle and nation build along racial lines (Triadafilopoulos, 2013; Troper, 1993). Single Black women were given admission into Canada to work as domestics but only on condition that they did not bring their families (Calliste, 1994). The imposition of the Chinese Head Tax compelled numerous Asian labourers to live apart from their families to preserve the Whiteness of the nation. Restrictions to limit and prevent non-preferred races from procreating and populating the

White national landscape meant that gendered, racialized, and class immigration restrictions shaped and impacted non-White family relations and communities until the 1960s and 1970s (Li, 1988; Wong, 2017). The easing of exclusionary immigration and the establishment of the point system continued to structure immigration in gendered ways.

The creation of the independent and family class of immigration as a result of the 1976 Immigration Act and the point system created an increasingly gendered and raced immigration structure and labour market (Arat-Koç, 1999; Ng, 1992; Ngwenya, 2018). As discussed earlier, the independent class allowed applicants entry based on points earned to meet the labour market needs and contribute to the economy; in most cases, the principal applicant was typically the male spouse in the family, with women being considered as dependents regardless of their education level or profession. The family class was created to reunite family members of immigrants already residing in Canada, who would then sponsor their eligible family members and for whom they were officially held financially responsible. Both these immigration categories framed women as dependents of their spouses, reinforcing the stereotypical image of traditional, uneducated, and subservient women (Arat-Koç, 1999).

This gendered and raced immigration structure was reproduced in the labour market integration and outcomes for racialized immigrants. Ascribed labels relegated racialized immigrant women to stratified feminized labour—factory work, cleaning, and working as domestics and other low-wage, precarious, low-end jobs. Overtly masculinized neoliberal immigration policies produced immigrant women as dependent subjects, increasing their dependency on their spouses. They exacerbated patriarchal structures while erasing “the economic contributions of those it defined as ‘dependents’” (Thobani, 2007, p. 123). The hyper-patriarchal structure propagated by the immigration system left many racialized immigrant women utterly dependent on their sponsors and employers. In the case of domestic workers, the legal conditions of sponsorship and the repercussions of breaking the sponsorship agreement included deportation and financial costs. These gender-based structural conditions made racialized immigrant women increasingly vulnerable to violence in the home, and for domestic workers on the job, while restricting their ability to seek social services in cases of abuse (Jayasuriya-Illesinghe, 2018; Man, 2004).

2.9 Summary

This chapter traced Canada's nation formation, from its White settler origins, and the establishment of a colonial racial hierarchical order. By the time immigration policies were liberalized in the 1960s to move away from overtly racist exclusionary classifications, the Whiteness of the nation was already secured through its laws, institutions, and ideologies. Multiculturalism served as an organizing mechanism to govern the state's racialized communities and solidify its White identity in the face of immigrants who were permitted entry but differentially integrated into the state apparatus. The next chapter, Chapter 3, will review the current literature on the challenges faced by FERIW in their labour market integration in Canada and locate this study in the literature. Chapter 3 will also describe this study's contributions to the LMI literature.

Chapter 3

Literature Review

“Why are they doing this? It was horrible. In the end, it’s a waste” (Noura, medical doctor, study participant, July 27, 2021, Transcript 6).

3.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the extant body of literature to understand the challenges faced by Foreign-Educated Racialized Immigrant Women (FERIW) in their labour market experiences in Canada and identify the key gaps in the LMI scholarship. A substantial portion of the literature concerning the labour market experiences of FERIW explores the challenges that FERIW encounter during their settlement experiences in Canada and the process of deskilling they undergo due to their intersectional identities. My review of the literature is divided broadly into four main categories: (a) the socio-economic status of skilled immigrant women, (b) neoliberalism, globalization, and the precariat, (c) Canadian experience and exclusionary credentialing, and (d) licensing and regulatory bodies and de-credentialing.

3.2 The Socio-Economic Status of Skilled Immigrant Women

Numerous studies have examined racialized immigrants’ poor socio-economic performance and outcomes (Galabuzi, 2006; Guo, 2009; Reitz, 2001; Shan, 2013). A review of the literature outlines the numerous barriers to labour market integration (LMI) and outcomes for FERIW, including language barriers, lack of Canadian work experience, and the devaluation of credentials. The socio-economic performance of racialized immigrants has been deteriorating since the 1980s (Galabuzi, 2006; Guo, 2009; Shan, 2013). The non-recognition of credentials has been recognized as one of the main barriers that FERIW encounter in their attempts to work in their profession of training (Galabuzi, 2006; Guo, 2009; Reitz, 2001). The *Othering* of FERIW extends to all aspects of their person, including their credentials, professional identities, and experiences. The socially constructed appellation, discourse, and ideology of the racialized *immigrant woman* as inferior, unskilled, and steeped in culture and tradition is operationalized within the power structure and practices of the political economy to deskill, de-credential, and consign these women to underemployment, unemployment, and precarity. Within the LMI site, the intersection of race, ethnicity, gender, and class converge to mark and code the credentials of

FERIW as inferior to the normative White Canadian equivalent, thus marking racialized bodies as inferior.

Creese and Kambere (2003) describe the LMI space as “discursively patrolled through accents,” which does more than exclude and Other (p. 566). In their study of African immigrant women in Vancouver, participants were asked about their experiences of employment, housing, settlement services, family roles and responsibilities, and language. They found that participants consistently highlighted ongoing barriers and racism related to language and accent. Their findings align with the narratives of the participants in this research as well as the analytical framework I employ, which identifies and contextualizes the marginalization of FERIW within the broader context of colonialism, capitalism, and Canada’s ongoing nation-building project, which continues to be a White project. Creese and Kambere draw a parallel between the linguistic capital of English to British colonialism, underscoring how colonial systems impose domination through language. They emphasize how the hegemony of English was used to validate certain forms of knowledge while rendering accented Others as invalid. Creese and Kambere contend that the “imagined community”, which plays a crucial role in nation-building, serves as both a “literal and figurative boundary” (p. 566). Racialized immigrants must navigate this border space daily, and many find themselves excluded from this “literal and figurative” border, instead existing in liminal spaces within the nation (p. 566).

While the primary focus of Creese and Kambere’s (2003) research was on African immigrant women’s accents and English and their settlement experiences, including housing, important parallels can be drawn and applied to the experiences of FERIW in the labour market. Expanding upon Creese and Kambere’s research, I contend that the LMI space reinforces and reproduces the *imagined* nation and its racial hierarchical order, which represents “the set of values, institutions, laws, and symbols through which people imagine their social whole” (Coda, n.d.), consigning racialized accented Others as unqualified and inferior and thus suited to cheap, unskilled labour. One of this study’s participants expressed that “English, not expertise, is the problem” (Farah, August 4, 2021, Transcript 5). Those who are empowered through and by Whiteness, and thus belonging, have the power to dictate to and deskill racialized bodies whom they demarcate as outside of the White nation space and the LMI border space. Delegitimization carries severe material and socio-economic consequences. Several scholars have examined the intersectionality

of race, ethnicity, gender, and immigrant status of highly skilled immigrant women's labour market experiences (Das Gupta, 2019; Galabuzi, 2006; Ng, 1992).

Ng (1992) described racialized immigrant women as a "captive" labour force, wherein:

Legal, social, and economic relations hold certain women (women of colour from the Third World, women who don't speak English, or who speak limited English, women who don't have the skills or qualifications seem to be relevant to the Canadian economy) captive in a seemingly democratic and free society.
(p. 122)

Ng's (1992) compelling depiction of immigrant women as being "captive" (p. 22) holds true for the contemporary LMI experiences of FERIW. I would add that it is not a matter of FERIW lacking the skills or expertise required for the high-skilled labour market (HSLM), but rather, their skills are de-legitimized and nullified within the colonial hierarchical labour market structure due to their gendered, racialized immigrant identity. Ng's (1992, 1996) work on immigrant women's social production as a "labour market category" is pivotal to the scholarship on the labour market experiences of immigrant women in Canada (Ng, 1996, p. 10). Ng's work has contributed to our understanding of the complex intersections of race, gender, class, and immigrant status in shaping and reshaping women's labour market positions and experiences within the gendered, racialized labour market structure of the political capitalist economy. Several scholars, including Ng, highlight that the categorization of immigrant women as dependents within the immigration system plays a pivotal role in their social construction and discursive representation, even before they enter Canada (Arat-Koç, 1999; Ngwenya, 2018; Thobani, 2000). The immigration structure is central to the systemic racism and sexism that immigrant women are subjected to and their resultant marginalization, underemployment, and precarious work (Ng, 1996). An important aspect of Ng's (1996) scholarship, particularly relevant to this study, is her analysis of the gendered, racist, and sexist labour market experiences of immigrant women within the broader context of global and local systems that perpetuate a racialized, gendered, hierarchical labour market.

In her research focused on the garment industry, Das Gupta (2019) notes that the Canadian garment sector was able to remain highly competitive by exploiting the labour of racialized immigrant women. Furthermore, the industry relocated its factories to Third-World countries to

capitalize on lower labour and production costs in those countries. Aligned with Ng's research, Das Gupta connects the local to the global system of neoliberal transnational capitalism. Racism and marginalization are embedded, safeguarded, and reproduced within powerful economic and political systems. Daily and routine acts of racism and discrimination occur as part of structures of power, including economic, political, and legal, that depend on a fundamentally gendered and racial hierarchy to anchor and perpetuate that power. Das Gupta (1994) argues that women become increasingly vulnerable to further marginalization and social exclusion, within a state that allowed them into the country and integrated them into a gendered hierarchy dictated by "specifically the needs of a capitalist system" (p. 11). In her work detailing the experiences of racialized nurses in Canada, DasGupta (2009) describes the systemic racism that racialized women experienced in the profession, including harassment by colleagues, unequal compensation and unfair disciplinary treatment. Racialized nurses' skills and knowledge were devalued and disregarded, and they were denied opportunities for promotion and advancement. Das Gupta's work provides a valuable context for understanding the broader global and societal factors that impact the labour market experiences of FERIW. Her body of work supports and helps to historically contextualize the labour market experiences of the FERIW in this study. The systemic racism Das Gupta describes in the nursing profession resonates with the experiences of FERIW, reinforcing the interconnectedness of economic, political, and legal systems that contribute to their marginalization.

Galabuzi's (2006) work which explores the state of "economic apartheid" in the Canadian labour market underscores the foundational role of racism and gendered racism (p. 15) in the workings of the political economy. Galabuzi's research historicizes contemporary labour market structures and traces the installation of the gendered racialized labour market structure in Canada. Galabuzi (2001) argues that amidst Canada's adoption of globalization and its idealistic discourse of multiculturalism, "there are persistent expressions of xenophobia and racial marginalization that suggest a continuing political and cultural attachment to the concept of a white settler society" (p. 3). Galabuzi also contends that the economic and political framework that emerged in Canada was rooted in a White Settler ideology, producing a labour market stratified by race, class, and gender, which helps to inform our current understanding of the labour market experiences of FERIW. Although Galabuzi's (2001, 2004, 2006) research does not focus specifically on FERIW, it does contribute to our understanding of how historical labour market configurations inform and shape contemporary labour market structures and divisions. The historically

racialized gendered labour market has forced and confined racialized women into what is deemed predominantly female occupations and sectors of the economy and work including nursing, factories, domestics, personal support workers, and cleaning. FERIW women are deskilled, dispossessed of their credentials, and retooled for the gendered and racially stratified low-wage, low-skilled economy, often working under precarious and exploitative conditions.

Race and the culturalization of race, along with gender and class, have discursively and materially marked many immigrant women's exploitative and oppressive labour market experiences in Canada. Citing data from the 2016 census, Block and Galabuzi (2018) demonstrate the differential earnings of immigrants based on gender and race, showing that racialized immigrant women earned 58 cents for every dollar earned by a White man in Ontario (p. 5). In Toronto, 62% of racialized people live in poverty. Immigrant women who immigrated to Canada between 2011 and 2016 were deemed low-income at an identified rate of 31.4% (Statistics Canada, 2019). Block and Galabuzi (2011) describe the "racialization of poverty," identifying race as central to the disproportionate poverty levels among racialized populations in Toronto for both immigrants and Canadian-born racialized people (p. 15). The significance of race and gender in Block and Galabuzi's work is closely aligned with the saliency of race and gender in my analysis of the labour market experiences of FERIW in Canada.

In Canada, it is common to hear anecdotally about immigrants with PhDs driving taxis and working in Tim Hortons. Reitz (2011) refers to this as the "taxi-driver syndrome", detailing the deskilling of highly qualified, skilled immigrants who were forced to work in menial, precarious, low-wage jobs because of the non-recognition of their credentials. In his study analyzing the underutilization of immigrants' skills utilizing a human-capital earnings framework, Reitz identifies several factors that resulted in immigrants' skill underutilization, which includes the non-recognition of foreign credentials by employers and licensing and trade associations. Reitz argues that the lack of recognition of immigrants' skills and credentials is partially due to cultural and racist stereotyping of immigrants, as well as to employers' inability to assess foreign credentials. Reitz contends that employers will often choose to take the safer route of hiring individuals with Canadian credentials, which they see as easier to assess. Reitz draws a parallel between the challenges faced by employers to those faced by universities when evaluating foreign credentials. I reject this argument because it reproduces and upholds Western credentials as the normative benchmark against which those of racialized *Others* are considered deficient

and inferior. Reitz concludes that: “Helping Canadian employers deal with the real and very practical problems of using the new global workforce could be a low-cost way of dramatically improving returns from our investment in immigration” (p. 373). This analysis contributes to the perpetuation of framing immigrants as the root of the problem and employers as a disadvantaged group who need to be helped and provided with resources to understand and accept raced credentials and racialized bodies. It also rationalizes and normalizes the discounting of foreign-educated immigrants’ professional experience as not worthy of recognition.

3.3 Neoliberalism, Globalization, and the Precariat

Several studies have hypothesized that the adoption of neoliberal policies and their contemporary manifestation through globalization has led to greater marginalization of vulnerable groups in society (Lewis et al., 2015; Munck et al., 2013; Standing, 2012). Standing (2012) introduces the concept of the precariat class, a category of workers whose lives are characterized by highly unstable employment conditions as a direct result of neoliberal policies. These policies have fostered hyper-flexible labour market structures and dismantled social policies, welfare programs, and labour regulations, pushing the most disadvantaged sectors of society into the precariat class. Standing defines the precariat class as individuals who are forced into unstable work, often facing periods of unemployment along with precarious living conditions, including housing and healthcare (p. 10). Standing categorizes the precariat class into three primary groups of which immigrants and migrants account for a large segment. He also includes minorities as well as young people who are compelled to work in menial jobs for which they are highly overqualified. Standing’s notion of the precariat class has been critiqued by several scholars of labour studies (Breman, 2013; Jørgensen, 2016a, 2016b). They argue that the purported precariat described by Standing essentially describes the traditional working class (Breman, 2013; Jørgensen, 2016a, 2016b). They contend that a portion of those who are categorized as part of the working class has been relabeled as the precariat to conform with Standing’s concept of a new class emerging from the forces of globalization.

Another critique of the precariat concept posits that the unstable and flexible employment structures produced by neoliberalism are neither new nor distinct developments. Throughout history, the working class has frequently grappled with periods of irregular and precarious employment (Breman, 2013; Jørgensen, 2016a, 2016b). While I agree with some of these criticisms directed at Standing’s (2012) concept of the precariat class, I also recognize the value

of this concept in providing a framework for examining and discussing the relationship between precarity, neoliberal globalization, and capitalism. This is particularly relevant in the context of the precariat class of immigrants and migrants who, according to Standing, are produced by the forces of globalization. Jørgensen (2016) argues that a distinctive feature of the precarity engendered by globalization is the growing numbers of immigrants and migrants living in precarious conditions in Europe. Immigrants seamlessly fit into the evolving hyper-flexible labour markets and structures, where they are subjected to exploitation and scapegoating within the neoliberal order. Immigrants and migrants, a critical source of cheap labour within Europe, are seen as the “new undeserving poor” within Europe’s borders (Bommes & Geddes, 2000, p. 251).

Neoliberal discourses have served to glorify globalization and the resultant hyper-mobility of markets and people. However, the hypermobility of capitalist markets and the increasing regulation and exploitation of labour, in many cases comprising racialized immigrants, propagate environments that breed and exacerbate inequities and racism and the development of parallel communities of racialized and spatialized Others. Immigration is a critical component of globalization and is pivotal to the configuration of the new transnational economic order, which is to be found in the major cities and capitals of the world, where most of the immigrant populations are concentrated. The presence of multicultural Others in large cities is primarily a result of globalization via the mobility of labour (Ong, 2006; Sassen, 1998).

Within the neoliberal gendered and racialized labour market, immigrant women are segregated into low wages, precarious jobs, and communities. Neoliberal globalization has engendered hyper-flexible, unstable, unregulated labour market conditions, forcing the precariat into new systems of exploitation (Standing, 2012). The financial deregulation and economic liberalism unleashed by neoliberal globalization have seen a decline in government market regulations and interventions, relying on and exacerbating further exploitation and marginalization of racialized immigrants. For immigrant women, a *captive* labour, force toiling in precarious jobs and industries, it is a double death due to their race and gender. Under neoliberal globalization, the erosion of human rights and labour rights globally and the overall deterioration in the living standards of racialized people, specifically racialized immigrant women in Canada, have seen the dismantling of welfare services and the elimination and reduction of many state services in healthcare and social services (Ong, 2006). This shift has resulted in racialized immigrant

women, in many cases already the primary caregivers for childcare and elder care, having greater home care responsibilities. Many women are forced into even more precarious and unsafe unemployment (Das Gupta, 2009; Man, 2004). These women become increasingly vulnerable to further marginalization and social exclusion, as “highly bifurcated labour markets undermine immigrants’ ability to successfully integrate into their host society” (Das Gupta, 2009, p. 137).

The precarity of work and the compartmentalization of racialized immigrant women in under-employment and unemployment engendered by neoliberal globalization has produced the *ghettoization* of jobs based on race, class, and gender (Galabuzi, 2006). During the COVID-19 pandemic, Ontario and Canada were able to witness firsthand the plight of racialized workers who historically have comprised the bulk of the care and service sectors and who are disproportionately concentrated in jobs such as personal service workers, orderlies, food and package delivery, factory, cleaners, and security. Many of these workers are racialized immigrant women, forced to work during the pandemic, risking their lives and their families, as risk was outsourced to disproportionately Black and Brown bodies. In Ontario, personal support workers (PSWs) are subjected to extensive precarity while caring for the elderly. They work long hours in severely underpaid, unstable, part-time and casual jobs with no benefits, and often face abuse and violence (Hapsari et al., 2022; Zagrodney & Saks, 2017). Racialized immigrant women comprise a significant percentage of the care sector, including PSWs, nurse aides, and orderlies (Pinto et al., 2022). Data showed that in 2016, more than 33% of the 245,500 workers employed as nurse aides, orderlies, and patient service associates in Canada were immigrants; immigrant women accounted for a substantial portion (Turcotte & Savage, 2020). Black and Filipino women are found to be overrepresented in jobs such as nurse aides, orderlies, and patient care jobs. Racialized women, many of whom have a university degree in health care or a related field, are often overqualified, underemployed, and underpaid for their work (Turcotte & Savage, 2020). COVID-19 highlighted the paradoxical space FERIW occupy within the neoliberal political economy. FERIW along with other racialized workers constitute the quintessential worker in globalized racial capitalism, hailed as the “essential workers” of the pandemic, while at the same time constituting the quintessential disposable worker.

3.4 Canadian Experience and Exclusionary Credentialling

Numerous studies have argued that the Canadian experience (CE) for immigrants to secure employment is a raced project aimed at deskilling racialized immigrants (Chatterjee, 2015a,

2015b; Ku et al., 2019; Sakamoto et al., 2010). Ku et al. (2019) position the Canadian experience discourse as couching race within a neutral language of difference to produce and marginalize immigrants as racialized Others. In their study examining the discourse of Canadian experience requirement for employment through a review of articles appearing in the print media during the period 2006 to 2011, Ku et al. found that the CE requirement is a paradox. Immigrants must possess CE to secure employment, yet obtaining CE is contingent on having a job. Consequently, most immigrants are compelled to undertake unpaid volunteer work or low-skilled employment to meet the essential CE requirement. The authors argue that the CE requirement functions as a tool to normalize and reproduce hierarchical citizenship and belonging. It places the entire burden of labour market outcomes on immigrants, who are subsequently deemed deficient when they are unable to secure employment.

Ku et al. (2019) also highlight that the discourse surrounding CE is completely normalized in media coverage as an uncontested factual requirement that all immigrants should attain. The authors conclude, critically, that the CE discourse functions as a marker of the nation's anti-racism by excluding racial bodies on account of a seemingly neutral discourse and requirement of CE, which "activates historical racial hierarchies in Canada without publicly acknowledging the racism behind it" (p. 306). This anti-racism function of CE aligns with the function of Canadian multiculturalism, a seemingly benevolent strategy to make immigrants feel welcome in Canada, but in reality, operates as an apparatus of control and Othering. CE functions as a raced nation-making strategy relegating racialized immigrants to the low end of jobs and professions (Ku et al., 2019). By its very appellation, CE is a raced project characterizing professional experience from non-White countries as inferior and inadequate. Thus, racialized immigrants start from scratch when entering the LMI space. They are divested of their *raced* qualifications and repurposed for the LMI space, with the requisite Canadian work experience to obtain employment.

In 2013, the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) declared the requirement for Canadian experience for employment a violation of human rights and may only be used by employers in certain limited circumstances. The OHRC (n.d.) also describes the Canadian experience as:

a requirement or preference (intentional or not) that people applying for jobs have experience working in Canada. Some employers may say this directly in a job posting or description. But in many cases, requiring Canadian experience is

done covertly in the recruitment process. For example, an employer may not state openly that Canadian experience is needed, but could give more value to it than to non-Canadian experience. Employers may also devalue or discount foreign experience, or require knowledge they assume someone can only get in a Canadian workplace (for example, social or other “soft” skills). (para. 1)

Although there is no official standard definition of what constitutes Canadian experience, the term has come to mean a combination of hard skills related to technical competencies required for the job and essential soft skills such as networking, professionalism, communication, and critical thinking (Chatterjee, 2015a, 2015b; Sakamoto et al., 2010). These skills are typically required for employees to secure employment aligned with their qualifications. In her research on CE as a strategy for nation-building, Chatterjee (2015b) argues that CE functions as both “proactive” and “defensive” mechanisms thus enabling the state to secure critical labour supplies through immigration, while employing racialized discourses of skill to cast the ideal worker as one possessing CE, which immigrants typically lack (p. 544). The discourse of CE portrays and normalizes immigrants as deficient, and it is only through Canadian education and work experience to mitigate their raced and inferior education and professional experience can they become worthy of some form of labour market participation. In 2008, Canada established the Canadian Experience Class, enabling international students and temporary migrant workers to pursue permanent residency status provided they have a minimum of one year of relevant work experience in Canada (Choi et al., 2021). Chatterjee (2015b) contends that this category effectively reinforces the construction of the ideal foreign worker as one who possesses an approximation of Canadian cultural capital in the form of Canadian work experience.

Scholars highlight that like race, skill is a social construction, not some objectively derived standard measure of aptitude. Concepts of skill are constructed within relations of power and ideological processes, including gender, race, and class (Arat-Koç, 1999; Reitz, 2001; Shan, 2013). Chatterjee (2015b) argues that the adoption of CE as an unconditional skill of its own accord serves to preserve the distinctive character and space of the nation. She describes how immigrants, who are characterized as deficient in these skills, are compelled to acquire specific Canadian educational and cultural capital to gain access to this privileged space of belonging. I would argue that despite obtaining CE and Canadian credentials, many FERIW continue to be

excluded from the HSLM space. FERIW's race, gender, accents, culture, class, and nationality contribute to their deskilling and eviction from the category of qualified within the HSLM.

Power and knowledge are mutually constitutive, according to Foucault (1980), and the power to legitimize or delegitimize knowledge is based on who wields that power. Said (1979/2003, p. 40) posits that the West "created" the Orient through its military, cultural, and intellectual power over the Orient: "If the essence of Orientalism is the ineradicable distinction between Western superiority and Oriental inferiority, then we must be prepared to note how in its development and subsequent history Orientalism deepened and even hardened the distinction" (p. 42). Like the colonizing power of the West to produce the Orient in diametrical opposition to itself and to rule over its creation, the *exaltation* of the nation and White national subject in Canada is secured through the delegitimization of the colour-coded credentials of the racialized immigrant subject (Galabuzi, 2006; Krysa et al., 2019; Said, 1979/2003; Thobani, 2007).

Many scholars have investigated the construction of foreign credentials as inferior and inadequate, and thus materially rejected within the LMI border space (Cardu, 2007; George et al., 2012; Krysa et al., 2019). George et al. (2012) found that the internationally trained engineers in their study employed a variety of approaches in their job search efforts to find suitable engineering positions, but they frequently encountered little success. Respondents identified non-recognition of international qualifications and their prior job experience outside Canada as some of the main reasons for their inability to find work in their profession. George et al. described these findings as consistent with the literature, citing a population-based study conducted by Engineers Canada and the Canadian Council of Technicians and Technologists in 2009, where 55% of international engineers in their study identified a lack of Canadian experience and qualifications as the primary reason for not working as engineers in Canada (p. 316). The devaluation, unemployment, and under-employment that immigrants in the study experienced due to the non-recognition of foreign credentials are consistent with the accounts provided by most participants in this study, who expressed that their credentials were not recognized in Canada.

Within the neoliberal globalization system, racialized immigrant women are deskilled even before they arrive in Canada. By labelling them as dependents within the immigration apparatus, they are already stripped of their individuality and attributes. By the time they get to Canada, they are further deskilled and de-credentialed in service of the global capitalist system and a

colonial hierarchical labour market which stratifies FERIW into cheap, precarious, low-end jobs. Several scholars have emphasized Canada's shift to *hyper-masculinized* immigration policies in the last few decades within the neoliberal capitalist system that has given priority to immigrants within the economic class—usually, male professionals who meet the financial requirements to qualify for immigration within this category (Arat-Koç, 1999; Ngwenya, 2018; Thobani, 2000). Most of the women I interviewed for this study had immigrated to Canada as dependents of their spouses, with their spouses being the principal applicants for immigration.

3.5 Licensing and Regulatory Bodies and De-Credentialling

Numerous studies have attributed the poor labour market performance of FERIW to the gatekeeping practices of licensing and regulatory bodies (Boyd, 2000; Cardu, 2007; Man, 2004; Premji et al., 2014). While the federal government has overall jurisdiction over immigration including who gains entry to Canada, the provinces determine labour market needs. Professional associations and licensing and regulatory bodies in each province have sole authority in setting eligibility and certification requirements, which can vary by province (Man, 2004). Licensing and regulatory bodies and professional associations act as the gatekeepers of these professions. They possess exclusive authority over the licensing process for individuals aspiring to practice in regulated professions, wielding the power to decide who gains entry and who is excluded. This exclusive authority carries significant material consequences for FERIW, who are often disproportionately delegitimized within the centres of power held by licensing and regulatory bodies. These licensing and regulatory bodies, along with professional associations, unilaterally define what constitutes legitimate knowledge and expertise. They also determine which qualifications fall short of Canadian standards, exercising significant influence over the recognition and acceptance of diverse credentials. Licensing and regulatory bodies and professional associations have been described as *labour market shelters* to safeguard the profession by restricting access and ensuring limited numbers to maintain an elite, select niche of licensed professionals through admission, equivalency, and exam requirements (Boyd, 2000; Man, 2004). Within the professional licensing and regulatory space, Canadian exceptionalism and elite citizens are produced and reinscribed as White. A limited number of racialized bodies are granted access if they jump through all the right hoops, pass the equivalency exams, and pay the costly fees for exams and entry to satisfactorily demonstrate they can be deemed a close approximation to a Canadian equivalent. Bauder (2003) describes this exclusionary process as

the “institutionalized processes of cultural distinction” to preserve the racialized labour market according to country of origin and education (p. 699).

Non-recognition of international credentials is often cited as one of the top barriers racialized immigrants experience in their labour market integration and outcomes (Cardu, 2007; Creese & Kambere, 2003; Premji et al., 2014). In their study on immigrant women professionals’ labour market integration in Quebec City, Cardu (2007) found that compared to European women with an unemployment rate of 9%, African and Asian women were unemployed at a much higher rate of 18–21% and that immigrant women with a doctorate were unemployed at the same rate as women from Quebec with a college diploma. Cardu also identified the non-recognition of credentials and stereotyping based on ethnicity and appearance as significant barriers to labour market integration and deskilling. The literature reflects the disproportionate devaluation of credentials of racialized immigrants by regulatory gatekeepers who, from the very onset, have normalized and established Canadian standards as the model criteria against which raced credentials from perceived Third-World countries are deemed to be inadequate.

3.6 Entry Point: The LMI Site as a Space of Colonial Violence

The literature on the labour market integration, performance, and outcomes for racialized immigrant professionals, and FERIW specifically, frame the issues around notions of deficiency and inadequacy. These included a lack of Canadian experience, poor language skills, speaking English with an accent, weak communication skills, and foreign credentials not on par with Canadian standards. Immigrants are discursively blamed for being the source of their poor labour market performance and materially punished as a result. This study places the literature on LMI studies in conversation with the literature on colonial violence to position the LMI site as a space of discursive, epistemic, spiritual and cultural violence inscribed on the bodies of FERIW through the invalidation and dispossession of their knowledge, credentials, and identities. FERIW are unable to access jobs in the HSLM commensurate with their credentials due to their race, gender, ethnicity, culture, class, nationality, and accent. Their racialization prevents their successful integration into the labour market, resulting in poverty, deskilling, and relegation to the gendered, segregated, cheap labour economy. Goldberg (2009) argues, “Throughout modernity, racial meaning and presumption have deeply marked not just where one can work but what one can do, from slavery and ownership to unskilled labour and professional license, artistic expression and intellection” (p. 368).

Fanon (2004) emphasized the violence and dehumanizing effects of colonialism. Thobani (2007) posits, “It is ... imperative to examine the relationship of the violence of colonialism to the law and the transmogrification of this violence into the legalistic structures of the settler society” (p. 35). Mbembe (2008) describes the sovereign’s power to determine who lives and dies, who is disposable, and who has value. Extending the notions of the violence of colonialism and the sovereign’s power to determine life and death to the LMI space, within this space the state and its institutions of power determine whose credentials are valid and whose are made disposable. FERIWs are dispossessed of their credentials, consigned to the category of unqualified, and are discursively and spatially segregated into raced enclaves within the racialized division of cheap labour and low-income housing and communities. Speaking of colonial occupation, Mbembe engages with Fanon’s work on the compartmentalization of the colonial world to describe the “writing of new spatial relations (territorialization) ultimately amounted to the production of boundaries and hierarchies, zones and enclaves” as well as the violence that is underwritten by sovereign rule and territorialization (p. 15).

The LMI space is characterized by communities of colour, in which race, gender and class impact the feminization of poverty. Applying Foucault’s (1980) framework on language and violence, enacted through the validation of discourses, to the LMI site, foreign-educated immigrant professionals are, by the very appellations of visible minorities and immigrants, marked as different. They are depicted as unskilled, possessing qualifications deemed inferior from their perceived Third-World countries. Subsequently, these immigrants find themselves evicted from the category of qualified, relegated instead to the reservoir of cheap labour within the LMI space and ethnic enclaves, characterized by Galabuzi (2006) as Canada’s “colour-coded labour market ... [and] creeping apartheid” (p. 15). Canada dropped their overtly racist immigration categorizations in the 1960s. However, these got redeployed and reprogrammed into racist exclusionary labour market segmentation where factors including race, gender and ethnicity are employed to “filter out the undesirable, the unclean, and the unworthy” (Munck, 2008, p. 1234). The LMI space reinforces the hierarchical inclusion and rights of those differentially included within the nation.

Walia’s (2004, p. 3) concept of “border imperialism” provides a valuable framework to analyze and highlight how the LMI site functions as a border space of violence. FERIWs are denied access to high-skilled jobs through invalidation and dispossession of their credentials,

knowledge, and expertise and cast off to low socio-economic jobs and status, with material life and death consequences. Walia (2004) identifies the violence inflicted on racialized displaced people at borders and border imperialism “within the matrix of racialized empire and neoliberal capitalism” (p. 75). Drawing parallels with Walia’s analysis, I posit that the LMI border constitutes a spatially compartmentalized site, paralleling the experiences of communities of colour who are racialized within the state and differentially incorporated into the colonial capitalist hierarchical order. This order is secured by state institutions, including legal entities and state functionaries such as professional and regulatory bodies. Furthermore, it is fortified through various forms of violence characteristic of colonial hierarchies and border imperialism, including physical, economic, cultural, and spiritual violence.

Borders are physical markers of boundaries delineating geographical territories. Borders are also ideological and fluid constructs and act not just as a sorting mechanism filtering individuals into classifications of skilled and unskilled, prioritized and unwanted, professionals and domestics, migrants and refugees, but also producing and prioritizing particular subjectivities (Anderson et al., 2009; Reitz, 2001). As markers of boundaries, borders fix and reinscribe what is located within and simultaneously what is excluded. Borders facilitate the selective inclusion of racialized bodies within colonial hierarchical structures, strategically leveraging and capitalizing on their labour for economic gain. Walia argues that border imperialism relies on a deeply ingrained racial hierarchical structure of citizenship that demarcates citizenship and belonging. She contends that border imperialism is linked to the state’s involvement in the exploitation of migrant labour, with Canada and the United States serving as examples of how the state sustains and propagates labour exploitation. I would extend this enactment of border imperialism to immigrant bodies. The violence of eviction from the *qualified* category within the LMI space due to the intersections of race, gender, class, ethnicity, and culture is pivotal to the neoliberal capitalist system. This eviction and repurposing of skilled labour for the unskilled economy ensures a steady supply of cheap, surplus labour. Additionally, the ongoing violence that FERIW encounter in the LMI site in Canada has to be located within the historical and contemporary colonial racial capitalist system, currently signified by neoliberal globalization. The colonial racial capitalist system has historically had a symbiotic relationship to death and the disposability of racialized labour, what Agamben (2003) described as the “living death” spaces of the plantations (Agamben, 2003). Disposable populations continue to be central to the workings of

contemporary neoliberal racial capitalism. FERIW's disposable credentials and lives are a function of the racial economic order.

3.7 Summary

In this chapter, I presented an overview of the key literature on the challenges faced by FERIW in their labour market integration in Canada. I examined the discourses of neoliberalism, globalization, and the making of a raced and gendered precariat class within the neoliberal globalization system. I situated the LMI site as a space of ongoing colonial violence that denies FERIW access to high-skilled, professional occupations and sectors. The conceptual framework that informed this work is outlined in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4

Discursive Framework

4.1 Introduction

I adopt the use of a discursive rather than theoretical framework in this study to create space to facilitate the fluidity and flexibility of ideas and discussions over grand narratives and scholarly dogma (Dei & Asgharzadeh, 2001). I employ an integrative discursive framework to interrogate the labour market integration experiences of Foreign-Educated Racialized Immigrant Women (FERIW) within the political economy consisting of: anti-colonial and anti-racist theory. My analysis also draws upon concepts of racial capitalism and structural violence to analyze the acts of eviction that FERIW are subjected to within the high-skilled labour market space in Canada and the consequences and impact of this eviction.

4.2 Anti-Colonial Theory

Through the lens of anti-colonial theory, I explore how despite the ending of the official phase of European colonization after World War II, Western hegemony and imperialism continued. Anti-colonial theory seeks to counter and change all forms of ongoing dominance, including violence and marginalization stemming from neoliberal racial capitalism (Kempf, 2009). The global hegemonic structure of trade and finance, currently signified by transnational capitalism, that is, globalization, began with Europe's colonization of the world and has continued into the present day with terms of trade, wages, housing, and access to healthcare and food disproportionately favourable to neoliberal transnational corporations and governments. This has consistently disadvantaged vulnerable communities, including racialized immigrants, in the transnational capitals and urban cities of the world (Sartre et al., 2005; Sassen, 1998; Watts, 2017). Colonial structures and practices, sustained by political and legal apparatus and discourse, remain deeply embedded within the global political and economic system. Memmi (2021) reminds us that: "Racism is ingrained in actions, institutions, and in the nature of the colonialist methods of production and exchange. Political and social regulations reinforce one another" (p. 20). The current colonial economic hierarchy in Canada is embedded within the global racial capitalist framework and relies on gendered racialized labour for its survival and expansion. The colonial violence perpetrated against FERIW through their eviction from the LMI space requires integrative anti-colonial and anti-racist resistance and interventions.

By engaging with anti-colonialism in this study, I highlight the entanglements of the international capitalist system with national and local structures of power and strategies of disempowerment. I argue that through the capitalist system, and consistently on terms favourable to imperial countries, former colonized countries continue to have their politics, economics, and by extension, domestic policies dictated to them by imperial powers. A combination of financial de-regulation, the liberalization of trade, global access to labour, and attacks on social security systems, referred to as the “Washington Consensus,” has seen the United States become the centre of the propagation of the globalization agenda (Levitt, 2005, p. 199). The United States became one of the new and significant superpowers after World War II, wielding its power through economic control exercised through the tools of capital and technology and exerting dominance over international financial institutions such as the World Trade Organization, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund (Watts, 2017; Young, 2016). The ability to exercise their sovereignty for newly independent nations was very limited, as they continued to be exploited by the imperial countries. Writing about neocolonialism in Africa, Ogar et al. (2019) describe globalization as an “agent of neocolonialism” (p. 91) in Africa, prescribing and possessing development and resources of Africa through the tentacles of the global financial institutions, including the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and multinational corporations (p. 2).

Following World War II, the international economic order, operating through transnational capitalism and global capital and finance, including global financial institutions, in many ways functioned much like the old colonialism. Within this ongoing colonial apparatus, the ruling class and other members of the national elite predominantly work in the service of international capital and imperialism to further their interests, while implementing and facilitating policies detrimental to the national interests (Watts, 2017; Young, 2016). Global capital, working through imperial agendas and multinational companies, continues to propel people into new dependency relations, destabilizing and impoverishing countries, and forcing the unprecedented global march of labour of the poor and dispossessed. This colonialism in motion benefits the political economies of the West. Postulating a new apparatus of neocolonialism and describing *feminized neocolonialism* through their research on “The Globalization of Care,” Sarvasy and Longo (2004) describe the lives of Filipina domestic workers who migrate to wealthy countries to support themselves and their families back home as “a new type of settlement . . . [that is] feminized neocolonialism” (p. 394), which is different from the traditional colonialism of

settlement and subjugation (Sarvasy & Longo, 2004). They describe this feminized neocolonialism of Filipinas as “how the world has become like a household with Filipina servants” (p. 409). This aligns with my concept of *colonialism in motion*: a contemporary manifestation of colonialism that reproduces and perpetuates colonial structures through the systematic deskilling and re-purposing of racialized and gendered immigrant labour, essential to sustain the low-wage labour economy. This is achieved through the impoverishment, destabilization, and orchestrated movement of people from former colonized countries, facilitated by the tentacles of the world capitalist system.

Marx (1973, as cited in Sartre, 2001) described colonialism as “capitalism in naked form, stripped of the decorous clothing of European bourgeois society” (p. 324). Colonialism and capitalism crystallized during slavery, as is detailed later in the section on racial capitalism. Colonialism was secured through a system of racialized exploitation and violence in the colonies. Ongoing colonialism is partially secured through the violence of dispossession, dehumanization, and denial of the rights, knowledge, and credentials of FERIW. The colonial system has been reconfigured by the West to push immigrants into what I label colonialism in motion. Bhabha (2012) argues that globalization has ushered in a subtle form of neocolonialism, propelling the world into an era characterized by heightened terror and violence. Part of this violence within globalization is the violence being inflicted on racialized immigrant labour, as FERIW are re-colonized, stripped of credentials, and reconfigured within the globalized movement of labour in the cheap, unskilled labour market space in Canada. As discussed in Chapter 3, the precariat class produced by globalization’s social and economic deregulation is being subjected to increased exploitation and precarity. Many racialized immigrants, who already constitute a vulnerable group, face escalating marginalization and exploitation, further exacerbating their precarious lives. For FERIW, the “ghettoization” (Galabuzi, 2001, p. 91) of jobs based on race, gender, and class results in economic and social death (Fanon, 1991). An anti-colonial theory provides “a newly holistic reading to domination and resistance, raising important questions around the intersections of class, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, racial, linguistic, and religion-based oppressions” (Kempf, 2009, p. 14). Similarly, Dei and Asgharzadeh (2001) present an anti-colonial framework that highlights “race and racialization processes” (p. 317), urging us to analyze how intersectional identities, including race, gender, class, and sexuality, are sites of punishment and subjugation. Many scholars have examined the complex challenges that FERIW face in their settlement experiences in Canada because of their intersectional identities

(Das Gupta, 2019; Galabuzi, 2006; Ng, 1992). They become confined to unskilled and low-skilled labour in the LMI site as a consequence of their deskilling and devaluation. Race, gender, class, and immigrant status constitute some of the principal sites of racialization and marginalization of FERIW.

The delegitimization of FERIW's credentials and knowledges in the LMI space need to be linked to ongoing colonial ideologies and systems, including universities and licensing and regulatory bodies, where knowledge is produced and legitimized. Henry et al. (2017) underscore how the university represents a key "racialized site" for the production and perpetuation of race thinking and epistemic erasures, including whose knowledge gets represented and thus validated (p. 3). Similarly, Dei and Asgharzadeh (2001) urge us to be mindful of colonial knowledge production and validation within the academy, which privileges and validates Western-centric knowledge and practices while invalidating and negating the knowledge of racialized communities. The colonial project within the academy reflects, serves, sustains, and reproduces "the material, political, and ideological interests of the state and the economic/social formation" as do other institutional state apparatus (p. 300). In so doing, ongoing colonial knowledge production and validation serve to delegitimize FERIW's credentials and knowledge, evicting them from the high-skilled labour market within the political economy, and repurposing them for cheap labour. The racialized organization of the political economy mirrors a colonial dynamic rooted in Whiteness and Blackness within which racialized immigrants are integrated (Bannerji, 2000a). Similarly, Fanon (2004) further emphasizes the structured role of racism in the economic life and apparatus of the colonies, such that "you are rich because you are white, you are white because you are rich" (p. xx). In Canada, your credentials are recognized if you are White. Your foreign, *raced* credentials are dispossessed and erased if you are a FERIW.

Fanon's (1991) exploration of the psychological effects of colonialism on the colonized underscores the epistemic, discursive and cultural violence enacted on FERIW within the LMI site. His account delves into the profound self-dislocation experienced by the colonized, as they are fixed, transfixed, and violently transformed under the oppressive gaze of the colonizer, which Fanon (1991) compares to a physical amputation:

The white man, who unmercifully imprisoned me, I took myself far off from my own presence, far indeed, and made myself an object. What else could it be for

me but an amputation, an excision, a hemorrhage that spattered my whole body with black blood? (pp. 112–113)

The violence of this dislocation, this rupturing as described by Fanon (1991), parallels the violence of eviction from the high-skilled labour market space that FERIW experience in Canada. Many of the participants in this study recounted how everything that forms the essence of who they are, including their education and professional experiences that shaped their professional identities, are taken from them within the LMI space. According to Ava, one of the participants in this study, “Canada invalidated who I am. Things that make me who I am” (July 26, 2021, Transcript 2). Fanon was one of the first writers to identify the relationship between language, culture, and power (Burney, 2012; Mondal, 2014). The colonizer’s language is perceived as superior and dominant, and the colonized is forced to speak the colonizer’s language and forego and forget their own history and native language, which is denigrated as backward and inferior. Many of the study’s participants shared experiences of how speaking English with an accent immediately rendered them as deficient within the LMI space. However, as postulated by Dei and Asgharzadeh (2001), anti-colonialism represents “an epistemology of the colonized people” (p. 300). They explain that their objective in introducing a reframed anti-colonial discursive framework is to provide insights into the realities and experiences of society from the perspective of the subjugated. Dei and Asgharzadeh’s “epistemology of the colonized” opens up spaces of resistance to hear directly from FERIW and centre their voices and experiences as they offer counter-knowledge, rejecting their portrayal as unskilled and deficient within the labour market integration (LMI) site. The participants in this study contest the hegemonic LMI policies and practices that evict them from the category *qualified* in the service of neoliberal capitalism. They hold steadfast to their credentials, knowledges, and identities as counter-hegemonic acts aimed at disrupting ongoing colonial neoliberal hegemonic practices.

4.3 Anti-Racist Theory

Race and gender are salient entry points into this study. Race is integral to the ongoing raced national project. Dei and Johal (2005) posit that race is constructed ideologically and politically with material rewards and privileges. Race remains one of the central ways difference gets produced and rewarded, as you wear your race on your face. Anti-racist theorists have argued that the social construction of race carries material benefits, rewards, and punishments. This social construction of race allows people to be categorized along “assumed biological

differences” (Thompson, 2020, p. 17). These divisions are then used to reward those who belong to the privileged category of Whiteness and penalize those who fall outside of Whiteness. By incorporating an anti-racist discursive framework into this study, I build on and strengthen the arguments I have made through anti-colonial theory to interrogate the issues of deskilling due to the intersection of race with other parts of FERIW’s identities to render them unqualified within LMI space in Canada. I use the saliency of race to foreground this study. Anti-racist theory allows me to apply the lens of race to conduct a more nuanced and race-centred examination of how, under a policy of multiculturalism, systemic racism intersects with sexism, classism, and an ongoing hegemonic project to structure the lives of FERIW in Canada. These factors delineate between model immigrants and those who are not, where race and power come to be understood as relations of domination and subordination (Dei, 1996). In addition to anti-colonial theory, anti-racist theory advocates for the notion of an epistemic community in which multiple voices and forms of knowledge are centred and for the foregrounding of the epistemic saliency of racialized voices (Dei & Johal, 2005, p. 6).

The movement and demand for anti-racist change for racialized people originated from collective grassroots organizing within local communities to challenge the state’s professed commitment to equality and rights for all citizens regardless of race (Dei, 1996). An integrated anti-racism and anti-colonial framework enables the pursuit of an action-oriented, transformative process to fully address systemic racism in the polity, law, institutions, and the very fabric of society. “Anti-racism explicitly names the issues of race and social difference as issues of power and equity than as matters of cultural and ethnic variety” (Dei, 1996, p. 25). Communities become racialized when they are singled out based on differences of colour, culture, ethnicity, and religion and subjected to unequal treatment (Dei, 1996). For many FERIW in Canada, there is deskilling and dispossession of credentials and *singling out* for low-paying, hazardous, low-end jobs based on race and gender. This exploitative system is couched in the neoliberal language of equal opportunity for all citizens, using a seemingly meritocratic system based on qualifications and ability (Dei, 1996). Within neoliberal discourse, the notions of skills, competencies, accountability, standards, quality, and excellence are framed in seemingly neutral de-political language and mask the structural inequities deployed to marginalize and racialize particular communities. Henry et al. (2017) argue that “Neoliberal principles have become the ideological framework and discourse through which racialized beliefs and exclusions are enabled, reinforced, and defended (p. 8).

Within de-politized neoliberal discourses of skills and qualifications, FERIW's raced credentials are discursively framed as deficient. Their raced credentials, from what is perceived as their Third World countries of origin, do not meet the exalted standards of excellence of the nation. As Foucault (1980) reminds us, knowledge and power are mutually reinforcing, and FERIW's knowledge and identities are invalidated within the colonial racial capitalist system, within which the LMI site and licensing and regulatory bodies are embedded. Within the LMI space, FERIW's raced identities become sites of mutually reinforcing power, oppression, and exclusion. The core of Western sovereignty and power is built on a system of racialized power and ongoing colonial violence (Thobani, 2007). Part of this ongoing colonial violence is the eviction of FERIW from the qualified category, and their relegation to the gendered and racially compartmentalized political economy. Fanon (1986, as cited in Ahmed, 2007b), argues that the world we come into is already shaped by colonialism and race, and space becomes inherently shaped by race, and made for White bodies. Racialized bodies can enter spaces made for Whiteness, but they will "have to inhabit whiteness, if they are to get 'in'" (Ahmed, 2007b, p. 158). To be able to have any chance of crossing the LMI border into high-skilled jobs, FERIW will need to inhabit *Canadianess*. Thus, racialized immigrants, specifically female racialized immigrants, are seen as having to be imbued with Canadian values, credentials, and work experience if they are to conform to the prevailing racialized state narratives and imaginary about immigrants. Arendt (1973) posits, "The right to have rights" includes the right to belong to a community (pp. 295–296). In Canada, that community is White, and your raced credentials are invalidated if you are a FERIW and you are singled out for punishment, eviction, and confinement to underemployment and unemployment within the racially compartmentalized political economy.

The insights from anti-racist feminist scholars, exemplified by bell hooks (2015) and Audre Lorde (1984/2007), underscore and help contextualize the impacts of intersectionality on FERIW's labour market experiences in Canada. bell hooks (2015) calls for anti-racist feminist theory to create spaces for the voices of marginalized women and for racialized women to actively participate in and establish their place within theoretical discourse. Audre Lorde challenged White Western feminists' privilege and progress within the White patriarchal system that came at the expense of Black and Third World women's marginalization. Lorde's (1984/2007) foundational work "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House" has become a powerful call to action to tear down the status quo and web of interlocking systems

of oppression faced by Black women and women of colour, including Western feminism's universalizing of women's marginalization, which erases the intersectional identities of racialized women. As noted by Ilmonen (2019), Kimberle Crenshaw is credited for first using the term intersectionality, drawing on critical Black feminist and legal theory to articulate the multiplicity of factors, including race, gender, and sexuality, that contribute to the oppression of African American women. However, several leading Black writers and scholars, including Audre Lorde and bell hooks, applied intersectional paradigms and perspectives to their work in the 1970s, naming class, gender, and race to underscore the multiple sites of oppression for Black women without explicitly naming it intersectional (hooks, 2015; Ilmonen, 2019).

Anti-racist feminist scholars such as bell hooks (2015) and Audre Lorde (1984/2007) argue that colonial oppression, including racial, ethnic, class, and cultural oppression, continues to marginalize racialized women in Western nations and formerly colonized regions. bell hooks (2012) introduced the concept of the *oppositional gaze* as a space of resistance for Black women when they discuss their cinematic viewing experiences. She reminds readers that “the gaze” (p. 115) has been a space of resistance for “colonized black people globally” (p. 116) and calls for Blacks who suffered silencing, erasures, violence, and racism to contest their marginalization by defiantly looking back and thus change their reality. bell hooks (2015) challenges Western feminists' hegemonic discourses that reduce all women's oppression to a patriarchal system without addressing race, class, ethnicity, and cultural differences, challenging the homogenization of racialized women's experiences as far removed from women's lived experiences. Prior to intersectionality becoming popular within feminist theorizing, bell hooks (2015) spoke about interlocking webs of oppression and the marginalization of Black women. In *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*, bell hooks (2015) presents a redefined feminism that incorporates dimensions of racism, classism, sexism, and imperialism to fight against discrimination, exploitation, and oppression. She underscores that subjectivities are comprised of these multiple, interconnected categories, which cannot be disentangled when resisting and fighting oppression. Bell hooks' ‘oppositional gaze’ opens up a crucial site for resistance and has important implications for understanding how FERIW navigate and challenge their marginalization in the Canadian LMI site, to contest racism and the violence of the dispossession of their foreign credentials and professional identities. Feminist anti-racist theorizing empowers FERIW to speak back and (re)claim their credentials, knowledges, and identities.

4.4 Theorizing Racial Capitalism

Colonialism and capitalism's symbiotic relationship with race and race thinking is a central theme underlying this study. The racial political economy drives and sustains the global socio-economic system. Many scholars have examined the historical and contemporary nature of the relationship between race, capitalism, and colonialism (Leroy & Jenkins, 2021; Williams, 2013; Robinson, 2000, as cited in Thomas, 2013). Racial subjugation and hierarchies are central to the workings of capitalism. Racial capitalism is defined as "the process by which the key dynamics of capitalism—accumulation/dispossession, credit/debt, production/surplus, capitalist/worker, developed/underdeveloped, contract/coercion, and others—become articulated through race" (Leroy & Jenkins, 2021, p. 3). Cedric Robinson (2000, as cited in Thomas, 2013) argues that capitalism's global development and expansion were facilitated by racism and race thinking that crystallized with the Atlantic slave trade and colonialism in the Americas. Robinson (2000, as cited in Lumba, 2021) further contends that the violence of colonialism and the system it orchestrated ensured subjugated and surplus labour and land "were racialized into a transnational exploitative and oppressive means of production ... [and] conditioned the twin motors of the transatlantic political economy: slave plantations and industrial manufacturing" (p. 111). It is important to note that scholars have acknowledged that racism pre-dated capitalism, but they saw difference and discrimination consolidating into racial differences under capitalism (Leroy & Jenkins, 2021; Lumba, 2021; Thomas, 2013). Racial capitalism has historically been deeply connected to death including the "living death" spaces of the plantations (Agamben, 2003). Disposable populations have historically been a feature of racial capitalism (Darian-Smith, 2021) and continue to be a feature of contemporary neoliberal capitalism.

While racism was intrinsic to the capitalist system and British industrialization, scholars like Walter Rodney (2010) and Eric Williams (2013) argue that the subjugation of Africans for the plantations was for purely economic not racist motives. Rodney (2010, as cited in Williams, 2013) contends that: "European planters and miners enslaved Africans for economic reasons, so that their labor power could be exploited.... Oppression of African people on purely racial grounds accompanied, strengthened, and became indistinguishable from oppression for economic reasons" (p. 7).

4.4.1 Racial Capitalism and Immigrant Labour

Racial capitalism is a dynamic and evolving phenomenon, subject to continuous shaping, reshaping, and transformation over time (Leroy & Jenkins, 2021). Neoliberalism and globalization represent the contemporary manifestations of racial capitalism. Within the neoliberal state project, for example, “the law of private property has been a crucial tool for disrupting indigenous political economies and reshaping First Nations into clients of settler states” (p. xii). The racially regulated labour mobility of immigrant professionals in Canada is a product of the neoliberal racial capitalist logic. As Valdez (2021) argues, state institutions and racism directed against racialized labour led to the installation of racially spatialized labour markets and spaces as dictated by the capitalist system and the goals of the nation to maintain its Whiteness. Leroy and Jenkins (2021) caution that sustaining racial capitalism, at times, requires granting limited political rights to racialized bodies, which masquerades as inclusivity and serves to make invisible the *racial* in racial capitalism, thus allowing it to expand and consolidate. This obfuscation is reflected in the gendered hierarchical labour market space in Canada. State-sanctioned multiculturalism produces and perpetuates Othering and marginalization of racialized bodies within a depoliticized diversity agenda. The deskilling of FERIW within the LMI space in Canada needs to be historically situated within racially organized modes of capitalist exploitation.

Former colonized regions are drawn into new centres of economic colonization, while simultaneously precipitating the unprecedented movement of racialized labour to the West and the creation and expansion of racialized enclaves of gendered labour in the major capitals of the globe, including right here in Canada. Within the contemporary system of transnational globalization, immigrant labour is pivotal to the maintenance of racial capitalism. Immigrants represent the *racial* in racial capitalism. Immigrant labour has come to represent the “quintessential workforce of global capitalism” (Robinson, 2000, as cited in Thomas, 2013, p. 4). Racial capitalism, operating through globalization, has established the necessary conditions to engineer the large-scale movement of people, *colonialism in motion*, including the destabilization of economies and politics of the global South and the exacerbation of existing inequalities and conflicts. This has created a surplus pool of labour for exploitation within the global capitalist system. Within this transnational context, the function of the state shifts to gatekeeping to secure its labour supplies while fortifying the White boundaries of the nation

space. An integrative anti-colonial, anti-racist transformative project demands the eradication of these internal, external, material, and discursive borders to cultivate “an epistemology of the colonized” (Dei & Asgharzadeh, 2001, p. 300) and bring about a transformation of the social order.

4.5 Summary

In this chapter, I presented my integrative discursive framework: anti-colonial theory and anti-racist theory. This choice of a discursive framework enabled me to analyze the interlocking and intersecting issues of gender, race, ethnicity, class, colonial violence, and structural violence on FERIW’s lives and labour market experiences in Canada within the system of neoliberal globalization. In the next chapter, I will describe the methods and methodology used to conduct this study.

Chapter 5

Research Methods

To be in the margin is to be part of the whole but outside the main body. For black Americans living in a small Kentucky town, the railroad tracks were a daily reminder of our marginality. Across those tracks were paved streets, stores we could not enter, restaurants we could not eat in, and people we could not look directly in the face. Across those tracks was a world we could work in as maids, as janitors, as prostitutes, as long as it was in a service capacity. We could enter that world, but we could not live there. We had always to return to the margin, to beyond the tracks, to shacks and abandoned houses on the edge of town. (bell hooks, 2015, p. xvii)

5.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the methodological decisions and paradigm used in this study. It describes the research philosophy and considerations that informed the methods employed. The chapter details the research strategy, including participant recruitment, selection, and data collection and analysis. Additionally, the profiles of the 12 study participants are introduced. This study constitutes a gendered and raced analysis of the process by which Foreign-Educated Racialized Immigrant Women (FERIW) in Canada experience a double death, economically and socially, through the dispossession of their credentials within the neoliberal political economy; they are deskilled because of both their race, gender, along with other intersecting aspects of their identities. In this study, intersectionality is an important framework to explore the complexities of FERIW's labour market experiences.

5.2 Methodological Paradigm

It is important to situate this research within a conceptual framework that positions race and gender as the central tenets of analysis given that race and gender serve as focal entry points in this study, underscoring the key sites of marginalization for Foreign-Educated Racialized Immigrant Women (FERIW) in Canada. I name the plight of FERIW, concerning the recognition of credentials, as one that evicts them from the category of *qualified* and renders them unskilled. They are without the right to have their credential rights recognized. Research methodologies are

influenced by the researcher's fundamental belief system, that is paradigm, based on ontological and epistemological assumptions (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Ontology is the researcher's theory of the world and reality, and epistemology is how the researcher believes knowledge is created (Hammond & Wellington, 2012), which Hays and Singh (2011) have identified as the "process of knowing" (p. 35). Our choice of a research paradigm fundamentally mirrors our beliefs and perspectives about our current and desired world (Lather, 1986). Every aspect of research methodology, from data collection to analysis and interpretation, is shaped by the researcher's paradigm, recognizing that knowledge is inherently non-neutral, value-laden, and enmeshed with power dynamics and social relations (Creswell, 2013). Given that this work is grounded in anti-colonial and anti-racist theories, I employ a critical feminist anti-racist research paradigm as the guiding framework for the methodologies and methods applied in this study. The primary goal of a critical feminist anti-racist methodological framework is to dismantle oppressive structures and practices, thereby generating spaces and opportunities that empower and uplift the voices of marginalized women (hooks, 2015).

Critical anti-racist research advocates for research to be grounded in the reality of people's lived experiences, rejecting positivist notions of objectivity and neutrality (Okolie, 2005). The roots of positivism can be traced back to the industrial capitalist era (Riley et al., 2021). Scholars embracing positivist social science are inherently influenced by a capitalist worldview. Positivism enjoys significant influence and authority in the natural sciences and continues to be "one of the most important heuristics in the social sciences (p. 813). Positivism remains a Western-centric paradigm and typically serves as the empirical model in hard sciences, signifying the principles of logic, evidence, and objectivity. The positivist approach categorizes knowledge that cannot be observed or tested as unscientific (Fox, 2008). Conversely, several positivist scholars dismiss qualitative inquiry as a soft science, labelling the work of qualitative researchers as value-laden, lacking objectivity, and consequently unscientific (Leavy, 2014).

My choice of a critical feminist, anti-racist paradigm emphasizes the researcher's role as an advocate for change. My subjective positioning in conducting this study, rooted in a critical feminist, anti-racist paradigm heeds the argument made by anti-racist scholars that research examining the interlocking nature of domination and unequal power relations when conducted with a claim of neutrality and objectivity, perpetuates rather than challenges oppression (Dei, 2005; Okolie, 2005). My approach to this research was consistent with Dei's (2005) position

that, “Anti-racism research is not about becoming located or situated in another’s lived experiences but is rather an opportunity for the researcher to critically engage his or her own experience as part of the knowledge search” (p. 2). I embarked on this academic work as a racialized immigrant woman navigating a landscape where my credentials and professional background were perceived as *foreign*. Throughout my employment at an elite Canadian university, I soon came to witness and understand that where you come from and where you are educated shapes your lived reality, including occupational reality as much as race, gender, class, and ethnicity.

The participants in this study are highly accomplished, qualified women with extensive educational and professional credentials, complemented by rich lived experiences. Despite eight of the 12 participants possessing master’s degrees, these women were deemed unqualified, unskilled, and incapable of speaking English proficiently because of their foreign accents, credentials and identities. Ironically, one of the participants in the study, whose master’s degree is in English Literature and whose thesis was on William Shakespeare, was mocked because of her *foreign* accent. The intersectionality and “simultaneity of [their] oppressions” (Brewer, 1993, as cited in Dei, 2005, p. 2) is visible in their narratives and lived experiences. The choice of a critical feminist, anti-racist paradigm serves to amplify their voices, as many of them laid bare the pain of delegitimization and its profound impacts on their lives. This study allows me the privilege of foregrounding their narratives.

In this study, I name the act of delegitimization of foreign credentials through non-recognition as an act of violence, both discursively and materially, resulting in detrimental consequences for FERIW. I reject the notion that non-recognition is simply an outcome of bureaucratic incompetencies and complex requirements across a multitude of stakeholders. To accept this posturing is to leave the status quo unchallenged and sustain the unequal colonial hierarchical power ingrained in structures and discourses that oppress FERIW. Delegitimization is no mere bureaucratic glitch; it is inherently tied to issues of race and racism and shaped by factors such as gender, ethnicity, and class, camouflaged as bureaucracy gone astray. Deploying a critical feminist, anti-racist paradigm creates a rupturing of the conventional framing of the effects of racism, marginalization, and violence imposed on racialized bodies as mere instances of discrimination (Dei, 2005). A critical feminist anti-racist paradigm enabled me to scrutinize the intersections of race, gender, class, and immigrant status with power structures that delegitimize

FERIW's credentials and human rights, ultimately leading to their economic and social death in Canada. This framework also provided a counter-hegemonic space for participants to challenge their eviction from the high-skilled labour market (HSLM) site and validate their lives, identities, and achievements, including credentials, by reclaiming and telling their narratives in a space that privileged their "subjective knowing" (Dei, 2005, p. 10).

5.3 Research Methodology

Qualitative research methodology situates the research and the researcher in the world being studied (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). By adopting a qualitative approach, I was able to obtain a firsthand account of participants' experiences and delve deeper into their narratives to examine how they interpret their realities. I chose qualitative versus quantitative methodology because "qualitative research ... uses *words* as data" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 6), while quantitative research "uses *numbers* as data" (p. 6). Whereas quantitative research supports positivist approaches to research which reproduces hegemonic practices, qualitative research enabled the words of the participants in this study speak directly to those who oppress and against a hegemonic state apparatus that seeks out the best and the brightest immigrant professionals and grants them immigration status. However, once in Canada, they are deskilled and repurposed for the low-wage labour economy. As bell hooks (2015) reminds us, "Often when the radical voice speaks about domination, we are speaking to those who dominate" (p. 205).

Qualitative research comprises five primary types: (a) biography, (b) case study, (c) ethnography, (d) grounded theory, and phenomenology (Creswell, 1994; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Lester, 1999). For this study, I employ a critical phenomenological approach. From an epistemological stance, a phenomenological approach emphasizes subjectivity rather than objectivity and centres personal narratives and lived experiences (Creswell, 1994; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Lester, 1999). Guenther (2018) describes critical phenomenology as going:

beyond classical phenomenology by reflecting on the quasi-transcendental social structures that make our experience of the world possible and meaningful, and also by engaging in a material practice of "restructuring the world" in order to generate new and liberatory possibilities for meaningful experience and existence. (p. 15)

This definition embraces Fanon's (1991) transformative and liberatory call to action and activism. Aligned with my choice of discursive framework and methodology, I adopted Fanon's phenomenology of race and oppression to highlight the participants' racialized experiences and realities of marginalization, thereby centring their narratives and their voices. I applied the lens of critical phenomenology as both methodology and transformative liberatory activism (Fanon, 1991; Guenter 2018).

Writing on race spatiality, ruptures to Whiteness, and race bias within secondary teacher education, Kempf (2022) defines racial spatiality "phenomenologically as the embodied relational politics of racial experience in a given space—reflexively framed by history, power, and epistemic location" (p. 5). Aligned with Kempf's concept of race spatiality, and a Fanonian phenomenology of race, this study grounds the participants' experiences of deskilling within the labour market space and names these experiences as one of discursive and material violence that FERIW are being subjected to in a *First World* country that prides itself in its advocacy of human rights, democracy, and justice. Within the labour market integration (LMI) site, race and space are mutually reinforcing and mirror the historical process of racial formation and racism in Canada. Dei (2020, as cited in Kempf, 2022) emphasizes the significant role of Blackness in shaping both physical space and the creation of Western, Eurocentric concepts of belonging and geography. Within the boundaries of the LMI space, FERIW's credentials are racialized and deemed unfit for recognition and validation, thus erasing their knowledge and experiences. The LMI space constitutes a site of *unbelonging* for FERIW.

In her seminal work on the phenomenology of whiteness, Ahmed (2007b) describes phenomenology as illustrative of how whiteness is a product of racialization and determines what bodies are allowed to do and how White bodies are entitled to occupy space. Ahmed described Whiteness as "An Orientation" (p. 152). Building on Fanon's work on phenomenology and race, Ahmed looks at how space is available to White bodies. Referencing Fanon's concept of the corporeal schema and the historical-racial schema (Fanon, 1986, as cited in Ahmed, 2007b), Ahmed posits that this historical and racial schema lies beneath the surface of the body, yet surfaces on the body that already bears the mark of racialization in a world "made white" so that white bodies are bodies "at home" and can naturally occupy space (p. 153). Colonialism inherently shapes this White world that is created for White bodies with all the materiality at their disposal. The privilege of Whiteness dictates the disparate access and ability to occupy

space for those who are White and racialized people (Fanon, 1986, as cited in Ahmed, 2007b). If, as Ahmed tells us, “Spaces acquire the ‘skin’ of the bodies that inhabit them” (p. 157), then racialized bodies are out of place in these spaces. These bodies are *stopped* from these spaces. This exclusion from space applies to FERIW within the LMI space, who are stripped of credentials and invalidated within the space of unmarked Whiteness with their marked foreign credentials.

5.5 Participant Recruitment

Participant recruitment for the study began in March of 2021. The goal was to recruit 12 to 14 participants. To be eligible for the study, participants needed to be foreign-educated immigrant women who:

1. Had immigrated to Canada between January 1, 2005, and December 31, 2017;
2. Have a university degree or a professional designation that was earned outside of Canada;
3. Have worked full-time in a professional occupation in their country of origin for at least 2 years before coming to Canada;
4. Have worked in Canada (full-time or part-time) for a minimum of 2 years;
5. Were at least 25 years of age or older; and
6. Were fluent in English.

I created a listing of immigrant-serving agencies in the Greater Toronto Area and emailed each organization, providing details of the study, the eligibility criteria, and the consent form, asking if they could share the call for participants with their networks. I asked friends and personal contacts to share the details of the study with their networks and anyone they thought would be eligible for the study (see Appendix A: Recruitment Email).

I used a combination of purposive sampling and snowball sampling to recruit the desired number of participants for the study and to optimize the depth of the data collected. Purposive sampling is used to recruit participants who are most likely to provide relevant and valuable information (Campbell et al., 2020). Snowball sampling is commonly used in qualitative research to study a specific phenomenon, where participants are carefully and specifically chosen for the particular information they can provide (Creswell, 2013). Snowball sampling identifies an initial set of participants and uses that initial group to recruit additional participants, thus creating a

“snowballing effect” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 98). Soon after participating in the study, several participants recommended others, and I was thus able to recruit additional participants through this snowballing effect.

5.6 Data Collection During the COVID-19 Pandemic

My data collection occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic and participant recruitment and conducting interviews were challenging. In keeping with public health measures and advisories, the University of Toronto (as cited in Goel & Ferris, 2020) adopted an Approach for Research Recovery and Adaptation policy,¹ which required researchers to use virtual, remote, or online research methods except in rare instances requiring various approvals. Researchers were allowed to use university-approved and supported virtual platforms for data collection, and I chose Microsoft Teams to conduct participant interviews. I would have preferred using Zoom for the participant interviews given that most people had begun using Zoom for work and social meetings and would have been more familiar with the technology; by October 2020, the Zoom video conferencing platform saw daily usage of 300 million users logging onto its platform (Arif, 2021). However, Zoom was not one of the university-approved platforms at the time for research and data collection. I anticipated participant recruitment would be challenging, as there was so much uncertainty during the pandemic. Would people come forward to participate in the study amidst a global public health crisis? I was fortunate that many organizations had moved to online and virtual platforms for communication, and I was able to recruit participants, as described earlier, through networking with immigrant serving agencies.

Once a prospective participant emailed me about participating in the study, I responded to thank them for their interest in the study and screen them for eligibility. I also included a copy of the consent form (see Appendix B) and advised that informed written consent would be needed for participation in the study. I included my phone number in the email so participants could contact me by phone with any questions they had. Once I heard back from the participant and the eligibility criteria were met, I contacted participants to discuss their availability dates for the interview and to remind them that the interview would take place using the virtual platform,

¹ See <https://research.utoronto.ca/covid-19-research-innovation-updates/u-t-guidance-recovery-human-research-during-covid-19-pandemic#group>

Microsoft Teams. I also reminded participants about the purpose of the study, that the interview would last around 1 to 2 hours, and that the online link would be sent to them a few days before the interview. Participants were advised that they would be required to sign the consent form to participate in the interview. Two days before the interview, I contacted participants to remind them about the date and time for the interview and shared the secure Microsoft Teams link for the interview.

One of the challenges with conducting the virtual participant interview was obtaining written informed consent. If the interviews were being conducted face to face, participants would sign the consent form right after the interviewer reviewed the consent form with them. Not all participants could sign the consent forms electronically or had access to a printer to print, sign, scan, and send them back to me. I collaborated with research colleagues and proposed two options for participants to sign the consent form. This approach aimed to maintain ethical rigour in the consent process while facilitating participants' ease of access. Under the first option, participants had the choice to print the form, sign, scan, and email it if they had access to a printer. Alternatively, the second option allowed participants to complete the form and type their name in the signature line if electronic signing was not possible. When emailing the form back to me, those who typed their names instead of signing electronically were asked to state clearly that the email was to be taken as signed consent in place of a signature on the form. In addition, at the start of the interview, I asked each participant to give verbal consent after a careful review of the consent form, which was recorded along with the interview. All participants were asked on the consent form to give written permission for the interviews to be recorded, and they all agreed to have the interviews recorded. All interviews were conducted in English, which was one of the eligibility criteria for participation in the study. Participants were provided a \$25 honorarium as a small token of compensation for their time.

The consent form (see Appendix B) was reviewed at the beginning of each interview, which outlined the details of the study and its objectives, emphasized anonymity and confidentiality of the shared information, and highlighted potential risks and benefits to participants. I emphasized to participants from the outset that they could ask questions and that they had the right to conclude the interview at any point, request the deletion of their data, or take breaks as needed. This was particularly stressed due to the sensitive nature of the discussions, which delved into

their experiences in Canada and the labour market, including challenges, barriers, and encounters with racism.

5.6.1 Participants

I conducted interviews with 12 participants who met the study's eligibility criteria. Though I recruited 16 study participants in total, two had to withdraw from the study due to family circumstances shortly after recruitment, and two did not meet the eligibility criteria. Three participants interviewed for the study were employed in community organizations dedicated to serving immigrants. Their unique perspectives allowed them to speak as both insiders and outsiders, providing insights not only into their personal experiences with labour market integration and credential recognition but also offering professional insights into the challenges faced by newcomer immigrant women professionals navigating life in Canada, including economic integration and labour market experiences.

Participants were eager to share their stories of their labour market experiences and, specifically, the impact of the non-recognition of their credentials on their lives. Many saw it as a liberatory exercise to speak about and against the invalidation of their credentials, embodied knowledge, and holistic identity, all the elements that defined who they are: educated, skilled women who made their way in the world and made their way to Canada, only to be rejected through the invalidation and dispossession of their credentials. They saw their counter-narratives as an act of resistance, aimed at challenging and disrupting the status quo. As one participant, Nadia, articulated, the prevailing narrative is that “when you move here as an immigrant, you just try to get a job at McDonald’s or work at Tim Hortons. So, I was told just go flip burgers and whatever” (August 9, 2021, Transcript 4). Participants’ narratives reveal a sense of betrayal by the Canadian state. Many participants highlighted how the state has infringed upon their human right to work in their chosen profession by delegitimizing and devaluing their foreign credentials.

5.6.2 Participant Profiles

5.6.2.1 *Lina*

Lina is a 36 to 46-year-old teacher from Sri Lanka who immigrated to Canada in 2015 with her husband and two young kids. She speaks English, Tamil, and Sinhala, described her level of English as fluent, and obtained a post-graduate diploma in Applied Statistics and a Bachelor of

Arts in Physical Sciences in Sri Lanka. She worked as a high school mathematics teacher for one year in Dubai before moving to Canada, and also worked in a higher education institute, teaching college students and preparing students for university entrance exams. Before moving to Dubai, Lina worked as a Mathematics and Statistics university lecturer in Sri Lanka, and an academic program coordinator for three years. The family immigrated to Canada to provide their children with safety, financial stability, and a better future. They did not want to return to Sri Lanka after working in Dubai because as a member of a minority group, they felt unsafe. Since immigrating to Canada, Lina has been caring for her kids, and upgrading her credentials through a bridging program, and a business administration program, to help her re-enter the job market. She has also been volunteering in a non-profit organization and working from home in both paid and community voluntary work, helping immigrant women from her community obtain their high school diplomas, and helping students prepare for entrance programs.

5.6.2.2 Ava

Ava is a 36 to 46-year-old woman from Colombia and has both a Bachelor of Education in Languages and a college degree for administrative assistants. She speaks English, French, and Spanish, and she worked as an English and Spanish teacher at an international high school, as well as an administrative assistant job for a large agricultural research company for over 10 years. She immigrated to Canada to join her husband whom she met in Colombia. Ava started researching and preparing to become a licensed teacher in Ontario at least 1.5 years before immigrating to Canada. She applied to the Ontario College of Teachers and gathered and submitted all the documentation needed for her application, including transcripts and taking the language test required. Ava described how costly and time-consuming this process was. She passed all the components of the language test except for the writing component, which she failed by 0.5, scoring 6.5 out of the 7 required to pass. Ava has worked at a bakery, Tim Hortons, and a packing company, and she was currently working as a House Person at a hotel, responsible for the cleaning of communal areas. She has had serious medical issues and lamented having to “dispose” of her degrees and skills in Canada.

5.6.2.3 Sofia

Sofia is from Albania, 36 to 46 years old, and immigrated to Canada to join her husband. Sofia has a daughter and has found it difficult to find work commensurate with her qualifications. She

speaks Albanian, English, French, Turkish, and Italian. Sofia possesses a Bachelor of Science in Sociology and worked as a researcher for 10 years in both the public and private sector, including with a political think tank. She came to Canada to build a better life for her family and give her daughter the opportunities she believed Canada, a developed country, would provide. She thinks many immigrants, like her, suffer extensive deskilling due to language discrimination and the Canadian experience requirement. She feels she has not been successful in her labour market experiences in Canada. She has done two part-time, short-term work assignments, lasting a few months each, including a research position in a non-profit organization.

5.6.2.4 *Nadia*

Nadia is a psychologist who is not recognized as a trained psychologist in Canada because her Bachelor of Science and Master of Science degrees in psychology are from Pakistani institutions. Nadia, who is 36 to 46 years old, immigrated to Canada with her daughter in 2009 to join her husband. Nadia speaks her native language Urdu, as well as Hindi, Punjabi, and English. She can read and write Arabic, Farsi, and French. Nadia worked as a clinical psychologist at a hospital for two years before immigrating to Canada. Nadia is one of the few participants in this study who works in an occupation closely related to her field of training. She credits this with her perseverance, hard work, and having Canadian qualifications. Nadia was able to complete a certificate course from the University of Toronto and secured the necessary client hours to become registered with the College of Psychotherapists in Ontario. Nadia obtained part-time work with an NGO as a group facilitator for a program for victims of domestic violence and abuse. At the time of her interview for this study, Nadia worked as a youth and family clinician with the same organization.

5.6.2.5 *Farah*

Farah immigrated to Canada in 2008, along with her husband and two kids. She is over 58 years old and speaks Urdu, some Arabic, and English. Farah obtained a Master of Philosophy in Medieval History and an undergraduate degree in English Literature from India. She started a Doctor of Philosophy degree in India but did not complete it. She and her family lived and worked in Dubai. She taught high-school English and History in Dubai for over 12 years, as well as short stints in Saudi Arabia where she taught English and humanities at an American school. Farah is very passionate about history and loves linking the history of English to language

teaching. She and her husband moved to Canada in search of a better life for their children. When she arrived in Canada, it was very painful for Farah to discover that she would need to complete a Bachelor of Education, as required by the Ontario College of Teachers, to be able to teach English. In addition, her Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) certification was not recognized, and she would need to complete a comparative certification. Farah eventually completed her Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) certification, but she has only been able to find limited supply teaching work. Finding work related to her profession was extremely challenging.

5.6.2.6 *Noura*

Noura is 47 to 57 years old and immigrated from Bangladesh with her husband and two kids in 2009. She is fluent in Bengali and English. Noura has a Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS) from Dhaka University, a Fellowship in Family Medicine from Bangladesh College of General Practitioners, and post-graduate training and certifications from the World Health Organization and the Open University in the United Kingdom. She worked as a senior medical officer for 12 years in Bangladesh, loved her job, and considers herself “self-made.” The family immigrated to Canada on account of her husband’s spousal application. Noura is unable to practice her profession in Canada. She was able to secure only part-time random work, including as a diabetes instructor with a community health centre, and as an assistant at an eye clinic. Noura has written the Medical Council of Canada exams required of all international medical graduates who wish to apply for a license to practice in Canada. She has not taken the provincial exams because of what she describes as confusing and changing requirements.

5.6.2.7 *Alia*

Alia immigrated to Canada with her husband and son in 2011. She is 36 to 46 years of age and fluent in Punjabi and English. She has a Master of Science in Behavioral Science and a Bachelor of Science in Chemistry. She worked for seven years in project management at an NGO that dealt with addictions, occupying the post of director before leaving the organization. Alia immigrated to Canada for a better quality of life. Alia was extremely fortunate that soon after arriving in Canada, she was able to obtain a permanent job through a volunteer placement, closely related to her studies and career back in Pakistan. Alia acknowledges that soon after she

arrived in Canada when she started applying for jobs, she did not receive any interviews despite being qualified for those jobs, which she attributes to her lack of Canadian experience.

5.6.2.8 *Zara*

Zara immigrated to Canada from Dubai in 2013 with her husband and two kids. She is 36 to 46 years old and was born in Pakistan but lived in Dubai for most of her life. She has two master's degrees in literature and finance from Dubai, speaks Hindi, Punjabi, Arabic, and English, and worked as a Grade 12 English literature teacher in Dubai. The family immigrated to Canada to provide a more secure future for their children. Soon after immigrating, Zara discovered that she would need additional education to teach the higher grades in Canada. Her master's degree from Dubai qualified her to teach up to Grade 3, and she taught Grade 2 for one and a half years as a substitute teacher. She later worked in several retail positions. At the time of the interview, she worked as an operations manager at a retail chain. Zara's circumstances are different from many FERIW because she is financially secure due to her husband's work and, therefore, does not have to worry about finances. However, she highlighted that the deskilling she has undergone in Canada and the inability to work in her profession have caused emotional turmoil.

5.6.2.9 *Kiran*

Kiran is from Azerbaijan, 47 to 57 years old, and immigrated to Vancouver in 2012, where she lived until 2020, before moving to Toronto. She is divorced with two daughters. Kiran speaks Azerbaijani, Russian, Turkish, and English. She has a Bachelor of Science in Physics Teaching and a Doctor of Philosophy in Rural Science from Azerbaijan. She also has a Master of Arts in International Development from an American state-affiliated university in Ukraine. Kiran worked as a high school physics teacher, and, later with an international NGO as a program secretary and an emergency program coordinator. Her last job in Azerbaijan was as an international consultant expert in Georgia. Kiran struggled with navigating the labour market in Vancouver and experienced multiple acts of racism. She held several temporary jobs at an immigrant settlement organization in Vancouver. When Kiran moved to Toronto, she began working with an immigrant settlement organization on a contract basis. She worries about the precarity of temporary employment that characterizes so many immigrants' labour market experiences.

5.6.2.10 Amelia

Amelia is 36 to 46 years old and immigrated to Canada from Beijing with her husband and daughter in 2010. She has two daughters. She speaks English and Mandarin and rates her English as at the intermediate level. Amelia possesses a Bachelor of Arts in Literature, worked as a Teacher of English Fundamentals at a college, and served as department head for 10 years. She has worked several temporary jobs with immigrant-serving agencies before obtaining a permanent job as a Workshop Facilitator. Amelia experiences feelings of *unbelonging* in Canada, despite her efforts to integrate.

5.6.2.11 Nyla

Nyla is a 47 to 57-year-old woman from Pakistan who immigrated to Canada with her husband and two kids. She speaks English and Urdu and has a Master of Arts in Social Sciences, with a major in International Relations and a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism. Nyla worked as a vice principal in a high school for eight years in Pakistan and hoped to work as a teacher in Canada. Soon after arriving, she was surprised to discover that teaching is a regulated profession for which she would need to be certified by the Ontario College of Teachers and would need to complete a Bachelor of Education degree. Nyla was advised that she could volunteer for a while in a school setting and eventually could become a lunchroom supervisor. However, she felt that she had not left a vice principal job to come to Canada to work for two hours a day. Nyla began work in a settlement agency a few months after immigrating and is now a coordinator of language and employment programs.

5.6.2.12 Marie

Marie, aged 58 and older, immigrated from China in 2005 with her husband. She has a Bachelor of Business Administration and worked as a Sales Manager for an international manufacturing company for 20 years. Marie rated her English as good, and a requirement of her job in China, needing to communicate with international clients in English. When she arrived in Canada, she did not feel very confident in her language skills. She has worked as a labourer in an auto parts company and done office work in a furniture company. She has undertaken several language training programs and a college diploma in Accounting and Business Administration. At the time of her interview for the study, she was working as a customer service representative. She

expressed that Canadian work experience, speaking English with an accent, and having foreign credentials have severely impacted her labour market experiences in Canada.

Table 1:*Overview of Participants' Demographic Information*

Alia	Pakistan	MSc BSc	NGO Director	Caseworker
Amelia	China	BA	Department Head/English Teacher	Workshop Facilitator (Settlement Agency)
Ava	Colombia	BEd plus Admin. Asst. Degree	High School English and Spanish Teacher	Hotel House Person
Farah	India	Mphil PhD (ABT)	High School Teacher - English and History (Dubai)	NGO Program Coordinator
Kiran	Azerbaijan	PhD MA BSc	International Consultant Expert	Community Education Coordinator (Settlement Agency)
Lina	Sri Lanka	Diploma in Applied Statistics BSc	High School Teacher – Mathematics (Dubai)	Self-Employed (Providing Entrance Exam Preparation)
Nadia	Pakistan	MSc BSc	Psychologist	Youth and Family Clinician
Noura	Bangladesh	MBBS	Senior Medical Officer	Has worked as Educator/Peer-Leader
Nyla	Pakistan	MA BA	Vice Principal	Language Coordinator (Settlement Agency)
Marie	China	BBA	Sales Manager	Customer Service Representative
Sofia	Albania	BSc	Market Researcher	Short-Term Research Work (NGO)
Zara	Pakistan	2 MA degrees	High School English Literature Teacher (Dubai)	Operations Manager (Retail Store)

5.6.4 In-Depth Interviews

Opting to use a semi-structured format, featuring open-ended interview questions, facilitated a more organic and enriching interview. The use of in-depth interviews provided a conducive space for me to explore the participants' experiences in greater detail and, equally importantly, granted participants the freedom to express themselves freely and authentically. Meaning and knowledge were collaboratively produced based on the dialogue and participants' shared narratives (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Open-ended questions allowed participants the freedom to articulate their experiences and realities. They were able to share any information they deemed relevant to provide context and specificity to their narratives and I was able to ask probing and follow-up questions as needed. In-depth semi-structured interviews closely aligned with my choice of a critical feminist anti-racist methodology to create a space for racialized immigrant women to speak out against their marginalization within the LMI site.

5.6.5 Interview Questions

Participants were reflective as they articulated their experiences and theorized their challenges. The framing of questions was purposeful, designed to engage the participants to reflect and speak to their experiences of the LMI space and life in Canada as FERIW. Fine (1994) reminds us that the way questions are framed impacts how participants interpret their experiences. Interviews can propel participants to critical consciousness through skillful framing of questions that allow the participants to reflect on and interpret their experiences that challenge the racialized order and seek transformative anti-racist change. Participants were asked a total of 33 questions (see Appendix C: Interview Questions). Questions covered socio-demographic information, language spoken, level of proficiency, education, and profession in their country of origin, reasons for immigrating to Canada, labour market experience in Canada, federal and provincial resources, community and social supports and resources, and multiculturalism in Canada. The final question served as a debriefing question, encouraging participants to reflect on the interview process, ask any questions, or offer any information that had not been covered and which they felt was pertinent. I pilot-tested the questions with a colleague, a fellow PhD student, and I refined the questions based on the feedback. I used the first few interviews to refine the subsequent interviews, making minor changes to the order of the questions.

In the consent form, participants were given the option to indicate if they wanted a copy of the main findings of the thesis, once completed. All participants indicated they wanted a copy of the significant findings. During the interview, I would take a few notes to record important details, including facial expressions and display of emotions. After each interview, I created additional field notes to record my overall thoughts and reflections on each interview. These procedures contributed to the enhanced rigour of the qualitative study and enriched the data and analysis (Phillippi & Lauderdale, 2018).

5.6.3 Embodied Knowledge and Self-Reflexivity

In conducting this research, I was critically aware that much of qualitative research is seen as a process of *othering* and that researchers bring to the study their privileged positions in terms of race, class, sexuality, and gender (Fine, 1994). I was acutely aware of the need to heed Fine's (1994, p. 70) advice to "work the hyphens." Rather than appropriating participants' voices and experiences to simply illustrate how they have been marginalized, my aim was to ensure that this work centred the embodied knowledge and voices of participants, reflecting a multiplicity of voices and experiences. In doing so, I aimed to reflect on and acknowledge the dynamics of storytelling: "whose story is being told, why, to whom, with what interpretation, and whose story is being shadowed, why, for whom, and with what consequences" (p. 135). To faithfully reflect the voices and experiences of the participants, I consciously avoided succumbing to the "shark phenomenon," where study participants and their narratives are perceived as mere "objects" in data collection rather than recognized as active "subjects." This approach aimed to resist the inadvertent perpetuation of oppressive colonial dynamics (Dei, 2005, p. 5). The research paradigm utilized in this study, rooted in critical feminist anti-racist principles, empowers the emergence of oppositional narratives and knowledge stemming from participants' unique social locations.

I adopted a reflexive stance during and after the participant interviews in this study. Reflexivity is seen as an important tool for navigating ethical considerations and knowledge creation in qualitative research studies (Case, 2017; D'cruz et al., 2007). I employed reflexivity to understand any biases and assumptions I was bringing to the research and to proactively navigate the interviewer/interviewee relationship which can perpetuate hegemonic practices (Case, 2017; D'cruz et al., 2007). Aligned with a critical anti-racist paradigm, I approached interviews with a collaborative mindset and was both "reflective and self-reflexive" during and after each

participant interview (Okolie, 2005, p. 248). Before the first interview, I reflected on the innate power dynamics in the interview process, maintaining an awareness of my role as the interviewer *managing* the process. I adopted a subjective approach to the interview, viewing the participants as key partners in the creation of this work, underpinned by their narratives. From the outset, participants retained agency over the interview process, inviting me into their world to share their narratives. Participants determined the day, time and duration of the interview. The virtual setting, facilitated by the online platform Microsoft Teams, transformed the interview into a dynamic conversation, diverging from the traditional format of being seated across from each other that often conceals subtle power dynamics.

I was cognizant of Dei's (2005) caution to researchers to be mindful and not conflate race and colour with automatic embodied knowledge in researching marginalized communities. Embodied knowledge requires incorporating one's lived experiences, knowledge, and beliefs in the research process and using these to advocate and work toward the social transformation of oppression and injustices (Dei, 2005; Okolie, 2005). In researching racialized immigrant women, my race, gender, and ethnicity made me an insider/outsider to the research given my lived realities and experiences in the LMI space. However, my intersectional identity also made me a member of an "epistemic community" that included the participants of this study who shared the underlying principles and ideas about racism and marginalization and its impacts on their lives and communities (Dei, 2005, p. 6). My racialized identity played a crucial role in helping me to develop a rapport with participants, allowing them to share deeply personal narratives. They recognized that my commitment to this study went beyond extracting narratives for a thesis; it was rooted in my embodied connection to the work.

5.7 Data Analysis

During the data analysis phase, I sought to ensure the analysis was consistent with my epistemological critical anti-racist feminist stance and that the data transcription and analysis faithfully reflect the voices and narratives of the participants. This approach sought to challenge and decolonize the landscape of qualitative data collection, particularly in the context of interviews, which can be used for "powers of abstraction, disembodiment, and objectification" (Briggs, 2011, p. 13). As described earlier, interviews were videotaped on Microsoft Teams with the participant's permission. Microsoft Teams also included a transcript of the interview that could be downloaded. After each participant interview, I would download the transcript, replay

the videotaped interview, and transcribe the interview, refining the very rough draft provided by Teams. I listened to each interview several times to ensure the transcription accurately reflected the interview. The transcription was done in a Word document, and I added my field notes to the document, which provided important context to the data.

After the 12 interviews were completed and transcribed, I made tables of each transcription, reflecting the format of the questions. I created an Excel spreadsheet to map how each participant answered each question. I then created a draft of the emerging themes. I employed a thematic analysis to code and analyze the data. Thematic analysis allows the researcher to identify, analyze, and make sense of the emerging patterns and themes in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2012). I participated in a workshop on NVivo in preparation for coding the data. However, I opted to use Excel to code the data, employing tables and colour coding, as I felt this process helped me to be more connected to the data. I printed colour-coded tables that depicted themes and codes, creating a visual, cartographic representation on a board. This allowed for frequent and easy visualization of the emerging narratives from participants' accounts.

In measuring thematic saturation within the data, I applied a hybrid approach, combining both inductive and deductive methods for the thematic analysis. Thematic analysis primarily relies on these two approaches to uncover patterns and meanings in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2012). An inductive approach allows the researcher to let the data determine the emerging themes, whereas, with a deductive approach, the researcher approaches the data with pre-existing ideas and concepts, based on the researcher's insights and knowledge, thus shaping the analysis based on predetermined notions of what the data should convey (Braun & Clarke, 2012). I did several rounds of coding, employing both the inductive and deductive methods. I compiled a list of codes, and then further analyzed the codes to identify the primary overarching codes and to determine which codes could be subsumed under more major themes. The coding process encompasses a comprehensive examination of the data guided by the researcher's knowledge, personal experiences, the relevant literature, and the overarching research questions the study seek to answer (Charmaz, 2006). This approach is crucial for deriving meaning from the data. I used codes to group parts of the data that were aligned around specific themes, systematically looking for and organizing emerging patterns. This process allowed me to determine the data's meaning and interconnections. I applied the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss,

1967), to consistently look for the emerging relationships and patterns within the data, and to adjust the codes as necessary throughout the data analysis phase.

5.8 Establishing Credibility and Trustworthiness

There are a multitude of perspectives on what constitutes validity in qualitative research, and choosing from the array of perspectives should be shaped by the researcher's epistemological and methodological stance (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Several strategies were employed to ensure the trustworthiness and credibility of the data and findings of this study. I reviewed and incorporated multiple data sources in this work, including participants' narratives, field notes, articles, policy documents, books, videos, websites, and working papers, thus ensuring triangulation. I engaged in researcher reflexivity, consistently adopting a reflective and reflexive approach throughout and after each participant interview to examine and understand my positionality within the study, as well as to recognize and address any assumptions and biases I may have brought to the research that could potentially influence both the participants and the data. Additionally, I presented rich descriptions of the data and participants' narratives, incorporating direct quotes from participants, to offer an honest portrayal of the lives of FERIW in Canada (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Thick descriptions assert "verisimilitude, statements that produce for the readers the feeling that they have experienced, or could experience, the events being described in a study. Thus, credibility is established" (Denzin, 1989, as cited in Creswell & Miller, 2000, pp. 128–129).

5.9 Ethical Considerations

The study received approval from the University of Toronto Research and Ethics Board in 2021, following the University of Toronto (n.d.) research guidelines. The approved application detailed the ethical parameters of the study, including the rationale for the study, the methods for data collection, participant recruitment, possible benefits and risks to participants, details of participants' consent process, and the procedures for ensuring and maintaining confidentiality and privacy of participants' information. When I embarked on this study, I understood from the outset that the women I would be interviewing, racialized immigrant women, constituted a vulnerable group. In formulating and finalizing the interview questions (refer to Appendix C), I was mindful of the sensitive and very personal nature of the information being asked of participants, about their lives and labour market experiences in Canada—that could potentially

be challenging for them to articulate. Recognizing the power dynamics inherent in interviews and their potential to perpetuate hegemonic practices, I heeded Gubrium and Holstein's (2003) argument that marginalized communities are often Othered, regulated, and surveilled through such studies. The interviews were designed to offer a space of resistance and facilitate the emergence of counter-narratives, providing participants with the agency to voice and share their experiences and lived realities.

Participation in the study was entirely voluntary, and I clearly communicated the research rationale and objectives to the participants and outlined how the collected data would be utilized. During the interviews, participants were in control of the process. They were assured that they could ask questions, decline to answer any questions, take breaks as needed, and could choose to end the interview at any time. The consent form spelled out the ethical requirements necessary for conducting research and safeguarded participants' rights in the research including: 1) Confidentiality; 2) Anonymity; and 3) Potential Risks or Harm.

Participants were assured that no value judgments would be placed on them or the narratives they were sharing. They were advised that one of the potential benefits of the study, as shared with participants, was that the objective of this study was to use the findings to advocate for changes to the system and culture of credential recognition, employment culture, and practices for FERIW in Canada.

5.10 Summary

This research is an in-depth qualitative study on the labour market experiences of FERIW in Canada. I employed a critical feminist anti-racist paradigm in this study to go beyond a mere recounting of participants' narratives, to actively challenge the systemic marginalization faced by racialized immigrant women through the delegitimization of their foreign credentials within the LMI space. The epistemological paradigm guided the research methodology used for the study—critical phenomenology—along with the specific methods employed in data collection, participant recruitment, and analysis. I described the ethical considerations that informed all aspects of the data collection and analysis. Additionally, the 12 study participants were introduced in this chapter.

In Chapter 6, I will present Part One of the results of the data analysis, including the main themes and subthemes that emerged from the study.

Chapter 6

Philosophical and Theoretical Engagement and Reflection of the Research Data and Findings Part 1

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I introduce two of the six themes and seven subthemes that emerged from the participants' narratives. These findings are explored in conversation with the literature on the labour market experiences of racialized immigrant women professionals, the main research question this study sought to answer, and the integrative discursive framework I have employed in this study: anti-colonial, and anti-racist theory. The participants in this study described their hopes and expectations in immigrating to Canada and their understanding of what Canada symbolizes. These are strong self-made women who have navigated barriers and challenges in their countries of origin to become the people they are, professionally and personally. Some have experienced civil unrest, persecution, and economic and political uncertainty in their pre-migration lives. They immigrated with a belief in the illustrious Canadian multiculturalism, implicitly trusting that they and their credentials would be accepted and recognized in Canada. Many of their narratives, however, painted a very different picture.

Two of the main themes and three sub-themes are explored in this section:

Theme 1: English and speaking with an accent, not expertise, is the problem

Theme 2: Multiculturalism's others

Subtheme 1: Racism and the culturalization of racism

Subtheme 2: Intersectional identities

Subtheme 3: What colour are your credentials: Deskilling and devaluation

The second part of the main themes and subthemes that emerged from participants' narratives are presented in Chapter 7, in which I explore the mental health and well-being impacts of deskilling on immigrants' lives and livelihoods and the spirit injury that results from the dispossession of credentials. In Chapter 7, I will also detail the resilience participants draw upon as they navigate multiple and complex settlement barriers. This includes examining the strategies they adopt and

the resilience they demonstrate while confronting settlement challenges, including their use of social and professional networks to stay connected with family and friends and access essential settlement resources and supports to facilitate their integration into the labour market.

6.2 Theme 1: English and Speaking with an Accent, not Expertise

As I described in Chapter 3 in the review of the literature, a Foreign-Educated Racialized Immigrant Woman (FERIW) is often discursively framed as a very traditional woman who cannot speak English or speaks English with an accent, is not very educated, or whose foreign credentials are deemed to be inferior because they are from a perceived *Third World* country, and, consequently, not on par with Canadian academic and professional standards. Of the 12 participants I interviewed for this study, 10 mentioned that their level of English was often in question and, for most of them, was equated with professional skill and competency, and they were judged as deficient in both areas owing to their accents.

Zara, who has a master's degree in English literature and taught literature to Grade 12 students in English for many years in Dubai, described how, despite her competence in English, her accent was ridiculed. Zara stated:

All my life, I was very good in English. Of course, that's why I mastered the language that was not my own. I taught it to other people. This is not my spoken language. It is not my first language at home. I teach it to other people, and I was proud of the fact that I have mastered the language, ... but I was made fun of by my own manager.... I was made fun of for my accent. (Zara, August 4, 2021, Transcript 8)

Zara's experience is reflective of the experiences of many other racialized immigrants whose English skills are deemed inferior owing to their accents. Not only is English one of the two official languages of Canada, but English must be spoken with an Anglo-Canadian accent to be deemed valid English. Racialized immigrants navigate daily encounters in Canada in which they are judged, ridiculed, and made to feel inferior and different because of their accents.

Sofia also felt confident that her level of English was "good," and along with her credentials, would help her integrate into the Canadian labour market and society. Sofia speaks five languages and studied at a university in English in Albania. However, once

in Canada, Sofia began to feel less confident in her English, as her language skills were often called into question in her workplace, and like many of the other participants, her accent and English being a second language became a substitute for her skill level. Sofia believed that her “credentials would work here.” However, Sofia’s credentials did not “work here” mirroring the experiences of many of the other participants in this study as well as thousands of other racialized immigrants. When Sofia obtained a short-term job in a research position at a non-profit organization, she experienced barriers due to language expectations. Sofia’s accent and unfamiliarity with some of the content knowledge of the project were equated with shortcomings due to language skills. Sofia described how:

There was feedback and frequent mention about English not being my first language in the workplace, and the topic was probably because there was some deficiency in communication. The topic was a topic that was new to me. I think knowledge of the topic or my lack of knowledge, my lack of familiarity with the topic I think at times was confused with my language and with my abilities as a researcher. (Sofia, August 16, 2021, Transcript 3)

Sofia’s experience exposes workplace expectations that a non-Anglo accent immediately renders the speaker as professionally deficient in some way—in Sofia’s case, lacking in research skills and content knowledge. Speaking English with an accent rendered many of the participants as second-class citizens within the Canadian multicultural mosaic. Fanon (1991) declared that: “To speak a language is to take on a world, a culture” (p. 18). Engaging with Fanon’s work, to speak the language of the dominant group is still insufficient for enjoying parity of status with the dominant group. Language and accents are two ways in which racialized differences have been historically embedded and reproduced within institutions and systems, anchoring relations of power and privilege. The reproduction of a gendered hierarchical labour market demands and depends on the deskilling of FERIW, which is an integral part of the neoliberal world capitalist system. One’s accent immediately marks one as an outsider. As Sofia described,

Language is the basis of what I feel or I perceive as slight discrimination. I can’t speak about racial discrimination.... I think the language is what I feel differentiates us very often with the rest of the people that are here that don’t have that. (Sofia, August 16, 2021, Transcript 3)

Sofia used the term discrimination rather than racism because she felt that she was being discriminated against based on accent not race, being Eastern European. She pointed out that racial discrimination has grave and far-reaching impacts for people of colour, but that language discrimination, which she encountered frequently in professional and social spaces, also had adverse outcomes for immigrants. This culturalization of racism, described by Razack (2005) as the codification of race through culture instead of historical notions of the biological inferiority of non-Whites, is particularly visible in the high-skill labour market (HSLM) space, which evicts FERIW because of their accents and foreign credentials.

Amelia worked as an English teacher at a college in China teaching English fundamentals for 10 years and was department head. She rated her level of English as intermediate. Amelia completed a master's degree at the University of Toronto. She felt it was important to obtain a Canadian degree to help her advance professionally and secure a good job. She also completed additional language training through various workshops. Despite all her efforts and professional experience, including Canadian work experience and a University of Toronto master's degree, Amelia believes that in her current job:

My English is a barrier in this role. For my age, listening and speaking are still not advanced. Even though I came with English from China, I can read, write, but still I feel my speaking is a kind of weakness for me from my perspective. I'm not confident even with my English. I feel the sense of belonging is lacking. I don't feel I belong here. Really weird thing for the very first five years since 2010 to 2015, I try so hard with the intent to fit myself in the Canadian life. I'm trying to improve my English and then networking with people, people from different countries, keep looking for jobs. Doing my best. I feel I'm always working on something. I hope I can really integrate myself in the Canadian life, but 2015 or 2016 is a point. It's a dividing point. I feel my longing became low. (Amelia, July 23, 2021, Transcript 10)

Amelia linked feelings of belonging and integration in Canada to her belief that her English language skills are inadequate despite her academic credentials and years of professional experience, including in Canada. Amelia's experience resonated with Zara and Sofia, as well as several of the other participants in this study, who initially felt confident in their English language skills when they immigrated to Canada. However, this confidence gradually waned as

they navigated multiple challenges in their settlement experiences, including racism and marginalization, rooted in their intersectional identities.

Foucault (1984) describes how through discourse and language, a “normalizing gaze” produces the normalization of particular subjects and differentiates, ranks, and marks others as outside of a particular community (p. 197). The participants in this study, like many other FERIW, begin to doubt their skills and abilities as they participate in Canadian life and labour market and are marked as inferior within a racial hierarchical structure that privileges White bodies and Western-centric forms of knowledge. These participants began to doubt their ability to speak the dominant language at an acceptable “normalized” level, even though some of these women spoke up to five languages and had completed their university education in English. The undermining of FERIW’s confidence in their abilities and language skills through the institutional and systemic racism they encountered reinforces Memmi’s (2021) argument that “all that the colonized has done to emulate the colonizer has met with disdain from the colonial masters” (p. 124).

Shannon (1995, as cited in McKay, 2013) argues that the construction and privileging of the dominant language as superior and modern and the marginalization and delegitimization of other languages often result in the speakers of those languages internalizing feelings of inferiority and stigmatization. In this case, speaking with a *foreign* accent, even if speaking flawless English, consigns FERIW to alterity within the nation and positions them within the Labour Market Integration (LMI) space as deficient and unskilled. The multilingual capital that FERIW possess is not valued as an asset to be leveraged within the LMI site, but they serve as markers of their foreignness and inferiority and sites for deskilling within the neoliberal capitalist system. Accumulation by deskilling is a strategic tool and function of the multicultural state apparatus to ensure and preserve a cheap supply of labour for the economy.

For these women and many others who qualify for immigration to Canada under the skilled worker class alongside their spouses, the barrier of speaking English with an accent serves as an insurmountable border. Many of the women in this study shared that they scored as many points, and in some cases more, than their spouses in the immigration application. These women could have potentially qualified for immigration independently. All study participants immigrated to Canada under the skilled worker program within the economic class and underwent assessment and point allocation based on selection criteria including education, language proficiency, and

work experience in managerial, professional, or technical jobs.² The six selection factors used to assess applicants for the Federal Skilled Worker Program (Express Entry) are presented in Table 2. The highest number of points in the immigration application is allocated based on language proficiency, educational qualifications, and work experience. Many of the women in this study questioned the ethics of Canada in granting them immigration based on their education, language abilities, and work experience, while simultaneously denying them the right to practice their profession through the non-recognition of their foreign credentials. They felt confident that having been accepted for immigration to Canada based on fundamental aspects of their identity, namely their education and professional experience, they would be able to integrate successfully into the labour market within their respective professions.

Haque and Patrick (2015) posit that Canadian language policies are a tool “to manage racial difference through processes of erasure, forced assimilation and exclusion through the technology of language” (p. 27). In their examination of the marginalization of Indigenous People, including their languages, Haque and Patrick argue that language policy is shaped by hegemonic practices embedded within racial hierarchies and that only through understanding how these policies are a tool of White Canadian nation-building can decolonization take place.

For racialized immigrants, language and culture are essential aspects of their identities. Aligned with the discursive production of language policies discussed by Haque and Patrick, the accents of FERIW in Canada serve as markers of foreignness. As Amelia described, you can do everything to integrate into Canada, but you still do not feel that you belong here. FERIW’s belonging is conditional on their ability to integrate into the dominant White Eurocentric system, where valid English is spoken with an Anglo-Canadian accent. Referencing Sivanandan (1982) that Blacks in Britain “wear” their passports on their “faces”, Thobani (2007) argues that the Canadian state has marked the citizenship status of racialized people on their faces and when they cross borders they face increased surveillance and scrutiny (p. 101). Similarly, FERIW wear their credentials on their faces and through their accents and their foreign credentials are regarded with suspicion and invalidation. Despite its policy of multiculturalism, written into law through the establishment of the *Multiculturalism Act* of 1988, Canadian nation-building continues to be a White project in which multicultural racialized others are allowed into the

² See [Statistics Canada. \(2022a\)](#). *Classification of admission category of immigrant*.

nation's borders but largely kept out of White spaces such as the high-skilled labour market (HSLM). Accents sustain and secure the Whiteness of the HSLM space by producing and reproducing Otherness and the racial hierarchical order.

Table 2:

Six Selection Factors – Federal Skilled Worker Program (Express Entry)

Factors	Maximum Points	Description
Language Skills	28	You can get up to 28 points for your language skills in English and French. We'll give you points based on your ability to: write, read, listen, speak.
Education	25	If you have foreign education, you must have: an Educational Credential Assessment (ECA) report for immigration purposes from a designated organization showing that your education is equal to a completed certificate, diploma, or degree from a Canadian secondary institution (high school) or post-secondary institution
Work Experience	15	
Age	12	
Adaptability	10	Includes factors such as: your spouse or partner's language level; your past studies in Canada; your spouse or partner's past studies in Canada; your past work in Canada; your spouse or common-law partner's past work in Canada; arranged employment in Canada; relatives in Canada.
Arranged Employment in Canada	10	

Note: Compiled from data available at Government of Canada (2023b)

Through the paradoxical practice of ‘multicultural monolingualism’ borrowing from Gramling’s concept of “cosmopolitan monolingualism” (Gramling, 2009, as cited in Li & Sah, 2019, p. 327), Canada prides itself as the Land of immigrants and multiculturalism, yet it officially recognizes only two Eurocentric languages, English and French, to the exclusion of the rich cultural and linguistic capital that immigrants bring to the country. Even when communicating in one of the state’s official languages, speaking with an accent renders immigrants as foreign Others in Canada. George and Chaze (2014) argue that immigrants are penalized for their accents despite language proficiency and that foreign accents as opposed to an Anglo accent “are considered to be undesirable and incompatible with high-status jobs” (p. 4). Similarly, in her study on English-speaking African migrants in Vancouver, Creese (2010) found that participants were subjected to disrespect and devaluation in many ways because of their African accents, despite being proficient in English and their high levels of education. Migrants, especially women, suffered accent discrimination in a myriad of ways, and they were deemed inferior, incompetent, and unsuitable for high-skilled jobs (Creese, 2010).

When Sofia declared that “language discrimination.... I think the language is what I feel differentiates us very often with the rest of the people here” (Sofia, August 16, 2021, Transcript 3), Sofia is speaking to the ways in which coloniality is secured through the linguistic capital and power of the dominant group to ensure and enshrine difference. Like Sofia, Noura, who was a doctor in Bangladesh for many years, is subjected to widespread racism due to her accent:

Everywhere, there is microaggression. You can feel it. Since 2020 whatever interview I got over telephone, so some of the interviews they used to express so you have an accent. I can’t understand you. When I used to go to the lab medical lab, they say your accent is different. (Noura, July 27, 2021, Transcript 6)

Noura’s experience emphasizes the routine linguistic discrimination that is practiced against FERIW. Language and accent discrimination were consistently highlighted in participants’ narratives. This theme of language discrimination is related to the main research question of this study, which asks does race and ethnicity impact and legitimize the system and structure of credential recognition and thus labour market outcomes in which internationally educated immigrant women are evicted from the category of *qualified*. Many of the participants in this study experienced skill devaluation through language discrimination. Their accents resulted in these highly educated and skilled professionals being deemed uneducated and unskilled due to

their race, nationality, ethnicity, and culture, evidenced by the accent in which they spoke. Employers evaluate competency and skill by ethnic names and foreign accents as highlighted by Oreopoulos (2011). The literature demonstrates that accents serve as a stand-in for race.

Several of the participants described the pride they felt in their ability to speak English and their belief that this would facilitate a smoother settlement experience in Canada. They applied their English language proficiency as a counter-hegemonic tool to navigate professional and social spaces. Ava, who immigrated from Colombia, described how she had been able to advocate for herself because of her level of English, which she described as fluent:

I am the kind of person, probably that's one of the reasons I learn English because I like to advocate for myself. I like to understand very well what people around me are saying, and I like to be able to reply and to answer them ... and to say, why would you say that to me? (Ava, July 27, 2021, Transcript 1)

Ava further described how other participants in the English Language for Professionals (ELP) workshop she attended at a settlement agency did not feel confident enough in their English language skills to challenge the presenter who was instructing participants to be more *Canadian* and less *ethnic*, “but it was very related to the culture of the people who were around me” (Ava, July 27, 2021, Transcript 1). Ava’s account emphasizes the stereotypical portrayals of FERIW as traditional and cultural and incompatible with the modern Canadian state, which is normatively White. Farah, who taught English and History at a high school when she lived and worked in Dubai before immigrating to Canada, described English as “practically like my first language” (Farah, August 4, 2021, Transcript 5). Farah understood that English “has status. It connotes something, right, and the ability to speak English? Well, it’s sort of a notch higher right?” Farah is speaking to the discourse of power and knowledge within which English has been historically rooted dating back to colonialism and contemporary forms of neocolonialism, which serve to privilege particular knowledge over others, including English and accent.

Like Ava, Farah leveraged her English proficiency to advocate for herself, providing a counter-narrative during her participation in a social mentoring program at an Immigration Settlement Agency. Farah’s mentor advised her that immigrants needed volunteer experience to build their social and professional capital in Canada. Farah responded by describing how the concept of volunteering in other cultures may not be called the same thing or look the same as the Canadian

concept, but that different cultures have their own versions of civic and community engagement, such as “if someone in my community or a friend is in hospital. We think nothing of it of going there and giving food or making sure food is reaching home.... We don’t think it is volunteering, right? It’s being part of a community” (Farah, August 4, 2021, Transcript 5). Farah was able to challenge the commonly held Canadian belief that immigrants are ignorant of many Canadian customs and practices, including volunteering. Farah was also able to speak back with oppositional knowledge on the wealth of social and cultural capital that immigrants possess, which are often overlooked or seen as impediments when compared to the normalized Canadian subject.

Accents and language are powerful signifiers of identity and tools of Othering. Both accent and language have historically been weaponized to subjugate colonized Others during colonialism and in its contemporary iteration, globalization, to mark racialized bodies for differential treatment. Language and accents are inextricably linked to broader systems of power and control within the neoliberal capitalist system. The power of accents and language within the neoliberal LMI space is used to validate certain bodies and credentials and to delegitimize and deskill racialized bodies. Linguistic imperialism (Phillipson, 1992) continues to be a strategic tool of the neoliberal globalization apparatus. Linguistic capital serves as a powerful currency in the LMI space and nation. Bourdieu (1991, as cited in Creese, 2010) notes that the symbolic capital of language is commodified within capitalism such that linguistic capital has both symbolic and material value because “language is embedded and circulates within systems of political, economic, social, and cultural distinction” (Shankar & Cavanaugh, 2012, p. 360). The privileging of specific forms of knowledge, often tied to English language proficiency and particular accents, influences hiring and promotion decisions within the labour market. Foreign accents contribute to FERIW’s eviction from the category qualified and their economic and social marginalization within the political economy.

As discussed in Chapter 5, the historical-racial schema of the world, shaped and transmitted through the legacies of colonialism (Fanon, 1986, as cited in Ahmed, 2007b), dictates how racialized bodies access and move in and out of spatial hierarchical structures rooted in factors such as race, gender, ethnicity, nationality, language, and culture. Accent and language discrimination are but two of the multiple sites of their identities through which FERIW are discriminated. I outline the other factors in the next theme presented.

6.3 Theme 2: Multiculturalism's Others

In seeking to answer the central research question of this study, does race and ethnicity impact and legitimize the system and structure of credential recognition and thus labour market outcomes in which internationally educated immigrant women are evicted from the category of *qualified*, I asked participants if they were familiar with the term multiculturalism regarding Canada, and if yes, what they thought of Canadian multiculturalism, whether they felt it has helped them in their work and life in Canada, and whether they feel welcomed in Canada?

Nyla, who immigrated to Canada from Pakistan with her husband and two daughters and worked in a settlement agency for several years, viewed multiculturalism as being a reciprocal process and location-specific:

I won't say all of Canada. Went to Quebec, and it was difficult to understand because I don't speak French, so difficult for me even to communicate. But in general, if I talk about the GTA [Greater Toronto Area], I do feel welcome. I feel that I belong here.... It does exist multiculturalism. I do feel that. If I look just into my neighbourhood, I think it's very diverse everywhere we go, you go to a local grocery store. You can see that for celebration, regardless of whatever the culture is there, you feel that that exists. (Nyla, July 28, 2021, Transcript 11)

Nyla situated multiculturalism within the prism of language, culture, and the presence of multicultural Others within the community and the celebration of that difference. Nyla also correlates multiculturalism with English-speaking Canada since she felt that she was unable to communicate in French in Quebec and, thus, did not feel welcome there. However, this framing of multiculturalism leaves untouched the asymmetrical power relations that celebrate food and festival multiculturalism while reinscribing the dominant White Canadian subject as the normative citizen through the bodies and labour of multicultural Others. Nyla's inability to communicate in French and thus feel more welcome in Quebec can be juxtaposed against the narratives that many of the participants recount of being discriminated against due to their accents even though they speak English. Notions of belonging, acceptance, and equality transcend language ability, which is of course an important factor in immigrants' settlement in Canada. However, as Amelia's and Sofia's experiences expose, accents served to highlight

FERIW's *foreignness* within the multicultural mosaic, and accented English becomes a site for unbelonging, Othering, and deskilling.

Unlike Nyla, Nadia felt that there is still a lot of work that needs to be done for acceptance and belonging within Canada for racialized immigrants:

I still feel we have a long way to go. I still struggle with feeling like I belong or that I'm valued for everything that I bring. Or that I'm seen as equal. I get that judgment or that discrimination; I still feel it. My issues are not as important. My community is not as important. I still hear that. (Nadia, August 9, 2021, Transcript 4)

Nadia's comments bring into sharp focus the differential inclusion of racialized immigrants within the nation. Spaces that are produced by and for Whiteness allow some bodies to occupy and move in and out of those spaces naturally, almost invisibly, while racialized bodies come to these spaces hesitantly, guardedly, and visibly, as if out of place, and are often excluded (Fanon, 1986, as cited in Ahmed, 2007b). Nadia described the impacts of race, ethnicity, gender, class, and culture on the social services sector:

The trauma of what a White kid goes through versus traumas of a Brown family or Brown kid goes through is looked at completely differently, which makes me sad. You will pull a zillion resources for a Canadian white English-speaking family, they can advocate. They've got their language. They know the resources and stuff. Whereas a family coming from India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, or wherever, right then most of the immigrants you know, not every immigrant parent is fluent in English...How many times people say this though, she's making it up. You would never hear that for a White woman.... But a Brown woman or Indian or Pakistani—she's just making it up. She wants to be on the system. She is lazy, so we don't even trust people's stories. (Nadia, August 9, 2021, Transcript 4)

Within a seemingly benevolent welcoming Canada, immigrants are rewarded differentially based on factors including skin colour, ethnicity, nationality, culture, language, and class. Nadia's knowledge of and experience working in the social services system has afforded her firsthand

knowledge of whose stories of trauma and hardships can be trusted and believed and whose are made up. Nadia provided key insights into the social assistance system that continues to pathologize Black and Brown immigrants as lazy and dishonest. This is consistent with the literature on the continuing stereotypical portrayals of racialized immigrant families. For example, Alaaazi et al. (2020) found that newspaper articles routinely pathologized African immigrant families as dysfunctional and anomalous from Canadian parenting practices, and the cause of their frequent adverse encounters with the law, educational authorities, and Children Aid Societies (CAS). The overrepresentation of children from racialized communities under the protection of CAS can be directly linked to the state's ongoing colonial project. Phillips and Pon (2018) argue that the state flexes its bio-power, which occurs because of the "fear of Blackness ... [within the child welfare system to] pathologize, marginalize, and even humiliate Black parents and their families" while positioning child welfare workers as saviors and protectors for the state (p. 90). Similarly, Thobani (2007) asserts that the Canadian state's welfare entitlements were primarily designed to serve White families, discursively framing them as rightful and deserving citizens. In contrast, racialized immigrant and Indigenous families were unjustly stereotyped as welfare cheats, undeserving of social welfare benefits due to their perceived inferior, uncivilized cultures, which marked them as fraudulent *strangers* within the nation. Institutionalized practices inherent in the child welfare system and welfare entitlements reflect the overarching hierarchical colonial structures that continue to perpetuate racism and marginalization. This racialized order, built on fears and stereotypes of Black and Brown bodies, becomes ingrained within institutional practices marking mainly White bodies for privilege and reward. Racialized Others are stereotyped as undeserving and singled out for punishment based on various markers, including cultural, racial, gendered, and class.

Alia, who worked as a caseworker in the social services sector at the time of her interview, believed that multiculturalism has helped ensure that Canada is home for her, but she acknowledged that many racialized immigrants are discriminated against because of their intersectional identities. Alia was one of the two participants in this study who was able to secure employment soon after immigrating to Canada in a field closely related to her education and previous profession. Unlike Alia, Noura felt that multiculturalism is an illustrious narrative but that the reality for many racialized immigrants is the very opposite of the acceptance and recognition that multiculturalism purports to enshrine. Noura described multiculturalism as:

A big word here, but in practice and application, it is not applied properly. When I had interviews, I had the opportunity to go to a lot of interviews. The faces of different people like us are treated differently. Headscarf. Age. Microaggression everywhere. Ageism is a big factor. Lots of physicians from other countries, and they're working taxis here. Yes, I came across a lot of lot of men and women. They're doing factory work there ... working in restaurants. (Noura, July 27, 2021, Transcript 6)

Noura's observations of multiculturalism in practice paint the stark realities for many FERIW professionals. She described how intersectional identities impact immigrants' experiences in the LMI space, a space that is produced by Whiteness. As Sartre (1965, as cited in Memmi, 2021) argues, "Privilege is at the heart of the colonial relationship-and that privilege is undoubtedly economic" (p. xii). Multiculturalism as state-sanctioned diversity continues to function as a tool of control of racialized bodies, actively producing differences to sustain the racial capitalist economic order.

Upon immigrating to Canada, I encountered, for the first time, concepts like visible minority and racialized immigrant. Through official federal and provincial forms, I became acquainted with the neat little classification check boxes that mandate individuals to specify the demographic group to which they belong. In most cases, I do not fall into any of the classifications. Recently for example, in the 2021 Census of Population questionnaire, respondents were asked to indicate which of the following applied or to specify another group, if applicable: White; South Asian (e.g., East Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan); Chinese; Black; Filipino; Arab; Latin American; Southeast Asian (e.g., Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotian, Thai); West Asian (e.g., Iranian, Afghan); Korean; Japanese; Other group-specify.³ I belong to the "Other group." As an East Indian woman from the Caribbean, I am literally Othered in a place that is a bastion of multiculturalism as enshrined in the Canadian *Multicultural Act*, but a place where I, like so many racialized immigrants, do not easily fit in or are subsumed under generic classifications.

³ Taken from Statistic Canada's (2021) *Visible Minority and Population Group Reference Guide, Census of Population, 2021*.

I employ bell hooks' (2015, p. 366) concept of "eating the other" to articulate the reduction and consumption of differences within Canadian multiculturalism to ethnic festivals and food. This concept is tied to Manning's (2000) exploration of the paradox within Canadian multiculturalism and national identity. White Canadians desire to be up close to the "other" while simultaneously maintaining their distance to preserve personal and national identity. hooks (1992, as cited in Manning, 2003) reminds us that: "White racism, imperialism, and sexist domination prevail by courageous consumption. It is by eating the Other . . . that one asserts power and knowledge" (p. 213). The power and knowledge over the Other extend beyond the commodification of the Other's culture, to control the very labour and life of the Other. Within the Canadian state's seemingly benevolent multiculturalism where its doors and boundaries are open to all who are accepted for immigration, hooks' (2015) concept of "White supremacist capitalist patriarchy" (p. 248) becomes instrumental in shaping the lives and labour of racialized immigrants. In this context, FERIWs face a labour market space that is exploitative and oppressive, and within which they are evicted from the category of qualified and skilled, and relegated to unemployment, underemployment, poverty, and marginalization.

6.3.1 Subtheme 1: Racism and the Culturalization of Racism

Can racialized immigrants truly be accepted in Canada? To help answer the central question of this study, does race and ethnicity impact and legitimize the system and structure of credential recognition and thus labour market outcomes in which internationally educated immigrant women are evicted from the category of *qualified*, one of the questions participants were asked was: Do you think your gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, or culture have any impact on your job search or work experience? If yes, how? The culturalization of racism, as discussed in Chapter 2, has transformed modern-day racism into covert and subtle forms, rendering it easier to deny and harder to substantiate (Razack, 1994). Scholars argue that traditional racism based on biological differences has, to some extent, been supplanted by the culturalization of racism (Razack, 1994). Contemporary manifestations of racism are inflicted on marginalized bodies based on factors including culture, ethnicity, nationality, speaking with an accent, religion, gender, and class.

Race, conflated with culture, remains central to the Canadian national project, often camouflaged within, while simultaneously propelled by, the trappings of diversity and equality through state-sanctioned multiculturalism. Racialized immigrants literally wear their differences on their faces,

ways of speaking, and manner of dress, such as cultural and religious attire. This culturalization of racism is anchored in “a belief in the normalcy and superiority of the dominant culture encoded around the language of citizenship, patriotism and heritage” (Fleras, 2004, p. 436). Most of the participants in this study felt that different aspects of their intersectional identities, including their gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, and culture, have adversely impacted their job search and labour market experiences in Canada. Farah described how an early experience with a mentor impacted her:

Definitely, it really matters, you know, and it’s interesting to see how people view you. When I got a mentorship and this time the lady who was assigned to me had really not stepped out of Canada. She thought that we literally arrived just off the boat so to speak – fresh off the boat, she was very surprised I mentioned one of the hockey stars, like I had good general knowledge. When the next meeting we met, she actually told me I went home and my children were very curious. How was your mentee and I said you know what she speaks almost classical English and she thought she was giving me a compliment. So you have this well-meaning people. Again, it’s not coming out of a bad place; they think it’s a compliment, but to me, it’s a putdown. (Farah, August 4, 2021, Transcript 5)

Farah was generous with her assessment of this experience which underscored the pervasive normalizing of dominant culture and tropes that stereotype racialized immigrants as uncultured. Eurocentric cultural discourses and practices perpetuate an archetypal image of the immigrant woman: who is perceived as not very educated, cannot speak English very well, and who comes from a village somewhere. Farah’s experiences also serve to highlight how spaces designed to help and facilitate immigrants’ settlement experiences in Canada are embedded within networks of power that serve to reproduce the status quo. If multiculturalism reinforces the normativity of Whiteness while simultaneously and seemingly extolling diversity, the asymmetrical networks of power, within which state-sanctioned diversity is rooted, remain uncontested. Farah’s experience, as well as Ava’s experience in her English Language class at a settlement agency described earlier, in which the class was instructed on acceptable Canadian behaviours and practices that racialized immigrants needed to adopt and which aspects of their culture should be

made invisible, mirror the racialization of space and bodies and the reproduction of the racial hierarchical order.

Noura described how the daily, routine experiences of racism can take their toll. She asserted that: “All those experiences impact you. You cannot express it, but when you go through all the procedures you can feel it. You can notice. Everywhere there is microaggression. You can feel it” (Noura, July 27, 2021, Transcript 6). Noura also described her job interview experiences:

Since 2020, whatever interview I got over telephone, so some of the interviewers they used to express, “So you have an accent. I can’t understand you.” When I used to go to the medical lab, they say your accent is different. And then another thing I notice that now it is they say, “Oh, so you just graduated last week.” One interview with one organization. I mean Home Care service and long-term care service, they say, “So you just graduated.” I say but I’m adult learner. No call back. Definitely age discrimination. (Noura, July 27, 2021, Transcript 6)

Noura described racism in terms of microaggression and discrimination. She connected her intersectional identity to the racism she encountered. Racism reworked through culture, instead of biology, along with other aspects of FERIW’s intersectional identities such as accent and hijab, evict them from the category qualified and relegate them to racially spatialized and gendered underemployment. When Noura, like many other immigrants, was told, “I can’t understand you,” this language not only codifies Othering but also serves as a potent tool of invalidation. It sends a clear signal to racialized immigrants that they exist outside of the realm of the normalized Canadian linguistic citizenship, and associated privileges. Fanon’s (2008) experience of “the white gaze, the only valid one, is already dissecting me” (p. 95), reflects the colonizer’s gaze as the sole legitimate frame through which one’s identity is perceived. When racialized immigrants’ accents are dismissed as incomprehensible, it reflects the legitimacy afforded to Anglo accents, validated through and by Whiteness, as the only legitimate standard against which racialized Others are judged and deemed inferior.

A xenophobic disdain for the Other informs the essence of cultural racism and the belief that the cultural differences of the Other are incommensurate with the dominant culture and society (Fleras, 2004). Stuart Hall (1997) argues that race is a “floating signifier” (p. 8) because of the

shifting meanings and signifiers of race over time and in different contexts. Hall describes race as working like a language with its own system of classifications and signifiers to produce a culture of “meaning practices” (p. 8). In the labour market space, racialized immigrants’ foreign credentials signify inferior, unqualified, and unskilled. FERIW’s intersectional identities are central to their othering within the LMI site as will be discussed further in the next section.

6.3.2 Subtheme 2: Intersectional Identities

As I highlighted in Chapter 4, within the discursive framework that informs this study, intersectionality is an essential paradigm to understand and analyze the ways that race and gender intersect and interlock with other aspects of identity, such as class, ethnicity, nationality, language, and religion. The result is the creation of a gendered racialized underclass of immigrant labour within the state, effectively *fixing* women as a category of cheap labour within the neoliberal hierarchical economic order. The deskilling of racialized women within the LMI space remains a key strategy of the neoliberal economic framework, ensuring the maintenance of a stratified, gendered, exploitable labour force. Official Canadian multiculturalism does not exist outside of networks of power as some depoliticized neutral policy and philosophy. It functions as an organizing principle designed to manage and control Canada’s multicultural Others. Drawing from Gomá (2020), multiculturalism is recognized as a form of “biopolitical governance” (p. 82), actively perpetuating and institutionalizing differences within a racial hierarchy that anchors the true citizens of the land, White Canadians.

Nyla described the challenges that immigrant women professionals face due to their accents:

But still, there are certain jobs that people might not be open to for immigrants, some of these jobs where you have an accent. Definitely, you have a challenge. Like simple jobs like reception jobs, if we cannot answer the phone, especially in this virtual world. If your accent is there, as an employer, it might be a challenge for you to hire the person if they’re not speaking very clearly or they’re not able to understand what the customer needs are, so in a certain way it is a challenge. (Nyla, July 28, 2021, Transcript 11)

Nyla’s comments situate the accent within dominant tropes of a foreign accent being a barrier for racialized immigrants in certain work settings and a challenge for employers. Nyla’s views

reflect and help to reproduce the state-sanctioned multicultural model in which immigrants bear complete responsibility to linguistically conform to the dominant accent and way of speaking because speaking with a foreign accent means others will not understand you, employers will not hire you, and you will not be able to understand customers' needs. Nyla, who was employed at an immigrant settlement agency, discussed some of the programs offered at the agency aimed at facilitating immigrants' settlement in Canada, including labour market integration. However, the reproducing of dominant narratives, as evidenced by some of Nyla's views on multiculturalism, even within programs designed to help immigrants, can serve to perpetuate the status quo. If we were to embrace the state's portrayal of multiculturalism, as a meaningful policy aimed at facilitating immigrants' integration into Canadian society, where diversity and equality are genuinely embraced and celebrated, recognition of immigrants would extend beyond cultural celebrations. It would encompass all spheres of life, including the political, social, and labour market, and would entail a reciprocal and inclusive exchange wherein the dominant group actively adapts to and values the diverse contributions of immigrants in all aspects of Canadian life.

Multicultural linguistic citizenship, as opposed to monolingual linguistic citizenship (Li & Sah, 2019; Raza & Chua, 2022), would be a feature of true multiculturalism, in which the multitude of languages that immigrants speak would be recognized as valuable human capital that immigrants can leverage in the labour market, rather than a source of deficiency and barriers to be overcome due to "cosmopolitan monolingualism," which requires immigrants to integrate through assimilating, by "becoming as close to an approximation of the dominant White culture, politics, economics and overall way of life" (Gramling, 2009; as cited in Li & Sah, 2019, p. 327).

The reproduction of hegemonic multicultural practices is often most visible in settlement spaces as evidenced by several of the participants' narratives of their experiences in workshops and programs designed to help them integrate in Canada. Ava described how her instructor in one of her English classes ostracized immigrant women by contrasting them to the dominant White Canadian normative practices:

She had this way to say, "Oh we Canadians, we don't do this. We Canadians, we don't like that." Cultural traits, dressing, sayings etcetera, alluding to hijab and religious traits. Like we Canadians, we wouldn't dress like that for an interview. It was more like a cultural thing. We Canadians, we wouldn't say that word.

This was mostly cultural concerns, and my classmates were from all parts of the world. This is a country of immigrants; it's funny to say. It was very related to the culture of the people who were around me. (Ava, July 26, 2021, Transcript 2)

The culturalization of racism is operationalized to reinforce differences and produce racialized immigrants as foreign, even while the state attempts to produce a *mimicried* model immigrant shaped in the likeness of the dominant *we Canadians* (Bhabha, 2012). Ava felt she had failed in her experience to succeed in Canada in her chosen profession, for which she was educated and trained, due to being foreign:

My coworker said.... "I forgot you are Colombian. There is no problem for you to get contact with the marijuana." Then I have one other job in Tim Hortons, and one day, I was cleaning the glass counter, ... and another of my coworkers and the cashier were talking to each other, and she said, "I don't understand how they let these people even come inside of this country. Because why would they even come here if they don't know how to speak English? They have to keep them all out. Why would we have to deal with these immigrant people?" So, I have failed in my experience. Like being Colombian, I am many times related to drugs and my manager would say, "What did you say? I don't understand what you're saying. Your English is very bad." English has been a barrier. (Ava, July 26, 2021, Transcript 2)

Ava faced discrimination on account of her intersectional identity and has been evicted from the category qualified because of her Colombian credentials. She is stereotyped as a result of her Colombian nationality as someone who is used to being around drugs. Her accent marks her as unintelligible and unable to speak English well. Ava's experiences resonate with Kiran who has worked as an international consultant expert in Georgia and has a PhD from Azerbaijan, experienced multiple instances of discrimination in Vancouver, where she lived before moving to Toronto. She felt that racism based on account of all aspects of her intersectional identity impacted her job search, work experience, and life:

A lot. It did a lot in Vancouver because of course, I had three different jobs in Vancouver and more experience, especially face-to-face there. In Vancouver, I

remember even the comments. I remember one of my managers. She was from France; she told me that if I were French with my experience, I would have been in a higher position than she is. (Kiran, July 28, 2021, Transcript 9)

Kiran's manager articulated the quiet part out loud. Kiran's experiences highlight that the historical state formation and the installation of the English and French settlers as the legitimate citizens of the nation are located not just in the historical past but continue to structure the political and socio-economic relations. Despite the multiplicity of nationalities, ethnicities and languages that now comprise the nation through mass immigration, European identity remains dominantly solidified while racialized identities are subjected to a multitude of settlement encounters to help make them less ethnic. Despite these manipulations, FERIW continue to be materially disadvantaged within the racialized LMI site, resulting in unemployment and underemployment. Kiran further described how she would often face suspicion and hostility because of her name:

Discrimination because of my name, and some people even said, "Why you don't change your name" because my surname was not clear. What you are, Middle Eastern? Russian? Maybe you can change your name. Different people don't understand, they might say you come from Middle East or Persia. People at the agencies who were advising me, my mentor, consultants. Change your name. (Kiran, July 28, 2021, Transcript 9)

Kiran's *foreign* intersectional identity, like that of other participants in this study, was picked apart in different spaces and singled out for punishment in the form of discrimination. At the workplace, her clothing was criticized for being unprofessional despite others dressing similarly. She was held to a different standard because of her culture. She described an incident when "my division manager just like loudly told me when I was asking her a question, she was pointing that I am wearing very short leaves, and it's not appropriate in the organization" (Kiran, July 28, 2021, Transcript 9). Kiran's name, a key part of her identity, became contentious because it could be read as Middle Eastern or Persian. Bodies, languages, and names do not merely reflect differences. They are anchored to historical colonial constructions between "normative Europeanness and Othered non-Europeans" (Krivonos, 2020, p. 390). Contemporary constructions of racial subjectivities reproduce difference and differential rewards where

normative bodies are privileged and rewarded within the neoliberal state and markets, and racialized bodies continue to be exploited, dispossessed, and marginalized.

Multiculturalism's perceived success places the onus of integration solely on immigrants, subject to the terms dictated by the state. The expectation is that immigrants bear the responsibility for making all the necessary changes to fit into the multicultural mosaic that ostensibly welcomes all. Hogarth and Fletcher (2018) describe the complexities and painful realities of "racialized unbelonging" produced and held in place by multiculturalism (p. xx). Many of the women interviewed for this study, like numerous other racialized immigrant women, can attest to the complexities and pain they experience in their daily lives due to the racism they encounter in Canada. Upon immigrating to Canada, FERIW find themselves in a constant struggle to fit into the dominant culture. Canada claims to welcome integration when, in reality, demands assimilation. From the myriad of state and non-state actors, including settlement agencies, employment agencies, employers, relevant information websites, and portals, the prevailing discourses concerning immigrants' socio-economic integration impose complete responsibility on immigrants. Failure to successfully integrate and participate fully in Canadian life and society, including labour market integration, is attributed to some deficiency on the part of racialized immigrants. Immigrants need to become as close to an approximation of White to be accepted within the dominant culture and space, and to achieve some level of belonging within the political, economic, and social spheres of the nation.

Lowe (2015, as cited in Gomá, 2020) describes how racialized citizens were historically bestowed nobility by approximating European Whiteness within the colonial context of the New World. Thobani (2007) underscores the scapegoating of immigrants' race and culture as the reasons for the barriers they encounter during their integration into Canada. Raza and Chua (2022) draw attention to Canada's narrow model of integration for racialized immigrants, emphasizing that the state frames integration exclusively through the two official languages: English and French. Settlement agencies, often the first point of contact for new immigrants seeking assistance with navigating settlement challenges, including those in the labour market, serve as sites where the dominant Eurocentric ideology and culture are reproduced. Raza and Chua (2022) highlight how these agencies, rather than embracing diverse ethnic backgrounds, attempt to de-ethnicize immigrants and orient and guide them towards conforming to the dominant White culture, as required by the dictates of the neoliberal state. Guo (2009) labels the

“colonial practices” of these immigrant-serving agencies whose overall aims and services are to teach immigrants how to be *mimicried* versions of a Canadian, by speaking more like Canadians and losing their ethnic accents. Immigrants are encouraged to embrace Canadian culture and customs and banish their own to their homes. The culture of the racialized immigrant is seen as inferior and backward and needs to be transformed ideally, hidden, and only practiced in their private homes. Exceptions are allowed when there is a need to showcase food and festival diversity, to highlight the idealized multicultural Canadian mosaic. Ultimately, normalized Eurocentric culture continues to be the ideal.

The discrimination that immigrants experience on account of their language and accent is an effective form of racism, and immigrant-serving agencies as well as English as a Second Language (ESL) and Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) programs in North America preserve and perpetuate the status quo (Amin, 2001). Amin (2001) notes how, like race, accents are social constructs that produce Othering by privileging native speakers of English and discounting immigrant speakers. Amin contends that accents are not about linguistic skills and competence but are rooted in colonial discourse and practice. Citing Lippi-Green (1997), Amin observes that an accent is not easily eliminated, and, even if racialized people could alter their accents, their intersectional identities, such as gender, race, and immigrant status, would continue to contribute to their marginalization within the dominant culture and sites of power. Similarly, Oreopoulos’ (2011) research illuminates the extensive discrimination faced by applicants with ethnic names, spanning a range of professions, and whose training was from their countries of origin. These types of discriminatory practices and discourse resonate with participants’ experiences, for example, Kiran was advised by several people, including a mentor and some settlement agencies, to change her name because it may be interpreted as Persian.

The ongoing colonial project of the state, in its contemporary manifestation, is being reconfigured through sites such as culture, accents, and language, within which immigrants are subjected to racialization and marginalization (Guo, 2009; Ramjattan, 2022). As they navigate the settlement landscape in Canada, immigrants quickly understand that they will need to shed their accents, cultures, and credentials and gain access to the dominant White culture to achieve some semblance of integration and acceptance within the White Canadian multicultural space. However, the elimination of Otherness is not simply achieved by accent elimination, Western dress, culture, and language. Ku (2012) describes how some of the participants in her study tried

to achieve “Canadianess” by developing relationships with White Canadians to achieve an approximation of Whiteness through proximity to White people. Despite all these attempts to navigate their way out of ethnicity and access White normative culture, Canadianess continues to be inaccessible to many racialized immigrants.

6.3.3 Subtheme 3: What Colour are Your Credentials: Deskilling and Devaluation

As I have described above, FERIW are subject to racism and discrimination on account of their intersectional identities within a multicultural mosaic that celebrates their ethnic diversity as exoticism and strangeness allowed within state borders and national spaces. Along with bell hook’s (2015) notion of fetishization, Thobani (2007) engages with the concept of fetishization:

Fetishization implies that the main factors excluding visible minorities from full participation in society are different forms of cultural barriers (such as a lack of English and French language skills), thereby placing the onus for racial inequalities experienced by people of color onto their culture’s inadequacies and individual lack of capital. (p. 156)

Fetishization manifested through the consumption and commodification of immigrants’ cultures, foods, and festivals contributes to their marginalization by perpetuating cultural stereotypes. Fetishization depicts racialized immigrants as inferior, backward, ethnic, and overly traditional based on their cultures, countries of origin, ethnicities, languages, and accents. This extends to their credentials, which are dismissed as being from foreign, inferior institutions, labelling FERIW as unqualified within the LMI space. Ava described the pain of having to “dispose of her degree” and declared that “I am very skillful person, and I’m right now I’m just wasting my life” (Ava, July 26, 2021, Transcript 2). Nadia signed a contract for a job as a clinical therapist, resigned from her job to take up the new job, and was advised two days before beginning the new job that: “We just saw your degree and it’s from Pakistan. I’m like, ‘Yes it is,’ and she said, ‘Well, we can’t hire you because you don’t qualify. You’re not a qualified professional’” (Nadia, August 9, 2021, Transcript 4). Nadia was unequivocally told she was unqualified because her degrees were from Pakistan. This blatant act of racism underscores the existence of systemic racism against racialized bodies and their raced credentials, deeply embedded within the institutional practices and structures of the state. Racism is fortified by the overarching networks

of colonial hierarchical power, perpetuating racism and domination. The state and its agents have evicted FERIW from the HSLM space, which is integral to the neoliberal, racial capitalist economic order, enabled and reproduced through the exploitation of racialized labour and the dispossession of FERIW's raced credentials.

O'Brien (2007) describes how the National Health Service, the UK's health national system, employed a strategy of deskilling immigrant nurses to establish and sustain a racial hierarchical structure in which authority and whiteness were intertwined. Similarly, Guo (2009) concludes that deskilling is a strategy for the making of White corporate culture and practices and that the notion of skill is not colour-neutral but raced in Canada. Numerous scholars, including George and Chaze (2014), Guo (2009), Li and Sah (2019), and Uda et al. (2019), have extensively documented the deskilling of immigrant professionals, attributing it to factors such as race, culture, gender, language, accent, class, and immigrant status. Immigrants are essential for achieving economic and nation-building goals.

The 2016 census data reveals a significant nationwide earnings gap of 12.6% between those born in Canada and newcomers (Raihan et al., 2023). Within the labour market space, numerous immigrant professionals face severe deskilling, exemplified by the familiar stories of internationally trained doctors working as taxi drivers. In the face of extensive deskilling, survival becomes a main priority for racialized immigrants, and many are forced to accept survival jobs, struggling to take care of their families. Unfortunately, for many racialized immigrants, engaging in educational and skills upgrading proves insufficient to overcome the barriers at the HSLM border site. Deskilling often results in adverse socio-economic, health, and well-being impacts for FERIW, which will be further explored in the next chapter.

6.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented and discussed two primary themes that emerged from the participants' narratives. The first theme highlighted that, for FERIW, English and speaking with an accent, not expertise, is the problem. Their *raced* accents are conflated with a lack of expertise and skills, depicting them as unskilled and unqualified within the HSLM space. The second main theme, Multiculturalism's Others, explored the unbelonging and Otherness that is produced through multiculturalism. The discussion included the subthemes of racism and the culturalization of racism, and FERIW's intersectional identities that contribute to their

marginalization within the LMI space. The subtheme of the deskilling and dispossession of FERIW's credentials because of their *foreignness* and thus perceived inferior status was also explored.

Chapter 7 will present Part 2 of the primary themes and subthemes which emanated from participants' narratives. Chapter 7 explores the precarity and struggle that characterize the lives of FERIW, the mental health and well-being impacts of deskilling on immigrants' lives and livelihoods, and the spirit injury that results due to the dispossession of credentials. In Chapter 7, I examine the theme of resilience, emphasizing how participants draw upon and exhibit resilience while navigating the multiple and complex settlement barriers encountered in their daily lives. I also discuss the role of social and professional networks that help FERIW stay connected to family and friends and access settlement resources and supports to help them navigate their labour market integration.

Chapter 7

Philosophical and Theoretical Engagement and Reflection of the Research Data and Findings Part 2

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I continue to present the primary themes of this study, introducing and discussing the remaining four themes and subthemes that emerged from participants' narratives. These findings are explored in conversation with the literature on the labour market experiences of racialized immigrant women professionals, the main research questions this study sought to answer, and the integrative discursive framework I have employed in this study: anti-colonial, and anti-racist theory.

Four main themes and four subthemes are explored:

Theme 3: Precarity: Life is a daily struggle

Theme 4: Health impacts of deskilling and dispossession of credentials

Subtheme 1: Canada's (in)human rights and the right to work

Subtheme 2: Psychological impacts of uncertainty

Subtheme 3: Violence, credential dispossession, and permanent wound

Subtheme 4: Spirit injury

Theme 5: Resilience

Theme 6: Professional and social networks

These themes are specifically linked to the following two central questions this study sought to answer:

1. How does this dispossession of the credentials of racialized immigrant women constitute a form of violence that is being inflicted on these immigrants by the Canadian state?
2. What is the impact of the devaluation and commodification of the labour of racialized professional immigrant women on the lives of these women?

7.2 Theme 3: Precarity and Life as a Daily Struggle

It is not hyperbolic to declare that there are life-and-death consequences of the deskilling and devaluation of Foreign-educated Racialized Immigrant Women's (FERIW) credentials. The lives of FERIW are characterized by a pervasive sense of precarity, emotional upheaval, and a constant challenge of navigating life in Canada, including taking care of their families, making a living, and making their way in their new country. Many of the participants have articulated their experiences as an ongoing battle for survival each day.

Zara described how “something from underneath your feet is pulled, and you're left stranded in the middle of nowhere, and now what, what's next?” (August 4, 2021, Transcript 8). Zara further described how not having her credentials recognized has impacted her well-being and mental health:

I've seen friends and you know so many people, for them, they struggle financially as well. But for me, it's an emotional turmoil that I go through every day. But I try to as I said, it's stoic resignation on my part. I've come to terms with it. It has affected my well-being. It has also affected my mental health ... my colour, the colour of my skin, you know my being Brown, a lot of things here I never experienced. Nobody ever called me Brown before. I didn't know what the term Brown is. (August 4, 2021, Transcript 8)

Zara's experiences underscore how the pomp and promise of Canadian multiculturalism are at odds with the day-to-day hurdles and hardships faced by racialized immigrants while grappling with complex settlement barriers. FERIW's intersectional identities add layers of complexity to these challenges. In addition, women are responsible for a variety of roles in their households and communities as financial providers, mothers, caregivers, and community organizers. Zara worked as a supply teacher, teaching Grade 2 students at the same school that her son was attending. She had spoken to the principal who advised her that since her master's degree is not from Canada, she could teach Grade 2, but she would need to go back to university for a possible one to three years to qualify to teach higher grades in Canada. She decided,

I did not go anywhere. I was very unhappy, ... and I'm like, I'm not going to do this anymore. Not making much money. You know for hourly \$11.75. Yeah, so

it was not much money. How much you're going to make you know for like two hours, three hours? Nothing. (August 4, 2021, Transcript 8)

Reflected in the mirror of food and festival multiculturalism, as well as the celebrated discourse surrounding multiculturalism that prominently features the state's official narrative, are the stark realities of racialized immigrants' lives in Canada. These realities are marked by pervasive issues such as underemployment, unemployment, poverty, marginalization, precarious housing, health challenges, and escalating levels of anxiety stemming from the challenges of survival. FERIW find themselves navigating a state of "economic apartheid" (Galabuzi, 2011, p. 15) and the impacts of the violence of eviction from the category of qualified. The state's colonial hierarchical superstructure dictates the very essence of the lives and livelihoods of FERIW. The gendered, racialized LMI site, central to the workings of neoliberal capitalism, wreaks economic as well as health and well-being havoc on FERIW. Many of the participants expressed persistent emotional turmoil while grappling with the precarious nature of their existence due to the dispossession of their credentials. Sofia conveyed that her inability to secure employment commensurate with her qualifications had a huge negative impact on her life. Nadia emphasized the importance of work to one's identity, sense of well-being and fulfillment, and of, course financial stability. She contended that having a job aligned with her profession "did more for me than any counselling" (August 9, 2021, Transcript 4).

Sofia, Nadia, and numerous other FERIW experienced a profound sense of disconnect and shock, coupled with feelings of betrayal and turmoil. They uprooted their lives and families to immigrate to a country that proudly touts itself as a bastion of liberalism, human rights, and diversity. However, this very country simultaneously betrays the thousands of immigrant professionals accepted for immigration into Canada based on their skills and credentials. Instead of thriving, these immigrants find themselves deskilled and relegated to the low-skilled and unskilled labour economy. Race articulated through discourses of credential inequivalence is deployed to serve as a legitimizing tool for the deskilling of FERIW.

Noura believes she remains an outsider due to Canada's refusal to recognize her credentials, leaving her unable to secure meaningful employment: "Without work, it seems that you are nowhere. I mean, you don't know that real society, the society I'm knowing here in Canada. I don't know the real society because I don't have any job, right?" (July 27, 2021, Transcript 6). Noura, a senior medical doctor from Bangladesh, has been unable to work in the medical

profession since immigrating to Canada in 2009 (up until the time of my interview with her in the summer of 2021). As presented in the participants' profiles in Chapter 5, Noura was employed in several part-time and random jobs and described the considerable time she invested in pursuing multiple endeavours in her attempts to establish herself in Canada. She has participated in numerous workshops, study groups, and courses at settlement agencies and their affiliates: "I went to every place; Woodgreen, Skills for Change, HealthForce Canada. Every place is like oh it's so easy it's things like that" (July 27, 2021, Transcript 6). Noura is still unable to successfully become licensed in the province. She has largely attributed this to the constantly changing provincial requirements, which make the process confusing, obscure, and a major barrier for racialized immigrants:

Ontario provincial regulations are different and British Columbia's are different, and now they have different things other provinces need. I need now an English Test. Even though on the website it said that if the study was in English, there's no need. I did IELTS, and you need to score 7 in all components. I scored 8 in reading, 7.5 in speaking, 8.5 in listening, but my writing went down 6.5. So for 0.5, I'm just screwed up. Then told I need a refresher – out of practice more than five years because I went back home in 2012 for six months because I had to care for my mom, but now it is too much. I mean too much cumbersome system. (July 27, 2021, Transcript 6)

Like so many other FERIW, Noura feels overwhelmed navigating the bureaucratic maze and the challenges of obtaining licensure. The requirements for licensure typically require Canadian equivalent academic credentials and professional experience, costly entry and qualifying exams, evidence of language fluency through approved language tests, and often additional education and training (Bauder, 2003; Guo, 2009). Licensing and regulatory bodies control access to professional practice in Canada and are regarded as the gatekeepers of the profession. FERIW lament and denounce the fact that their human capital qualifies them for immigration but once here, that same human capital is invalidated, eliminating their ability to work in their profession in Canada. Many of them have to undertake multiple roles and responsibilities including earning a living, usually through survival jobs, and find it extremely challenging to dedicate the necessary time and resources for licensure. Many of those who do undertake the process, find it frustrating and complex. Noura's ordeal of dealing with frequently changing requirements

underscores the almost complete control that licensing bodies exercise over the lives of FERIW to practice their profession in Canada.

The participants' accounts, in conjunction with the existing literature on the experiences of FERIW, highlight the arbitrary nature of licensure information available to participants. For example, Ava was informed by the Ontario College of Teachers that even if she fell short of the required writing test score by 0.5 points, she might still have a chance of registration, depending on the subjects she would be teaching. However, she was later informed that she would need to retake the test. FERIW are subjected to seemingly arbitrary, shifting, and unclear licensure information and regulations, which can have profound consequences on their livelihoods. Reitz (2001) questions if we should accept "the market-value judgments of professional licensing bodies or employers . . . [as truly representative of] the 'true' value of immigrant credentials" (p. 349). Schiller (2014) describes the complexities of the different provincial requirements for nurses in the provinces of British Columbia, Ontario, Alberta, and Saskatchewan. She describes the challenges that these complexities create for nurses who want to practice in one of these provinces. For FERIW, licensure constitutes one of the most significant labour market integration barriers, often leading to feelings of despair, anger, frustration, unstable jobs, and lives of precarity.

Canada recognizes that immigration is essential for sustaining and expanding its economy. Immigration is a crucial tool of the neoliberal globalization economic system, facilitating the unrestricted flow of capital, markets, and people as needed. However, the movement of racialized Others is constrained through the creation of internal boundaries, including the inaccessibility to high-skilled jobs through credential invalidation for FERIW. Racism and neoliberal capitalism are mutually constitutive, as is the state's neoliberal immigration policies which secure the workforce needed for economic expansion. Simultaneously, multicultural Others are differentially included reproducing the racial hierarchical status quo. The complex and confusing maze of requirements and regulations that immigrations must comply with and navigate to obtain credential recognition is not just a flaw in the system requiring correction. Rather, the design of the system serves to predominantly exclude racialized bodies.

The colonial hierarchical order prevailing in Canada is sustained through borders of racism, labour market eviction, and deskilling. It is somewhat incredulous to accept that a nation whose economy is ranked a top-10 global economy (Trading Economics, n.d.) and a G10 member,

representing the world's leading industrialized countries, struggles to effectively integrate racialized immigrants and establish a streamlined system for recognizing their credentials in the labour market. Characterizing the ongoing *immigrant professional problem* as bureaucratic incongruity serves as a smokescreen, concealing the elaborate networks of power converging within the high-skilled labour market (HSLM) site to expel FERIW from the qualified category. The dictates of the neoliberal racial capitalist system necessitate and rely upon an accessible pool of cheap labour.

Participants' narratives offer a poignant glimpse into the maze that FERIW navigate as they strive to carve out a meaningful existence in Canada. Their accounts depict a state of perpetual effort, characterized by multiple leaps and bounds that require considerable resilience to survive, work, and live meaningfully in their adopted country. Participants described how time passes, yet stands still, as they confront each day and grapple with the ongoing struggle to forge ahead in life, seeking avenues to upgrade their skills or coming to terms with their current circumstances. Zara's characterization of this experience as a "stoic resignation" encapsulates the reality faced by many FERIW, who continue to forge ahead amidst the painful conundrum of credential dispossession and thus their inability to obtain a job commensurate with their professional qualifications.

Numerous studies have examined the spatial and temporal displacement experiences of migrants and refugees and the detrimental impacts of occupying a liminal space (Brun, 2015; El-Shaarawi, 2015; Griffiths, 2014). Referencing De Certeau's (1984) seminal work in urban studies, De Backer et al. (2022) described the relationship between those with power and wealth and their power to control space versus the powerless and their inability to occupy and inhabit space or have power and control of space. I extend De Certeau's analogy to the labour market space where the state and its agents, including professional bodies and employers, can discard the credentials of FERIW, deeming them unacceptable to Canadian standards and casting out racialized immigrant professionals from the HSLM space.

In their study on the treatment of refugees in the Calais refugee camp in France, Davies et al. (2017) identify the plight of refugees as a consequence of state (in)action and designate the impacts of such inaction as a form of violence. Davies et al. ground their analysis in a framework that integrates Foucault's (1997) concept of biopolitics, Mbembe's (2008) notion of necropolitics, and Galtung's (2018) theory of structural violence. They argue that by framing the

treatment of refugees at Calais within this theoretical construct, their study illustrates “how the biopolitics of migrant control has given way to necropolitical brutality” (p. 1264). Engaging with this notion of violence resulting from state inaction and its agents to the treatment of FERIW, I examine the state’s strategy of inaction in addressing the root causes of the *foreign-trained professional problem*. I identify the dispossession of FERIW credentials as violence enacted on the bodies of these immigrants through their eviction from the HSLM and the tearing apart of their credentials, and their lifetime of labour and sacrifices to earn those qualifications that significantly shape their sense of identity and their place in the world. The biopolitics of control and regulation over FERIW’s raced credentials and the structural violence embedded within neoliberal institutions and hiring organizations structure the lives of FERIW. These centers of power dictate whose credentials are recognized and which bodies are consigned to the unskilled/low-skilled labour market.

The poor labour market outcomes of immigrant professionals continue to be couched within discourses of skills, training, education, incongruous policy and incompetent bureaucracy. In a recent report for RBC, Janzen and Fan (2023) highlight the underutilization of skilled immigrants in the HSLM and their overrepresentation in unskilled and low-skilled jobs, despite immigrants’ higher educational capital compared to Canadian nationals. Janzen and Fan emphasize the extensive devaluation of immigrant professionals, especially those with degrees in medicine, dentistry, and optometry, who end up working in low-paying unskilled jobs as a result. By couching the problem within the de-political language of educational and skills upgrading, improved and innovative integrated policies and resources, the neoliberal, neocolonial state agenda at play is concealed. The state’s inaction and distractions when it comes to the labour market barriers faced by FERIW leave unchallenged “a political-economic system underpinned by racialized immigrant labour with an equally entrenched ideology of inferiority of racialized subjects” (Chatterjee, 2019, p. 8).

Several interview participants had or continue to experience serious medical conditions, and some are dealing with mental health and well-being struggles. Ava, for instance, was diagnosed with a tumour, and the required medication for her treatment proved to be prohibitively expensive. At the time of her diagnosis, Ava had been forced to quit her part-time job as a packer due to an on-the-job injury. Ava’s situation was compounded by her need to find a job quickly to access medical benefits and afford the life-saving medication she needed. Fortunately, she

managed to secure employment at a hotel, which provided her with essential medical benefits. Ava painfully described her situation regarding her eviction from the HSLM site:

I had to dispose of my degrees that cost so much for me to get it and so much money invested in Canada to make any use of it. And for nothing. So, in terms of my degree, yeah, in terms of my professional life, it has been a source of frustration, and right now, I am in psychotherapy. No, for real, I'm in psychotherapy. Because I was diagnosed with depression and anxiety. (July 26, 2021, Transcript 2)

Ava's health condition and labour market experiences underscore that the sovereign state has the power to determine who lives and who dies, which lives are disposable, and which ones are worthy of preserving. This power over life is evident in Ava's case: "If I didn't have the medication for that, the doctor said you could have lost your sight because this tumour is growing inside behind of your eyes and can make you blind" (July 26, 2021, Transcript 2). Ava's experiences resonate with Farah's, who describes her own health issues, declaring that: "People don't realize how traumatic it is to be an immigrant" (August 4, 2021, Transcript 5). Farah has had recurring health crises including cancer, depression, and anxiety while continuing to be the primary caregiver for her kids because her husband lives and works abroad. She felt:

It was just out of the blue, you know. As an immigrant, you never ever plan for ill health, right? So then you know the rest of the year was taken up in surgery, and then eventually, treatment, and then after that again I went into a real decline. I think I lost all confidence. I didn't know it at the time I was in depression. Anxiety subsisted. (August 4, 2021, Transcript 5)

I asked Farah whether she perceived any potential connection between her health crises, mental health struggles, and her inability to practice in her profession. After reflecting on my question, Farah responded,

Even as and what you're saying now that you said it, I'm very thoughtful, and I think I'll think about that some more, but yes, somewhere it must have registered, and I did not think about it. You know, like the clock is ticking away. (August 4, 2021, Transcript 5)

Both Ava's and Farah's experiences corroborate the phenomenon known as the "healthy immigrant effect" outlined in Chapter 3. Newcomer immigrants typically exhibit better health upon their initial arrival in Canada compared to the local-born population. However, shortly after settling in Canada, many immigrants undergo a decline in their health (Premji et al., 2014; Subedi & Rosenberg, 2016; Vang et al., 2015). Lack of opportunities for meaningful employment can often result in despair, frustration, anger, and depression for immigrants, adversely impacting their health and well-being. Conversely, engaging in rewarding and paid employment contributes positively to immigrants' settlement experiences and overall health and well-being (George et al., 2012; Subedi & Rosenberg, 2016; Uda, et al., 2019).

When I inquired about the impact of not finding work in their profession on their overall quality of life, participants reflected on the dissonance between their dreams and idealized vision of Canada, and the harsh realities they faced daily. They spoke of the anticipation associated with immigrating to a country that portrays itself as a Land of equal opportunity, where all immigrants are welcomed and accepted based on a point system that recognizes their credentials. Participants articulated their initial motivation to come to Canada in pursuit of a better life for themselves and their families, envisioning a better future for their children. However, once here, that dream for many of them has turned into a nightmare of devaluation, de-credentialling, and days, months, and years of navigating the *immigrant professional maze*.

Eleven years after immigrating to Canada from China, where she worked as a high school teacher, Amelia expressed the ongoing challenges she faces: "I still feel I'm facing a lot of challenges now. Housing and kids' education. My own personal career and my personal well-being. Sense of belonging. There's a lot" (July 23, 2021, Transcript 10). Amid the demands of family responsibilities and the pressures of her job, especially due to perceived language skill disparities, Amelia highlighted the ongoing struggle to find time for self-care and attend to her mental health. A common theme in many participants' experiences was the expectations surrounding language proficiency. Despite having studied English at the university level and engaging in various forms of language upgrading, a considerable number of participants still grappled with feelings of inadequacy about their language skills. For FERIW, the dispossession of their credentials had a significant impact on their lives, from mental health and well-being to their family relationships.

7.3 Theme 4: Health Impacts of Deskilling and Dispossession of Credentials

In this work, I wish to engage with the notions of mental health, well-being and wellness rather than mental illness. In recent years, there has been a growing awareness and impetus among various stakeholders, including clinicians, medical professionals, scholars, governments, and relevant international organizations, about the need to move away from a mental health illness framework that views health as the absence of disease to one that addresses and promotes mental health and well-being (Bakker et al., 2008; Slade, 2010). According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2004), health is defined as: “A state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” (p. 10). The WHO also declares the right of every person to the highest standard of health is a basic human right.

In Maslow’s hierarchy of needs (1943/1996), the pursuit and motivation to achieve higher-level needs are contingent upon the fulfillment of basic needs. According to Maslow, the first category of needs is physiological, encompassing fundamental necessities such as food and shelter. To fulfill their most basic needs, adults must engage in work to earn an income, enabling them to care for themselves and their families. However, in examining Maslow’s higher-level motivation needs, people also seek fulfillment through the development of self-esteem and the exploration and realization of their potential: that is, self-actualization. Fundamental human rights, aligned with the principles advocated by the World Health Organization (WHO), include the right to work for the provision of self and family, as well as the right to attain optimal health and well-being. The literature shows that racialized immigrants tend to be poorer, suffer greater chronic health and well-being problems, have higher levels of underemployment and unemployment, and disproportionately live in precarious and low-income housing compared to their Canadian counterparts (Subedi & Rosenberg, 2016; Vang et al., 2015). Fulfilling employment is recognized as a key contributor to positive mental health and well-being. Employment, income, and job security are regarded as core social determinants of health and predictors of other determinants of health and health equity, including income and working conditions, food security, housing, basic amenities, and social inclusion and non-discrimination (WHO, 2004; Public Health Agency of Canada, 2023). Numerous studies undertaken in Canada, Australia, and the United States support the *healthy immigrant effect* described earlier (Premji et al., 2014; Subedi & Rosenberg, 2016; Vang et al., 2015).

To qualify for immigration to Canada, skilled immigrants are screened on their health status and need to meet the requisite threshold of points based on their human capital, thus immigrants to Canada tend to be younger and healthier. By screening for health, Canada ensures they are allowing healthy immigrants into the country, thereby securing an adequate, abled labour pool. Human capital factors, including age, education, professional experience, and language proficiency, are factors that also contribute to the social determinants of health and thus better health (Vang et al., 2015). Although this study did not ask participants a specific question on the health impacts of their labour market experiences, several of the participants brought up the impacts of dispossession of their credentials on their lives and the toll it took on their health and well-being. While there have been many studies on the socio-economic barriers and challenges newly arrived immigrants faced in Canada and the impacts on their health, these studies focus on immigrants in general. There is limited research on the racialized and gendered health impacts experienced by FERIW because of the dispossession of their credentials. This study not only reinforces the healthy immigrant effect discussed earlier but also sheds light on the health and well-being impacts that FERIW suffer when they undergo deskilling and eviction from the qualified category in Canada.

In their research on foreign-trained skilled workers who worked as taxi drivers, convenience store workers, and gas station attendants in major cities in Canada, Subedi and Rosenberg (2016) found that skilled immigrants who were underemployed had high levels of stress related to their jobs, declining physical and mental health, and a diminished quality of life. Participants in their study expressed frustration and stress from being relegated to unskilled jobs while their qualifications remained unused. Similarly, Samuel's (2009) examination of South Asian women in the Atlantic Provinces, all with undergraduate degrees from India, highlighted the psychological impacts of acculturative challenges and stress resulting from resettlement experiences, including employment discrimination. Samuel's findings indicate that depression and emotional stress were prevalent among participants due to race, gender, and ethnicity-based discrimination, particularly in the labour market where they were compelled to take survival jobs. Samuel links the devaluation of academic credentials to a human rights violation, underscoring the positive correlation between depression, anxiety, chronic disease, discrimination, and immigrant status. These findings resonate with the experiences shared by participants in my research who underscored that securing a job aligned with their profession and credentials was of paramount significance, impacting all aspects of their lives.

The devaluation of FERIW's credentials impacted all aspects of their lives, including their status within their families and communities. Participants in this study expressed the pride and happiness they experienced in their past jobs when they were employed in their profession of training. Their work provided personal fulfillment as well as respect and esteem from their families and communities. They worked hard to achieve their credentials and professions and enjoyed a comfortable life and an elevated socio-economic status associated with their professions. It played a crucial role in shaping their sense of identity. As Zara expressed,

I was teaching Grade 12 boys English literature only for all those years. I loved it. That was my subject. Shakespeare was my thesis. I loved it. My education – every day you are reading, studying, you're making notes, you're planning lessons. All that, my entire life has been turned topsy turvy. It's no more the same life that I lived for those years. My students, they respected me, the love that I got from my students who are still in contact with me. You know, they call and message me on social media. I'm still in touch with them, the lives that I have changed. You know the difference that I've made in people's lives. It has been taken away, as if you know somebody has snatched it all away. (August 4, 2021, Transcript 8)

Zara's account of the fulfillment and respect she enjoyed from engaging in meaningful employment resonated with Noura's account. Noura described her life as a medical doctor: "I loved my job. I am a self-made person. I did everything on my own back home" (July 27, 2021, Transcript 6). When I inquired about the repercussions of being unable to practice her profession in Canada on her life and health, she responded,

I told you before I was raised in a different place, in different era. For my well-being, I know lot of things on my own. I am self-made. Those who became physicians are self-directed. I know many things on my own. I know how to take care of myself. (July 27, 2021, Transcript 6).

At the same time, Noura was visibly emotional during parts of the interview, especially when she talked about the racism she experienced routinely, comprised of "microaggressions everywhere" (July 27, 2021, Transcript 6), on account of her intersectional identity as a Muslim immigrant woman from Bangladesh who wore a hijab. Noura also experienced age discrimination in many

spaces. She described the vicious cycle of attempts and activities immigrant professionals are put through with little results:

It's horrible here. We have to do so many things. How many certifications can we do for here? How much money and expense do we have to spend? Every admission, every test costs money and time. How many things people can do? You have lost time, and it's stressful and not helpful. Wasting our time. (July 27, 2021, Transcript 6).

Noura's experiences encapsulate the frustration, anger, and despair that resonate with many FERIW due to the deskilling and devaluation they undergo within the Canadian LMI space. Compared to their lives of professional practice in their countries of origin, fast forward to their lives in Canada, and many of them have had to *dispose* of their qualifications, which have been invalidated by and within the Canadian state and an array of state and non-state actors, including professional regulatory bodies, state and non-state employers, and university admission policies. I highlight university admission policies because for many countries considered *Third-World*, candidates' undergraduate degrees and master's degrees are assessed as the equivalent of an undergraduate degree.⁴ This practice underscores the multiple enmeshed axes of power that converge and impact the deskilling of FERIW.

The studies by Kennedy and Chen (2012) and Premji et al. (2017) corroborate the profound consequences of deskilling on immigrants. Kennedy and Chen reveal a decline in economic status and self-esteem among immigrants, contributing to an increased risk of mental health disorders. Similarly, Premji et al. note the development of depression, mental stress, sleeping disorders, and various physical health problems among participants in their study, stemming from employment challenges and subsequent economic difficulties. The experience is often accompanied by a deterioration in self-esteem and a loss of identity. These findings parallel the health and well-being challenges identified in my research, reinforcing the impact of credential devaluation on the health and well-being of FERIW in Canada.

⁴ See the University of Toronto's international degree equivalencies for example: <https://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/future-students/admission-application-requirements/international-credentials-equivalencies/>

7.3.1 Subtheme 1: Canada's (In)Human Rights and the Right to Work

Immigrant professionals are being allowed into Canada based on their human capital as evidenced by the point system through which they have to qualify to gain admission into the country. However, once here, they are dispossessed of their credentials through credential devaluation and repurposed for the cheap labour economy. For FERIW, they face deskilling because of both gender and race along with other aspects of their intersectional identities, such as age, class, ethnicity, language, and nationality. Participants in my study talked about Canada being a Land of opportunities and equality. They expressed that one of the primary motivations for immigrating to Canada was the country's renowned reputation for freedom and inclusivity.

All participants, whether they already had children or were planning to start a family, expressed a strong desire to offer their kids a better future and enhanced quality of life in Canada. They saw Canada as a place where their children could realize their dreams and become whatever they aspired to be. Lina described her family's reasons for immigrating: "So we would think about education for our children and the stability. So that is why we move to Canada" (July 22, 2021, Transcript 1). Nyla shared similar sentiments:

I want to give a better life to my kids.... I wanted to give them a better life in terms of not just financials, but also in terms of having their own choices in life. Whether they want to educate themselves; however, they want to do whatever they want to do. (July 28, 2021, Transcript 11)

Canada's portrayal as a Land of equality, opportunity, and multiculturalism is a construct woven into the *national imagining*, crafted and reinforced by state-sanctioned discourses and laws such as the *Multiculturalism Act* (1985). Many immigrants embrace and reproduce these depictions. For many immigrants, this idea of a land full of possibilities and dreams is a familiar theme. Anecdotally, based on conversations with friends and family members who have immigrated to Canada with their families, one of the primary reasons they express for immigrating is "for the sake of their children." Canada is globally perceived as an ideal place for raising children. What are the origins of this discourse? Racialized people, including those born in Canada, are often confronted with the question: "Where are you from?" The construction of the Other is central to sustaining the normative White national subject who belongs.

Discursive borders are fortified through and against the bodies of racialized people who cautiously access and navigate spaces in contrast to those who belong to the dominant group, and, as a result, occupy spaces with ease and fluidity. Even when racialized people share the same language, accent, and cultural capital as the dominant group, they are still perceived as strangers, occupying a space of *unbelonging*, and often treated as immigrants (Ahmed, 2013; Creese, 2019). Creese (2019) argues that the questioning of identities and origins of racialized bodies is not only a “verbal assault ... [but also constitutes a manifestation of] racial micro-aggression” (p. 1480). These encounters underscore that, despite diversity and multiculturalism policies, the hegemony of Whiteness has not been displaced; instead, it persists and continues to be reinforced against the racialized *Others* of the nation.

Canada’s history of settler colonialism, along with the historical erasure of Black migration, including the arrival of Black migrants from the Caribbean and the United States, as described by Walcott (2003, as cited in Creese, 2001) as “the absented presence of blackness in Canada” (p. 1480), and its ongoing colonialism of Indigenous communities and racialized people, expose the discrepancy between the idealized portrayal of Canada in discourse, legal frameworks, and the lived realities. This reality challenges the image often presented of Canada as a nation committed to the principles of equality, equity, diversity, and human rights.

As a signatory to the UN (1948) *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, Canada supports the right of every person “to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment” (Article 23). Canada actively seeks and promotes immigration, specifically of skilled immigrant labour. In 2022, Canada set immigration quotas of 500,000 per year for the next three years, which would see an estimated 1.5 million new immigrants in the country by 2025. Of these numbers, the government is hoping that over 60% will be economic immigrants, accepted based on their skills and qualifications (Nixon, 2022). As part of its increase in immigrant quotas, the federal government has not put forward any substantive policies on improving the socio-economic integration of immigrant professionals, the provision of affordable housing for immigrants and working-class people, and improved health care access. The needs of the neoliberal economy dictate increased immigration quotas. The federal government and business leaders recognize that “Canada needs more people.... Canadians understand the need to continue to grow our population if we’re going to

meet the needs of the labour force” (Canada Immigration Minister, S. Fraser, as cited in Isai 2022).

The emphasis on increasing the labour supply but not living standards continues to reflect the state’s neoliberal priorities. In a survey conducted by the Institute for Canadian Citizenship, results showed that the Canadian dream for new immigrants was becoming impossible, with 72% of immigrants surveyed describing the job market as restrictive and the cost of living and housing as out of their reach (Hepburn & Rawji, 2022). In 2019, 17.4% of recent immigrants who arrived in Canada within the last 10 years lived below the poverty line (Canada Without Poverty, n.d.). Statistics showed that in Canada in 2020, 15.3% of Chinese, 12.4% of Black Canadians, and 10.8% of South Asians lived in poverty (Statistics Canada, 2019). Immigrant women faced exacerbated poverty rates, experiencing marginalization due to their intersectional identities, including immigrant status, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, and language. Notably, racialized elderly immigrant women, for instance, exhibited a poverty rate of 21.7% in 2019, in contrast to 17.8% for elderly immigrant men and 11.8% for non-racialized Canadian-born women (Statistics Canada, 2019).

The promise and picture-perfect life that the state and its agents are selling are at great odds with the realities that characterize the daily lives of FERIW here in Canada. The appealing pictures, videos, and success bylines and stories portrayed on government websites, brochures, and embassies around the world are a far cry from the complex settlement barriers and resulting emotional and physical stress and struggles that impact racialized immigrant professionals. Grant (2005) describes that the level of psychological daily stress the skilled immigrants in his study experienced resulted in anger, bitterness, frustration, and lack of confidence because their expectations of the employment opportunities they found in Canada, which was one of the main factors in their decision to immigrate here, were out of their reach once they were here. The devaluation of their credentials once they were in Canada led them to conclude that Canadian employers and professional regulatory bodies were discriminatory and that all racialized immigrants were subjected to discrimination in Canada. This adversely impacted immigrants’ desire to integrate into Canada since they did not feel welcome here and could not identify with their new home.

Kiran felt that: “My country causes everything. All the discrimination, racism start from there, where you from. As soon as they hear Azerbaijan” (July 28, 2021, Transcript 9). Kiran expressed

concern about the instability of employment for racialized immigrant women in Canada and the impact of this instability on their mental health, overall well-being, and socio-economic survival. Kiran has had to rely on social assistance during periods of unemployment. She also expressed concern about the uncertain nature of her contract work to date, both in Vancouver and in Toronto, and what the future holds when her current contract ends without another position to transition into. Kiran described the impact of precarity and life's daily struggles:

Even now, I'm thinking what I will do when the contract ends. I have apartment, so I will go back to social services again and receive 700 something dollars per month and will start living again with roommates. I did this in the pandemic because, yes, I moved here myself, right? I quit my job there, and I moved here. Now I am thinking what happens now if my daughter, now one daughter sick, what happens with my job or if something happens to me, how will I survive? I think, right now, I am considering I'm depressed. This is my mental state now. (July 28, 2021, Transcript 9)

Kiran's ongoing anxiety about her employment and financial situation and how they affect her health and overall well-being resonates with the experiences shared by other participants in this study. Immigrants often find themselves trapped in a continuous cycle of job hunting, working in survival jobs, skills upgrading, efforts to get their credentials recognized, and juggling family responsibilities. Canada is ramping up its human capital immigration quotas to prioritize highly skilled immigrants, seeking to attract the "best and the brightest" individuals (Dobrowolsky, 2017, p. 197). Simultaneously, the racially gendered hierarchical labour market in Canada is witnessing a heightened prevalence of precarious and contractual work. This shift is significantly impacting the health, well-being, and settlement experiences of FERIW in Canada. Samuel (2009) describes the devaluation of South Asian women's human rights violations. I argue that Canada's commitment to ensuring the right to work for all individuals is translating into the right to labour in precarious work for racialized bodies. The psychological impacts of such precarious work are particularly notable for FERIW.

7.3.2 Subtheme 2: Psychological Impacts of Uncertainty

Many studies have documented the adverse impacts of living in extreme uncertainty, precarity, and a state of daily limbo on the health and well-being of asylum seekers (Davies et al., 2017;

Premji et al., 2014; Tsagarousianou, 2022). Several scholars have described the precarious conditions and extreme uncertainty that characterize the lives of asylum seekers who are detained in or occupy dehumanizing conditions and spaces, such as camps, detention centres, and prisons, as violence (Davies et al., 2017; De Backer et al., 2022; Grace et al., 2018). This violence has detrimental effects on the health and well-being of asylum seekers who have fled their countries due to many factors, including war, famine, and violence. Grace et al. (2018) describe the emergence of “the violence of uncertainty” which is sanctioned through “systematic personal, social, and institutional instability that exacerbates inequality and injects fear into the most basic of daily interactions” (p. 904). Extending this notion of the “violence of uncertainty” to the state of precarity and uncertainty that characterize the lives of FERIW, I examine how they are forced to spend countless hours, days, months, and years exploring and trying many different pathways and options to get their credentials recognized and to get a job in their profession of training.

Nadia, who found herself in a situation where she and her daughter had to rely on social assistance after her husband walked out on them soon after their arrival in Canada, explained that she began enrolling in any available courses. She had submitted numerous job applications but had been unsuccessful in securing an interview for any of them. In addition to enrolling in a certificate course at the University of Toronto using her savings, she dedicated her time to volunteering:

I took any course that was offered: English language, a bridging program, training programs for new immigrants. So, I would drop my daughter off to the kindergarten, and I had those six hours, and in that six hours, I would run around and do all the courses. (August 9, 2021, Transcript 4)

Nadia’s example highlights the profusion of activities that structure the uncertain world of many FERIW. They work in survival jobs, seek skills and credentials upgrading, navigate credential recognition processes, and strive to secure employment in their respective fields, all while shouldering the responsibilities of caring for their families. Participants availed themselves of resources and support services offered by immigrant settlement agencies, community organizations, and tertiary institutions. They enrolled in courses, programs, workshops, volunteer positions, placements, and additional educational opportunities to navigate the intricate maze of credential recognition in their attempts to pursue careers in their respective fields.

Farah recounted her efforts to establish herself in Canada:

I had made the rounds. I think I must have gone to every agency there is. You name it, like yes, settlement agencies. I was living in Richmond Hill, and I drove so I would go everywhere. So I went to COSTI, signed up for a mentorship program. It was more like a social mentorship, so the lady who was paired with me, she was a White Canadian, and you know, for small things, I remember her with a lot of gratitude.... Agencies help you theoretically. So, for example with the Catholic Association, I did a very long 3-month job training program: how to apply for jobs, how to do job search, prepare for interviews, shake hands, looking in the eye. I did internships and, again, all unpaid. I went to many places. After that, I went for the TESL because I thought I needed something. So that was my experience, and then after that, still I applied to many places with my TESL, but didn't get anywhere. (August 4, 2021, Transcript 5)

Farah's numerous attempts to establish herself as a teacher in Canada yielded little success. Multiply these attempts by the thousands of FERIW who are diligently striving to secure positions in their professions in Canada or closely related fields. The state's human capital-centric immigration policies underscore the importance of skilled immigrants, who are viewed as crucial for leading Canada's post-pandemic economic recovery (Zhang et al., 2023). This position is in stark contrast to the actual labour market experiences of FERIW. Discussions about the essential infrastructural and systemic changes needed to streamline the recognition of credentials for skilled immigrants are conspicuously missing. Immigration projections and quotas appear to be significantly disconnected from the actual systemic conditions that consign FERIW to the cheap labour economy. Unless this is an intentional outcome.

Tsagarousianou (2022) contends that binaries of mobile and immobile, that is those who have the right of movement across borders and which groups should be restricted, were enacted during colonialism and deployed by the state and its agents to control the movement of the poor and marginalized to achieve the state's economic goals. Tsagarousianou further argues that these binaries continue to be deployed today to mark asylum seekers as dangerous: "Others ... [and] an existential threat to the economic and cultural reproduction of Western nations" (p. 271). Similarly, FERIW are marked as deficient, unskilled *Outsiders* and cultural *Others*. The biopolitical power exercised by the state over the right of movement across borders and within

the national space applies to the HSLM space in Canada, which evicts FERIW from the category of qualified through dispossession of their credentials. These racialized immigrant professionals are then subjected to prolonged and confusing policies and practices around accessing resources and supports to upgrade them to a standard that the state and its institutions and partners deem acceptable to be called qualified. Many immigrants do not have the luxury of time and money for the endless cycle of what I call the *get recognized treadmill*, to take courses, workshops, additional education, and seek placements and volunteer positions to try and make it in Canada in their profession. Many racialized immigrant professionals find themselves trapped in survival jobs, relinquishing their hopes and dreams of realizing the Canadian dream: a comfortable home, a good job that recognizes their credentials, and a secure neighbourhood to raise their families. This dream was one of their primary motivations for immigrating to Canada.

Between 2016 and 2022, over 1.3 million new immigrants settled permanently in Canada, representing the largest number of recent immigrants in the country's history according to census data (Statistics Canada, 2022). Canada remains a preferred choice for immigrants seeking a better life. Yet, the state of upheaval and uncertainty that FERIW encounter bears no resemblance to their dreams, expectations, or the narratives and discursive framings of the country they chose to call home. Historical colonial borders instituted by the state and its agents are ongoing, in old and reconfigured forms, exercising control over the bodies and mobilities of FERIW demarcating which spaces they can access. The state continues to employ biopolitics to restrict access to spaces reserved for privileged bodies, including the HSLM space to maintain the Whiteness of the "corporate hierarchy" (Guo, 2015, pp. 242–243). The eviction of FERIW from the HSLM site sustains the neoliberal racial capitalist order.

The literature on the impact of uncertainty and precarity on the lives of asylum seekers and migrants points to a strong relationship between the effects of uncertainty and the health of asylum seekers and migrants (Grace et al., 2018; Griffiths, 2014; Phillimore & Cheung, 2021; Tsagarousianou, 2022). The literature also showed that the longer the wait times for asylum decisions, the greater the impacts on health, and for women, the health impacts are even more severe due to factors including gender and sex-based violence (Phillimore & Cheung, 2021). While navigating their lives in a new country while trying to establish themselves professionally and maintain their social location within their families and communities, FERIW confront additional responsibilities such as childcare, elder care, and household responsibilities. They

struggle with their diverse responsibilities and roles and the many barriers that they encounter in the HSLM space.

Premji and Shakya (2017) highlight the structural barriers racialized high-skilled immigrant women faced as well as the barriers they had to navigate with their gendered roles and responsibilities within their families, which resulted in adverse effects on their own physical and mental health and that of their families. The participants in Premji and Shakya's study were engaged in high levels of employment precarity characterized by brief stretches of employment and lengthy stretches of unemployment. Over half of the participants suffered from severe mental stress and depression, and most of the participants suffered multiple health problems, including ulcers and diabetes. Kiran, who had several different contract and part-time jobs at immigrant-serving agencies (ISAs), observed that based on her own experiences and those of the racialized immigrant women who sought the services of the agency:

Then most of the time, they don't like to show their weaknesses. They have this mental health, but they don't want to talk about this big problem because right now they need survival job. They need financial stability. They need a job income, and then they can talk about mental health. Yes, I know I am depressed. I'm running all over here and there. I do almost 12 hours of work and volunteer work. I am depressed because I don't have enough income. I am thinking about my future. First, give me a job, even survival job. Find for me something to do, and then let us build my future career pathway. (July 28, 2021, Transcript 9)

Kiran's account illustrates the stressful and tumultuous conditions that characterize the lives of FERIW. They contend with numerous sources of stress as they navigate their survival, establish themselves, and care for their families. Kiran's experience underscores the critical choices FERIW make, sometimes life and death choices, to prioritize their survival by taking on survival jobs, while setting aside their anxiety and mental health concerns. In the survival treadmill they find themselves on, there is no time to think of their own well-being. The economic sector in which FERIW ultimately find employment plays a significant role in shaping their overall well-being (Waldinger & Lichter, 2003, as cited in Zuberi & Ptashnick, 2012, p. 64). Immigrants often grapple with feelings of anger, frustration, and disillusionment due to the multiple and complex barriers to integration they experience in Canada. This sometimes includes being

compelled to send their children back to their home country because they are unable to care for them (Zuberi & Ptashnick, 2012).

While the participants in this study did not have to face the painful necessity of sending their children back to their home countries due to an inability to care for them, some did agonize over whether to continue residing in Canada or return to their home country. For instance, Nadia contemplated returning to Pakistan amidst her settlement struggles in Canada but ultimately stayed to secure her daughter's future. The decision to stay in Canada becomes a complex process for many immigrants, especially considering the sacrifices they made to leave behind their lives and professions for a new beginning in a foreign country. The time, resources, struggles, and sacrifices they have dedicated to integrating in Canada impact their will to persevere. Additionally, their children's future becomes a significant factor influencing their decision to remain in the hope of securing a better life for their children. Participants also highlighted their strength and resilience in the face of complex integration challenges, which will be explored in more detail in Theme 5: Resilience, later in this chapter. As argued by Hout et al. (2015), participants in their study navigated difficult decisions throughout their settlement experiences in Canada, including labour market integration; nevertheless, many demonstrated resilience by maintaining a strong work ethic and a high level of motivation to overcome challenges.

7.3.3 Subtheme 3: Violence, Credential Dispossession, and Permanent Wound

Thakur (2022) argues that violence and cruelty need to be examined by studying commonplace forms of violence and repression that occur routinely in everyday life. Drawing on Mbembe's (2003) concept of necropolitics as a starting point, Thakur sought to better understand the cruelty and "living death" space that characterizes the lives of many in the Global South, where "Necropolitical subjectivities, including violence, death, and poverty, are normalized as choices made by individuals and communities, instead of shaped by historic and global contexts" (p. 1). By placing everyday banal cruelties and repressive practices in conversation with large-scale acts of physical violence, Thakur worked within a cruelty continuum to show that necropolitical violence does not need to be theorized within binaries of large-scale violence versus everyday

violence. Instead, both forms of violence should be examined relationally in terms of how they are entangled and interwoven.

Engaging with Thakur's notion of the cruelty continuum and Mbembe's (2003) concept of necropolitics in which "sovereignty means the capacity to define who matters and who does not, who is disposable, and who is not" (p. 27), I explore the networks of power that determine whose credentials get recognized within the HSLM space in Canada and thus the state's power to determine who can work, feed their families, and survive. Race is central to Mbembe's necropolitics, and "the space of the plantation appears as a paradoxical space where social death and death mould into each other, and that each exists as a politico-juridical structure and an economic structure at once" (p. 21). While a gendered analysis receives minimal attention in Mbembe's necropolitics (Islekel, 2022), I employ an intersectional analysis to expand the concept to include the disposability of FERIW's credentials and bodies based on factors such as race, gender, ethnicity, language, religion, and nationality in the service of global capitalism. Mbembe introduced the concept of *permanent injury* (p. 39), where groups deemed disposable are "kept alive" (p. 21) but in abhorrent conditions. These conditions include widespread violence, famine, and poverty, as well as everyday forms of political and socio-economic violence, including spatial confinement, precarious work and living conditions, and impediments to improving one's marginalized condition (p. 21). Such violence can also result from the state and its agents' refusal to take action to alleviate the suffering of particular groups (Davies et al., 2017).

The state of permanent injury, as described by Mbembe (2003), can be aptly extended to the situation of FERIW in Canada. They are held in a perpetual state of personal and professional limbo, where their life's accomplishments and academic qualifications lie wasted and invalidated within the HSLM space in Canada. The cruelty of the uncertainty and the obscurity surrounding the pathway to getting their credentials recognized and securing employment in their profession inflicts a form of everyday violence on FERIW. This violence remains concealed within de-politicized, bureaucratic and economic explanations, such as the necessity for system improvements, the call for immigrants to enhance their language skills and upgrade their qualifications, and the state's efforts to align job opportunities with immigrants entering Canada. This discourse is typically framed within a deficit discourse that places blame on immigrants for their poor labour market outcomes.

As I have described earlier in this chapter, several of the participants in this study were suffering from physical and mental health and well-being conditions and challenges. They conveyed that being an immigrant is stressful and that the path to credential recognition is opaque. Many have come to terms with the fact that they may never attain the professional life and identity they enjoyed previously and instead must settle for alternatives, which in most cases means non-professional jobs. However, settling comes at a personal cost to their spirit and their bodies. Ava concluded our interview by stating, “I am very skillful person, and I’m right now, I’m just wasting my life” (July 26, 2021, Transcript 2). She also shared,

My qualifications, all of the good things in me is being wasted, is just wasted....
I’m trying to find out myself what my life is going to look like after all of this,
what is going to be my future... I do feel wasted. I feel wasted. I know 100%
sure that nothing is going to change if I stay in this country. (July 26, 2021,
Transcript 2)

Ava’s experience, marked by the anguish and loss of her personal and professional identity, can be described as a *permanent wounding* that has impacted numerous FERIW in similar circumstances. Additionally, Zara’s statement encapsulates the emotional and psychological toll that the dispossession of credentials has exacted on FERIW: “But for me, it’s an emotional turmoil that I go through every day, but I try to as I said, it’s stoic resignation on my part. I’ve come to terms with it” (Zara, August 4, 2021, Transcript 8). Many FERIW have come to accept their new reality, but there always exists the emotional toll of surrendering a significant part of themselves—the attributes and experiences that have played a role in shaping the individuals they have become. Nadia is one of the two participants in this study who managed to secure employment closely related to her prior profession. Following many years of personal and professional challenges and part-time and contract work, she successfully obtained accreditation from the Ontario College of Psychotherapists, allowing her to work as a Child and Family clinician. She attributes her certification to her completion of a certificate course at the University of Toronto, extensive volunteering, and dedicating countless hours to group counselling work, which allowed her to accumulate the necessary client hours.

Nadia was underpaid and undervalued for her group counselling work before becoming certified. Nadia secured a prestigious therapist position. However, two days before her scheduled start date, she was told directly by the human resources department that her Pakistani credentials

rendered her “unqualified” despite having previously signed an employment contract. Her bachelor’s and master’s degrees were evaluated as equivalent to an undergraduate degree, leading to the withdrawal of her job offer. Nadia described that:

It was a direct hit, and I felt insulted, like what do you mean I’m not qualified? That word stood out for me right when she said, “You’re not qualified.” She says, “I’m just telling you, your degrees are from Pakistan.” Yes, it was always from Pakistan. I never said anything else, and you had my degree since December. Like you telling me this now; like I’ve already resigned. I’m about to join you guys in two days, and you saying no to me because my degree is from Pakistan. And so she just got mad at me, and she’s like, “You know what, I don’t have the time to argue with you right now. We have a policy and procedure in place. Your equivalency says you’re not a graduate, and this is a position for that, and you’re not a psychologist and you’re not a social worker. You can never work for the [organization].” (August 9, 2021, Transcript 4)

Having foreign-raced credentials relegates racialized immigrant women to the category of unqualified in Canada. After such a bitter experience, Nadia felt that:

No matter what I do, how hard life I had, how hard I struggled, I jumped through all the hoops, paid all the dues. I paid crazy amount of money. I got the licensing. I did this, and I did everything, yet still, I’m not enough. (August 9, 2021, Transcript 4)

Despite the ordeal she experienced when her foreign credentials led to her being labeled as unqualified, and similar to the sentiments shared by other participants in this study, Nadia remained confident that Canada provides a more promising future for her daughter. Nadia’s experience was solely as a result of her foreign credentials being declared invalid and non-equivalent to Canadian qualifications and serves as a stark example of the pervasive racism and violence that structures the lives of FERIW in Canada. These permeate the practices of employers, regulatory bodies, educational institutions, and the prevailing discourses that sustain and reproduce systemic racism. Even with her Canadian qualifications in hand, Nadia’s *raced* qualifications still rendered her *unqualified*. This raises significant questions regarding the abundance of policy recommendations and scholarly works that promote the idea that

immigrants can enhance their employability by pursuing skills and educational upgrading in Canada. Nadia's experience underscores that FERIW's intersectional identities continue to position them as *outsiders* within Canada.

Occupational access and hierarchies reflect those of the superstructure of the nation. Canada's image as an inclusive, multicultural society is in stark contrast with the racism that structures the lives of racialized bodies. The state's colonial hierarchical order continues to serve the interests of the dominant group and serves to perpetuate and strengthen inequality and differential rights for those demarcated *Others*. In the case of racialized bodies, the sovereign and their agents possess the power to dictate who is employed, who survives, and who can secure positions in the HSLM space, ultimately influencing who lives and who dies. The racism and marginalization experienced by FERIW, stemming from their intersectional identities, deteriorating health outcomes, and the dispossession of their credentials, need to be understood within the theoretical lens of ongoing colonial violence and spirit injury.

7.3.4 Subtheme 4: Spirit Injury

As described earlier, the literature indicates that a significant number of immigrants develop health problems soon after they immigrate to Canada, despite having better health status compared to the local-born population due to mandatory health checks immigrants need to undergo to qualify for immigration. Settlement challenges and barriers deny racialized immigrants the ability to easily acculturate within Canadian society, resulting in unemployment, underemployment, lack of credential recognition, and racism. As a result, immigrants' physical and mental health, and well-being are adversely impacted. Many racialized immigrants multiple hardships in their pre-migration lives including civil unrest, famine, poverty, and persecution (Williams et al., 2022). Their marginalized settlement experiences in Canada, largely a result of structural and systemic racism, result in deteriorating social determinants of health and render racialized immigrants more vulnerable to the risk of mental health problems, PTSD, and physical health conditions (Williams et al., 2022).

According to Lavallée (2010), humans are spiritual beings. Physical and mental ailments, such as depression, addictions, post-traumatic stress disorder, and back pain, are seen as manifestations of spiritual injury. Dr. Lavallée, an Anishinaabe/Métis advocate, promotes the integration of Indigenous cultural and spiritual practices as crucial elements in the management and treatment

of health and mental health conditions. Wing (1997) defines spirit injury as encompassing both overt and covert forms of violence that impact one's psyche, spirit, and identity. Violence, in this context, extends beyond physical harm, with racism being identified as a form of spirit injury. Such violence, particularly those stemming from prolonged and unrelenting circumstances, can be internalized, leading to manifestations of "rage, despair, or hopelessness" as expounded by Wane (2013, p. 11). In her study on what constitutes Black Canadian feminist thought, Wane (2013) explored the racialized and gendered experiences of Black women in Canada. Her study revealed that the racism these women encountered in their daily lives, along with the constant negotiation of their sense of identity against society's perception of their raced and gendered bodies, constituted a form of spirit injury. When Nadia declared that she no longer had "this fight in me anymore" and the desire to return to her home country, where she feels accepted, including recognition of her credentials, she was speaking to the notion of spirit injury, where the spirit has been worn down and wounded from everyday manifestations of racism.

Many of the women in this study encountered racism routinely due to their intersectional identities. One participant recounted being subjected to sexual harassment from a mentor—a mental health professional tasked with assisting her in her labour market integration barriers during a time when she was particularly vulnerable. Noura experienced both physical threats and verbal assaults due to her hijab, while Farah and her children were subjected to verbal abuse based on their ethnicity and immigrant status. Aligned with Lavallée's (2010) and Wing's (1997) premise that physical and mental conditions are manifestations of spirit injury, the gendered racism these participants endured could be linked to profound spirit injury. The impacts manifested in a myriad of ways, ranging from emotional and mental anxiety to depression and physical health conditions, including cancer. Their eviction from the HSLM site, marked by the rejection of their raced credentials and bodies, left a permanent wounding and profound spirit injury. Despite these challenges, these strong self-made women, though wounded, remain unbroken. They exhibit remarkable resilience in navigating the multiple and complex adversities they face in their settlement experiences in Canada tied to racism and discrimination, a theme elaborated upon in the next section.

7.4 Theme 5: Resilience

The participants in this study, like many other FERIW, lead lives shaped by complex settlement experiences characterized by racism, sexism, isolation, and the loss of family and social

networks, social and economic status, and employment security. FERIW's precarious lives in Canada leave many vulnerable to domestic violence (Rashid & Gregory, 2014). However, amid these adversities, participants shared narratives of strength, faith and love for their families, and for many of them, resilience in the face of incredible challenges. They resisted seeing themselves as victims. Instead, they affirmed their sense of self and pride in their identity. Resilience is defined as "the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or significant sources of stress—such as family and relationship problems, serious health problems, or workplace and financial stressors" (American Psychological Association, 2020, para. 4). The participants in this study found, demonstrated, built, and strengthened their resilience in the face of multiple struggles and hardships in their daily lives through family support, spiritual faith, community, activism, drawing on their inner selves, and taking control of their lives as best as they could.

For many of these women, family is a main source of strength to help them navigate the challenging settlement environment they and their families are confronted with in Canada. Nyla explained that shortly after arriving in Toronto, she could rely on her husband to assist her in navigating the city, enabling her to access the resources and support she needed during her job search:

I had never taken public transport before in my life before coming to Canada, and the subway was really out of the question. I remember it was a full trip when we took the subway for the first time. So things like that, I had to wait for my husband to come to go with him. (July 27, 221, Transcript 11)

Nyla further noted that she and her husband were aligned regarding their approach to raising their daughters, thus reducing the potential for tensions and conflicts that many parents encounter during their settlement experiences in a new country and culture:

So my 8-year-old was explaining to me how different family structures are. Luckily, me and my husband are both open to all these conversations to happen at home, so we didn't have that culture barrier or anything taboo to talk about at home. So my kids had that independence and freedom to talk about all those things, but I know from different people, it's difficult. It was difficult for the

kids to have these conversations and honestly, it was also a learning moment for me too. (July 27, 2021, Transcript 11)

Nyla and her husband encouraged open discussions in their home to cultivate a supportive family network that allowed the family to depend on each other in their new homeland. Family support was a common theme among many of the participants.

Zara also found comfort and support within her family, declaring:

My biggest support is my kids. I do not go and seek support elsewhere. That's not my personality. I'm very strong. I've been through a lot emotionally.... but I have a great connection with my kids. I read and meditate a lot. (August 4, 2021, Transcript 8)

For Zara, faith is also a source of strength and resilience. She practices Islam and states, "I want to be myself. I want to keep my values" (August 4, 2021, Transcript 8). Zara feels no desire to conform to Western culture to integrate. She is secure in her cultural identity. She derives happiness from fasting during Ramadan, praying, and meditating.

Despite being isolated from the traditional family and community support network that they enjoyed in their home countries, these women managed to maintain their family ties and support networks through the use of technology and occasional visits to family members whenever possible. Farah's husband resides and works outside of Canada to provide ongoing support for their family. Even though they initially immigrated as a family to Canada, he had to leave after just two months to seek employment outside of Canada due to his inability to secure a job related to his field of expertise. He preferred not to settle for a survival job, having worked hard to establish himself. Farah makes every effort to visit him as frequently as possible, maintaining family ties and seeking emotional and mental support, especially in light of her health challenges. Farah recounted:

But my husband does send money. He is still abroad but still providing for us. Because of some circumstances, I can't work full time, yeah, so that's how I manage. And especially after my cancer diagnosis because we thought I could get a job here, and then he could come here eventually. You know that was the plan, but it didn't work out. You know all the best-laid plans go asunder so. Go

to waste. So because of my cancer thing, he had to stay on there, and then one thing led to another, and then my depression, and then I couldn't do a full-time job. So poor fellow, he just continued to be there supporting. (August 4, 2021, Transcript 5)

Spousal support, financially and emotionally, is pivotal for Farah and her family, even though the family's settlement experience has torn them apart due to her husband having to work away from the family to provide for them. Farah is able to cope with her health concerns and labour market challenges largely due to the support provided by her spouse and her children. Similarly, Nadia's daughter and extended family comprised her support network. Nadia also described other sources of support:

So, I've been lucky in just kind of having some very good friendships, people I've met over the years through my professional network and previous position. I like to hold onto relationships, so you know, I make time for those people, and I value that. Then I take vacations frequently. I don't care about the money. I go to be with my family—that just gives me a bit of a break. And also for my daughter, like I want her to have that sense of community, which is so important. (August 9, 2021, Transcript 4)

For many immigrants, maintaining connections with both their immediate family and relatives in their home countries plays a crucial role in helping them navigate the challenges of settlement in a new country. Nurturing family ties, whether in person or through technology, play a key role in developing and deepening their resilience, enabling them to better deal with the complexities of settlement in Canada, including racism and deskilling (Rashid & Gregory, 2014). Family connections help to alleviate racism, isolation, uncertainty, and unbelonging, which contribute to their overall well-being.

7.4.1 Additional Education and Training as a Strategy for Autonomy

One of the strategies FERIW adopted to exercise resilience, improve their employment opportunities, and retain some measure of autonomy over their lives was engaging in additional training. This included participating in formal and informal courses, programs, workshops, and

internships. Many of these were offered at no cost by settlement agencies and through federal and provincial organizations.

Nyla undertook several courses and was currently enrolled in a diploma:

I did a few courses from U of T. It was more of continuing education. I am currently registered with Ryerson University for a social service management diploma. Just for my own personal and professional development. Always, there are many on-the-job training sessions that I attended. Some mental health workshops. (July 28, 2021, Transcript 11)

Farah acquired certifications from both TESL Canada and TESL Ontario, but this did not lead to a substantive change in her employment prospects. She decided to “change track” and enrolled in a women’s leadership program provided by a non-governmental organization (NGO). Farah credits this program for helping her obtain improved employment, and she currently works as a Program Facilitator with the same NGO. In addition, all participants in this study undertook unpaid internships as a way to enter the job market and establish connections. Noura pursued certifications in Inter-Professional Complex in Long-Term Care from George Brown College, the Licentiate Medical Council of Canada certification for Skills on Public Health from the British Columbia Institute of Technology, and certification from Toronto Public Health. Noura also earned multiple community work certifications from volunteer work with the Toronto District School Board, Diabetes Canada, and Toronto General Hospital.

Enhancing and diversifying their professional skills, including language proficiency through supplementary courses, workshops, and programs, exemplify FERIW’s resilience and resistance to the devaluation and deskilling that they experience within the Canadian labour market. However, at the same time, the neoliberal state does not recognize their qualifications and subjects FERIW to a *certification treadmill*. This process is funnelled through the apparatus of settlement services, which mandates immigrant professionals undergo a series of language and skills training, aimed at making them more *Canadian*, as raced credentials and identities are deemed invalid and unworthy for the HSLM space.

7.4.2 Activism and Resilience

Many FERIW exert agency and build resilience through their activism (MacDonnell et al., 2017). Ten of the 12 participants in this study were engaging in activist work in their communities and social groups. Farah is very engaged in activist work, volunteering as a mentor with the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council. Farah has also volunteered with the three political representatives in her riding: (a) her councillor, (b) her Member of the Provincial Parliament, and (c) the former Member of the Provincial Parliament (MP). She stated,

[I] joined the Canadian Cancer Society because I wanted to give back. I became a volunteer for them, and then I was approached by the Canadian Cancer Care Ontario at that time to be a speaker. I used to speak about my experience about the health experiences of immigrants. (August 4, 2021, Transcript 5)

In her role as mentor, Farah encourages other immigrants to volunteer and engage in activism “to build their connections, to empower themselves and strengthen their civic citizenship” (August 4, 2021, Transcript 5). Amelia also engages in civic activism and leadership. Amelia serves as the co-chair of her neighbourhood network. She participates and promotes information sharing and responsiveness to the needs of the community: for example, advocating for a senior centre in her neighbourhood.

Nyla too engages in activism related to her work as well as her community. Nyla helped to establish social organizations dedicated to Pakistani and Muslim needs since she found there were none available in her area. She also participates in work-related activism:

I also participate in a lot of stuff that United Way does. I’m part of the campaign that’s done through workplace, but I also was part of their special events committees that they put on such as the CN Tower events and all that. I also do a lot of volunteer work through our mosque. (July 28, 2021, Transcript 11)

Through their activism, the women in this study are reclaiming certain spaces for themselves while also carving out new ones that enable them to develop social connections and networks, advocate for matters of personal and community significance, and deepen their sense of identity as they confront the challenges associated with settlement in Canada, both for themselves and their families. By engaging in activism, FERIW are actively practicing and promoting positive

mental health and well-being. Research has demonstrated that activism yields a positive influence on the health and well-being of immigrants during their settlement journey (MacDonnell et al., 2017).

7.4.3 Identity and Inner Strength

In this study, participants drew on their innate sense of self, unwavering belief in their identity, and inner resilience to navigate the barriers to settlement in Canada. Many shared life stories characterized by hard work, perseverance, and personal sacrifices in pursuit of their professional aspirations in their home countries. Combined with their faith, family, cultural ties, and social networks, these experiences profoundly shaped their identity. Despite being unable to practice their professions in their new homeland, they exhibit strength in the face of challenges and unfulfilled professional aspirations, which impacted all aspects of their lives including their mental health and well-being and their socio-economic status.

The participants' voices and experiences illustrate how they harness their inner strength and identities to navigate the challenges they encounter in Canada, even though there are moments when they feel broken and in despair. Nadia spoke of "fighting the good fight," recognizing the positive aspects of her situation. Beyond her family and social circles, and professional connections, Nadia elaborated on her strategies for maintaining her well-being:

at the same time, you know, it's a lot of reflective work, I mean the profession. So you know, I feel privileged, like there's so many things I know, so am very self-aware. So I'm able to just kind of, you know, pull myself out of things and just kind of shut it down and take a break, but at the same time, you know, I wouldn't say like it hasn't impacted me. It sure has. (August 9, 2021, Transcript 4)

In her role as a therapist, Nadia applies her clinical training and expertise along with her attributes, experiences, and resources to heal and promote her mental health and overall well-being. Nadia also stressed the importance of ensuring her daughter understands her history, culture, and family connections.

Noura has experienced a painful process of skill devaluation and credential loss in Canada. Despite being a doctor with substantial medical expertise, the neoliberal state and its agents

prohibit her from practicing medicine in Canada, even after obtaining a physician's registration number. Due to her intersectional identity, she experiences discrimination at multiple sites: ageism, Islamophobia, racism, sexism, and classism all converge to hinder her ability to secure employment commensurate with her extensive skills, education, and expertise. When recounting her experiences, her emotions were powerful. Yet, amid the deskilling and devaluation, there was also a strong sense of defiance. She refused to be subdued by the actions of the neoliberal colonial state. Even in the face of the harsh reality of having her medical credentials eviscerated, she asserted that every opportunity she secured in Canada, she discovered independently through online research without relying on settlement agencies. She proactively contacted doctors and educational institutions in her community, seeking placements or volunteer positions to gain Canadian and medical-related experience. Noura described: "I spent a lot of time doing a lot of things" (July 27, 2021, Transcript 6).

Noura has to navigate the credentialling process while simultaneously taking care of her family, as her husband works abroad:

International medical graduates have to write all the exams for Medical Council Canada. Very expensive to write the exams. Could have used for my family. Time and stress. In the end – it's a waste. Uncountable that time and it's stress. Managing everything on my own because my husband used to work overseas. Have to do everything at home and stress with the teenage children. It was horrible. (July 27, 2021, Transcript 6)

Despite the overwhelming pressure and stress that Noura endures, when I inquired how this had impacted her life, she affirmed that her upbringing, academic and professional background, and life experiences have equipped her with the ability to look after herself, including her mental health and well-being. Additionally, she provides ongoing informal guidance to her family and friends regarding health and well-being matters, which not only helps her sustain her sense of professional identity but also bolsters her resilience.

7.4.4 Technology

Technology has played a pivotal role in the settlement experiences of FERIW by allowing them to maintain connections with family and friends who are far away, join and access social

networks, and research settlement resources and supports, including immigrant-serving agencies, jobs, and health services. This is well supported by the literature that shows the importance of technology in helping to ease some of the isolation and settlement barriers newcomer immigrants encounter in Canada (Rashid & Gregory, 2014). Participants in this study described using the Internet to research opportunities and resources. Many of the participants emphasized the central role that social media plays in lessening their isolation and allowing them to maintain connections with and seek support from friends and family in their home countries and abroad. Technology serves as a tool of empowerment for these participants who find themselves in settlement circumstances where they have limited control, particularly considering the devaluation and dispossession they suffer within the labour market and the resulting psychological, social, and economic repercussions. Participants highlighted the use of a range of social media apps to build their professional and social networks. Lina has collaborated with fellow members of her ethnic community to establish a social network on LinkedIn, hoping it will evolve into a professional network (July 22, 2021, Transcript 1). This resonates with Sofia who described that most of her social and professional networking occurred online. During her online job searches, Sofia found a women's professional network on a social platform, which subsequently became her primary job search resource (August 16, 2021, Transcript 3).

Sofia also valued the social connections she has been able to make through the Internet:

My social network of friends, which are entirely ethnic now because I chose to keep it that way because I ... was having difficulty to breakthrough other networks. I didn't know of many networks to be honest. I found this network of women online, and it was a huge network. It wasn't easy to, you know, create connections. Meaningful connections and another network that I feel like I am forming lately has been with establishing some connections with the parents of my daughter's friends—taken me about two years to build. (August 16, 2021, Transcript 3)

Sofia's experiences parallel those of numerous immigrants who encounter difficulties in establishing social and professional networks in Canada. They frequently confront isolation and uncertainty as they grapple with the complexities of settlement, including deskilling and racism. The internet plays a crucial role for many immigrants, allowing them to sustain connections, regain a sense of control in their lives, and seek employment opportunities while navigating the

multitude of hurdles and challenges associated with settlement in Canada (Rashid & Gregory, 2014).

7.4.5 Victimized but not Victims

The participants in this study, like numerous other FERIW, have experienced deskilling and the devaluation of their credentials upon immigrating to Canada. They were welcomed into the country for their potential as a source of cheap unskilled and low-skilled labour, while their raced qualifications were deemed invalid. They are victims of the neoliberal state apparatus, which I have described elsewhere in this work as “colonialism in motion,” representing a modern manifestation of neo-colonialism. This is achieved, in part, through the devaluation and repurposing of racialized and gendered immigrant labour to serve the demands of the neoliberal racial capitalist economy. However, the women in this study have chosen to share their narratives as an act of self-reflection, resistance, empowerment, and defiance against the marginalization and skill dispossession that many of them have faced in Canada. They resist becoming and being depicted as victims, even in the face of grave settlement barriers. They have encountered racism and discrimination on account of their race, gender, ethnicity, class, religion, language, accent, and immigrant status. They reflected and articulated the links between their marginalization and racialization and their diminished socio-economic status and standing in their homes and communities. In their study on the resilience and mental health of immigrant women, MacDonnell et al. (2012) found, “The non-recognition of foreign credentials and systemic barriers in the Canadian workforce held back the participants and their husbands from advancing their careers. They needed to negotiate within the Canadian system and most of them sacrificed their careers” (p. 205).

Maintaining family ties was an integral part of the lives of the participants in this study and they sought and deepened resilience and strength through family ties. Several studies have documented the importance of family and social networks as a main resource to help immigrants navigate the challenges of settlement (Graham & Thurston, 2005; MacDonnell et al., 2017; Waldon, 2005). Immigrants seek the comfort and safety of immediate and extended family to help alleviate the racism and marginalization they encounter in their settlement experiences in Canada. Participants in this study drew strength from the close ties with their spouses, children, and extended family to help them cope with the challenges they encountered in Canada. However, not all immigrants are able to find strength and resilience in family networks.

Settlement barriers often impact family relations and gender roles and create or exacerbate existing tensions and violence within family structures (Okeke-Ihejirika et al., 2019). In numerous immigrant cultures and households, the responsibility for childcare and household work are seen as women's responsibility while men are seen as the primary breadwinners, even when the women have professional careers (Okeke-Ihejirika et al., 2019). Many of the women in this study were expected to fulfill the primary caregiving roles for children, elderly parents, and household management, while their spouses were viewed as the primary financial providers and heads of the household. In their countries of origin, many immigrant women receive assistance from extended family for childcare and household duties while also relying on other resources such as drivers and domestic helpers. However, in Canada, these support networks are no longer available. During their settlement journey, many FERIW are compelled to take survival jobs while still shouldering the bulk of housekeeping and childcare responsibilities.

Even in situations where FERIW serve as the primary or co-breadwinners for their families, gender roles are still expected to remain unaltered, which can cause significant tensions for immigrant women. Nyla, whose spouse was a teacher in Pakistan, and who undertook additional education as required by the Ontario College of Teachers to become accredited to teach in Ontario, did not find a job after completing the requirements set out by the College. Nyla described that:

[Her spouse] is considered a certified teacher here, but he couldn't find a job. There was a long waitlist, and then the problem is it's not a steady job, right? You have to be on the supply list for a very long time, and then and again from the culture perspective, the husband is the breadwinner of the family, you know, regardless of whatever the wife does, right? So it cannot be just my work. (July 27, 2021, Transcript 11)

Nyla's experience supports the findings of research conducted by Okeke-Ihejirika et al. (2019), who discovered that the African immigrant women in their study perceived themselves as insufficiently equipped to navigate the stress and tensions within their family structures stemming from settlement challenges impacting gender dynamics within their families. The women in their study highlighted the harmful impacts of deskilling on their economic stability, undermining their ability to renegotiate traditional gender roles in light of changing work roles,

given that in many cases, the women were working multiple survival jobs to provide for their families.

The literature on the settlement experiences of immigrant women demonstrates that the complexities of their settlement encounters and experiences, including marginalization, racism, deskilling, economic precarity, and changing gender roles, can render many immigrant women more vulnerable to domestic violence or the worsening of domestic violence (Graham & Thurston, 2005; MacDonnell et al., 2017; Waldon, 2005). Several of this study's participants who also work in settlement agencies voiced their concerns about the vulnerability of immigrant women to violence in the home as their family's economic circumstances and social status declined because of deskilling and dispossession of credentials. Nadia shared her experience of finding herself on her own, along with her daughter, just two months after moving to Canada to reunite with her husband:

My husband was a sales manager, had an MBA. He came here, [but] he couldn't make it in his industry or his field, so he took a lot of odd jobs like working at a McDonald's, whatever it was. Survival jobs. He couldn't hold on to a job for long. I guess because of the culture shock, and you know, he wasn't used to such things, and he had a bit of a temper, so you know, the Canadian ways of doing things like there's a policy and procedure and protocol. Still, the way it worked was that during all of this, I'm trying to figure things out and, you know, work like build a relationship again with my ex-husband, a lot of damage had happened around that time, and you know, it was a domestic situation. What happened was: then he left... So I found myself on my own after like two months of moving to Canada. (Nadia, August 9, 2021, Transcript 4)

Nadia's experience of domestic upheaval resonates with those of other racialized immigrant women who navigate multiple settlement barriers, including family tensions and conflict, as they try to integrate in Canada. Contesting and resisting racism and marginalization can be reframed as resilience (Bottrell, 2009; Goodkind et al., 2020; Rashid & Gregory, 2014). FERIW employ a variety of strategies to cope with their settlement barriers. These include finding strength and comfort in family and social networks, engaging in additional education, including language classes, workshops, courses, programs, and placements and using technology to maintain connections and research resources and jobs. They engage in daily acts of defiance and

resistance, as they encounter racism and discrimination on a routine basis. Telling their stories represented a counter-hegemonic act aimed at challenging the stereotypes surrounding immigrant women, and the deskilling and dispossession of their credentials. By becoming the narrators of their own stories and their lived realities, they asserted their agency and created counter-knowledge.

Collins (2000) asserts, “As long as Black women’s oppression persists, so will the need for Black women’s activism” (p. 274). FERIW recognize their state of eviction from the HSLM site through credential devaluation and dispossession within the Canadian neocolonial, neoliberal state apparatus. Through their acts of resistance as resilience, they are empowered to carve out new spaces and reframe their identities for themselves, their families, and their communities. Noura has not been able to practice her medical profession in Canada. She is deeply wounded by this blatant racism, marginalization, and eviction from the category qualified. Yet, she resists that eviction by taking care of her family and practicing the traits she learned about holistic self-care and spirituality. She also provides guidance to family and friends about health matters. She is empowering herself by reframing how she can continue to use her medical skills. Through her volunteer activism with organizations such as Diabetes Canada, she continues to carve out different spaces to stay connected to her profession. MacDonnell et al. (2017) found that the immigrant women in their study,

take action individually and collectively, resisting invisibility, challenging norms, advocating for and creating community and health resources. In contrast to the dominant view of immigrant women as passive recipients of services, their stories show how women are key figures at individual, family, community, and system levels, motivated by concerns for their children or in response to broader social injustices that shape their everyday social worlds. (p. 194)

FERIW understand that the journey toward credential recognition and, consequently, self-recognition is lengthy and challenging in Canada. Despite engaging in education and skills upgrading and practicing acts of resilience as resistance (Rashid & Gregory, 2014), the neocolonial practices of the neoliberal state continue to deskill them, depict them as unqualified, and relegate them to unemployment, underemployment, and a source of cheap labour for the unskilled labour market. However, these strong, self-made, spiritual, and resilient women will continue to defy and resist their marginalization and seek full participation in the rights and

rituals of citizenship in Canada. Another strategy that FERIW employ to navigate the barriers they face in their settlement experiences in Canada is to develop and use social and professional networks.

7.5 Theme 6: Professional and Social Networks

Eleven of the 12 participants in this study highlighted the importance of professional and social networks to help immigrant professionals navigate the HSLM site, build meaningful connections, and access settlement resources and support with people who share common identities, interests and goals, including nationality, language, culture, and ethnicity. They believed that their lack of access to professional networks in particular was a major barrier to their ability to get a job in, or related to, their profession. Professional networking is defined as “a series of goal-directed interpersonal interactions that build and maintain professional relationships and include the exchange of work and career-benefiting resources” (Porter et al., 2023, p. 1). Social networks, on the other hand, are defined as a group of people who include friends, family, colleagues, and acquaintances who share personal interactions and relationships (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). These interactions and relationships can be both face-to-face and online. Five of the participants belonged to social networks that were entirely of their own ethnic and cultural groups. Sofia described finding it difficult to connect in a meaningful way with people outside of her ethnic group:

My social network of friends, which are entirely ethnic now because I chose to keep it that way because I was having communication difficulties, having difficulty to breakthrough other networks. I didn't know of many networks to be honest. I found this network of women online, and it was a huge network. It wasn't easy to, you know, create connections. Meaningful connections. Usually, I find it a lot easier to connect with people that have similar backgrounds with me. I mean not just ethnically but culturally. It's sad, but it's true—sad because for a multicultural country that it's still not easy to connect. People stay within the same bubble, and I know that it's not because they avoid connections or exposure to other cultures or to local culture, but it's because they have a very hard time communicating, and I think being accepted as well. I think they find it difficult. It's not that they choose to be secluded to be isolated. (August 16, 2021, Transcript 3)

Sofia's experience reflects the challenges immigrants face in developing connections with groups both within but also outside of their communities. This is consistent with the literature that highlights how social connections are generally established with individuals from comparable socio-economic backgrounds and cultural capital (Akkaymak, 2016). Sofia utilized a combination of social and professional networks to assist her in her job search in Canada. Sofia's experience serves as a perfect illustration of the ongoing sequence of activities that FERIW engage in as they navigate the process of seeking employment and establishing networks of support and resources in a new country:

Facebook network of women, mainly of mothers actually aimed at helping women with any kind of job-related inquiries so either employment or job search situations of any kind. That's where I came to find out about the adult learning co-op placement program. This career connection that started beginning of last year. Got in contact with the organizers, and I secured a place. Last year, September, I started the program. Help with the skills needed in job hunting and job workplace communication. Also offers a short-term placement in organizations of interest. (August 16, 2021, Transcript 3)

Sofia's successful use of social and professional networking is shared by Ava. Ava, like many of the other participants in this study, described how connections and networking are the only way to secure employment in Canada:

I don't have friends and family here. The only thing I tried to do was that Facebook team; in the group they posted a lot of jobs. Was on Facebook in those established groups, like Colombians in Toronto Group or Latinos in Toronto.... I know the way jobs work in Canada is networking. This is a big deal for immigrants because we don't know nobody here. Lady who hired me was Colombian. I was just lucky to find her. It was meant to be, but if I didn't find her, probably right now will be working at the Tim Hortons... Many jobs, like in my job, my managers, they have zero knowledge of what they do, but they are managers because they are friends with somebody else that put them in that position regardless of their qualifications or education. So I know a lot has to do with that, and I disagree because you should put people qualified to do jobs. (July 26, 2021, Transcript 2)

Ava's experiences in the labour market quickly brought her to the realization of the strategic significance of networking within the job market. This resonated with Lina, who emphasized that professional networks play a pivotal role in securing professional employment in Canada:

You know one thing is—We were discussing with especially a few professional friends of mine. That is, they discuss when they apply for jobs; even though we have all the qualifications the networking is missing. Getting a job, especially in their profession, you need that professional network. For example, the dentists, even though they have all the qualifications in dentistry or research or intellectually, we need to get into the right contacts. The right networking is still a struggle. (July 22, 2021, Transcript 1)

Amelia described what multiculturalism means and how it relates to her networks:

Multiculturalism means that all the cultures coexist, but they're all there, but they have their own space, so it's not like USA called a melting pot. We live together, but we live independently. I feel like my network is limited. I don't have many networks in there from other cultures. I have some, but I don't have time to nurture that network. Newcomers are struggling to live, struggling with their life. How can they have time to interact with other people? Newcomers, they are facing survival. (July 23, 2021, Transcript 10)

Amelia highlights an important aspect of the struggles and negotiations that immigrants face while dealing with barriers to settlement in Canada. They are enticed by the promise of the Canadian dream to move to Canada and granted immigration based on their human capital, which includes language proficiency, educational background, and professional expertise. Upon arrival, those very attributes are no longer deemed human capital but are devalued and dispossessed within the LMI site, becoming the very characteristics that label them as *unqualified*. Soon after they arrive in Canada, many racialized immigrants embark on a life of survival and the *credential recognition treadmill*, leaving limited time to build meaningful connections across cultures, ethnicities and nationalities, as described by both Amelia and Sofia.

7.5.1 Newly Arrived and Needing to Network

For many new immigrants to Canada, the availability of resources and supports to help them develop and use pre-arrival and post-arrival social and professional networks would play a pivotal role in easing their transition and settlement in both their personal and professional lives in Canada. Many immigrants are not familiar with the concept of professional networking (Austin & Rocchi Dean, 2006; Maitra, 2015; Porter et al., 2023), and it is yet another thing, albeit a major component, that they need to understand and develop rapidly and utilize to navigate their settlement in Canada. Many of the FERIW in this study were not familiar with professional networks as a tool for securing professional employment. Ava described getting employment in her home country because she was the best-qualified candidate for the job, whereas she felt that in Canada, “As a society—Canadians talking about multiculturalism and inclusion and welcoming immigrants it should be about your qualifications you have to do a job. Not networking and who you know” (July 27, 2021, Transcript 2).

Many of the participants in this study experienced deskilling and dispossession of their credentials because of their intersectional identities. This impacted their health and well-being, causing emotional stress, turmoil, and a sense of loss regarding the status and sense of self that they had previously enjoyed from working in their profession. They sought out connections and interpersonal relationships with people with whom they shared similar experiences of culture, nationality, language, ethnicity, and immigrant status to help them navigate the challenges of settlement. Ager and Strang (2008, as cited in Porter et al., 2023, p. 177) describe social networks as “connective tissue” for immigrants in accessing and asserting their citizenship rights and navigating their socio-economic settlement. Similarly, in a study on Indian immigrant Information Technology (IT) workers in Canada, Maitra (2015) describes how participants in the study relied heavily on their ethnic social networks of family and friends both in Canada and India to find jobs in the IT sector, and only through the use of their ethnic networks were they able to obtain information about “body-shopping” (p. 197) agencies who assist with international placements in IT.

In this study, participants turned to social networks to access and establish professional connections, given that they were newcomers to Canada and lacked existing networks for job opportunities related to their respective professions. Social networks constitute an important source of information on settlement supports and resources, including housing, healthcare,

childcare, community, and cultural and social events. Amidst all the uncertainty and precarity they are experiencing, immigrants find security and comfort in networks of people who share similar cultures, ethnicities, languages, and nationalities. In their study on foreign-trained pharmacists, Austin and Rocchi Dean (2006) found that many foreign-trained pharmacists found it difficult to meet the licensing requirements in Canada to practice, and they lacked access to professional networks that their Canadian counterparts enjoyed and benefitted from. However, they also found that due to their lack of professional networks, foreign-trained pharmacists relied on their social networks of family and friends based on shared language and culture which impeded their efforts after they became licensed to access jobs. While this may be the case, I think it is important to balance any negative aspects of reliance on social networks against the comfort and support that social networks offer immigrant professionals to help them navigate the extensive deskilling, racism, microaggressions, and numerous other settlement barriers they encounter in their daily lives.

Austin and Rocchi Dean also highlight the importance of peer support networks as an important element of the International Pharmacy Graduate bridging program for foreign-trained pharmacists. Peer support networks helped participants coalesce around shared learning experiences and challenges for foreign-educated professionals and the particular integration barriers they face as well. Lina described how taking additional education, such as the Workplace Communication in Canada bridging certificate program, has been helping her build her confidence as well as her social and peer networks: “It is preparing myself mentally and emotionally and also in terms of networking, especially meeting new contacts to get into the job market, that is also helping me” (July 22, 2021, Transcript 1).

While social networks provide critical resources and support, including emotional and moral support, for immigrants navigating the complexities of settlement challenges, they can also be a source of demoralization and negative feedback. Shuva (2022) describes how Bangladeshi participants in her study received negative information and feedback when they networked with friends and family from their ethnic communities due to these people’s negative experiences in Canada. Nadia recounted how when she first arrived in Canada, she was discouraged by her ex-spouse and family friends from exploring further university studies:

When I came, of course, I wanted to just kind of explore a few things and connect you know and contacted UFT and couple of other places to study....

Not really a lot of people being supportive at that time. It was more like, you know, when you move as an immigrant, you just try to get a job at McDonald's or work at Tim Hortons. So, I was told the same thing—family, friends, people that we know like here in the community that you socialize with, or some of my ex-husband's friends, you would go visit for tea coffee, and they'll be like what are you doing, and I'm like well I'm just taking my time, my kid is too young, and I'm settling in. I'm looking for things, and this is what I would like to do, and people would shut me off right away. It'll be like you can never get a job at U of T or equivalent. (August 9, 2021, Transcript 4)

Nadia's journey underscores the stereotypes, what some would describe as the realities, which can restrict skilled immigrants' career aspirations and outlook in Canada. Immigrants are expected to pursue specific occupations, typically unskilled or low-skilled, irrespective of their professional qualifications, due to the prevailing labour market landscape for immigrants in Canada, particularly for FERIW. At the same time, some immigrants emphasize the inadequacy of realistic information provided during the pre-arrival phase of their journey, both from their social networks and official immigration sources such as government websites. According to Shuva (2022), study participants who were dissatisfied and disheartened by their inability to practice their professions in Canada attributed their decision to immigrate to Canada to a lack of information about the Canadian workplace culture and the labour market realities for immigrants.

In Noura's case, she detailed her process:

I researched on the immigration website about what I would need to do to practice medicine here. That's one of the problems. They posted everything so nicely, so welcoming, that you can write these exams and get entry, and everything will be fine. Still not convinced, as I was then 43 and I would have to study and take care of my young kids at that time, but relatives and friends back home and friends here convinced me to come for the family. (July 27, 2021, Transcript 6)

Noura's experience emphasizes the need for immigrants, who rely on a range of sources for pre- and post-arrival settlement resources, including employment, to have a diverse array of resources

and experiences. This includes providing them with realistic depictions of life in Canada, rather than just idealized examples, to assist immigrants in navigating the challenges of settlement and making well-informed decisions about their decision to immigrate in the first place. Additionally, although the negative experiences of others in their networks can be demoralizing, it is vital for immigrants to have access to the necessary resources and support systems that enable them to effectively navigate and manage the multitude of settlement challenges they may encounter (Shuva, 2022). This can assist in mitigating the impacts of negative feedback from friends and family within their social networks. Numerous studies have highlighted the lack of comprehensive information on government websites about crucial settlement information for newcomers, such as employment and licensing information (George & Chaze, 2009; Kaushik & Drolet, 2018). Noura, along with some of the other participants in this study, emphasized that although there is information available and accessible on these websites, it generally presents an overly positive and simplified view of employment and licensing in Canada, which sharply contrasts with the harsh realities they encounter soon after their arrival.

7.6 Conclusion

This chapter examined the precarity and daily struggles that characterize the lives of FERIW. The reflection and discussion of the research findings were analyzed within the context of biopolitics and the state's power over life and death. Precarity, broken dreams, and deskilling and dispossession of credentials contribute to poor health outcomes, including mental health struggles for many FERIW. It impacts their psyche and spirit and creates spirit injury because of racism and marginalization. However, the participants in this study showed defiance, resistance, and resilience by the very act of telling their stories, countering hegemonic discourses about immigrant professionals.

In chapter eight, I will consider an anti-colonial, anti-racist, decolonial framework for dismantling the neocolonial deskilling and retooling that passes for labour market integration in Canada.

Chapter 8

Discussion, Summary, Recommendations, and Conclusion

8.1 Introduction

Drawing on concepts of racial capitalism and structural violence to locate the acts of eviction that FERIW are subjected to within the LMI space in Canada, I argue that racialized immigration on the move to Canada represents the human face of Canada's ongoing nation-building and economic policy agenda. The LMI space reinforces and reproduces the colonial racial hierarchical order in Canada, preserving the Whiteness of the nation.

8.2 Summary of the Research

This study explores the Labour Market Integration (LMI) site as a space of ongoing colonial violence and spirit injury, where race plays a central role in legitimizing the politics of credential recognition, in which Foreign Educated Racialized Immigrant Women (FERIW) are evicted from the category "qualified" in Canada. Contemporary neoliberal immigration policies, as was historically the case, continue to be aligned with nation-building: (a) economic expansion and (b) preserving the colonial racial capitalist hierarchy. This dissertation represents a decolonial work, that aims to cast an oppositional gaze and speak back to the discursive and material Othering, deskilling, and dispossession of Foreign-Educated Racialized Immigrant Women's (FERIW) credentials, knowledge, and identities in the labour market integration (LMI) space, through anti-colonial and anti-racist theory, and integrating concepts of racial capitalism and structural violence.

The multicultural state's neoliberal agenda accepts racialized immigrants for immigration to Canada based on their human capital, including age, health status, and credentials. However, once in Canada, many racialized immigrants undergo an invalidation and dispossession of credentials and human capital and are repurposed for the cheap labour economy.

Delegitimization of FERIW's credentials adversely impacts their socio-economic health and well-being. Many of us have first-hand knowledge of immigrant professionals who immigrated to Canada, only to find themselves working in jobs for which they are highly overqualified, including the familiar example of doctors working as taxi drivers. In the case of one of this

study's participants, Noura, a highly experienced doctor, managed to secure a few random jobs but was unable to find meaningful employment for the most part.

This study undertook the following learning objectives:

1. Gain an in-depth understanding of the intersections of race, ethnicity, immigrant status and credentials with the established systems and practices of credential recognition within the Canadian labour market.
2. Critically assess the role of the Canadian state and its historical state formation within the larger context of historical and contemporary forms of capitalist accumulation by dispossession in the ongoing marginalization of FERIW within the LMI site.
3. Understand how credential dispossession impacts the socio-economic and health and well-being of FERIW and the broader impacts on their settlement and integration in Canada.

To achieve these objectives, this study sought to answer the following central research questions:

1. Does race and ethnicity impact and legitimize the system and structure of credential recognition and, thus, labour market outcomes in which foreign-educated racialized immigrant women are evicted from the category of qualified?
2. How does this dispossession of the credentials of foreign-educated racialized immigrant women constitute a form of violence that is being inflicted on these women by the Canadian state?
3. What is the impact of the devaluation and commodification of the labour of foreign-educated racialized immigrant women on their lives?

The literature review highlighted the challenges that FERIW encounter during their settlement experiences in Canada and the process of deskilling they undergo due to their intersectional identities. I examined the following main categories in the LMI literature: (a) the socio-economic status of skilled immigrant women, (b) neoliberalism, globalization, and the precariat, (c) Canadian experience and exclusionary credentialling, and (d) licensing and regulatory bodies and de-credentialling. This study places the literature on LMI studies in conversation with the literature on colonial violence to position the LMI site as a space of discursive, epistemic, spiritual and cultural violence inscribed on the bodies of FERIW through the invalidation and dispossession of their knowledge, credentials, and identities. FERIW are unable to access jobs in

the HSLM commensurate with their credentials due to their race, gender, ethnicity, culture, class, nationality, and accent. Their racialization prevents their successful integration into the labour market, resulting in poverty, deskilling, and relegation to the gendered, segregated, cheap labour economy. Fanon (2004) emphasized the violence and dehumanizing effects of colonialism. Mbembe (2008) describes the sovereign's power to determine who lives and dies, who is disposable, and who has value. Extending the notions of the violence of colonialism and the sovereign's power to determine life and death to the LMI space, within this space the state and its institutions of power determine whose credentials are valid and whose are made disposable. FERIW are dispossessed of their credentials, consigned to the category of unqualified, and are discursively and spatially segregated into raced enclaves within the racialized division of cheap labour and low-income housing and communities.

8.3 Key Findings

Through in-depth interviews, FERIW interpret and articulate their experiences within the LMI space, which has historically been a hierarchically stratified space based on race and gender. FERIW also shared the strategies they employed to resist and contest their marginalization and eviction from the high-skilled labour market (HSLM) space.

The following six main themes and seven subthemes emerged, that impact and shape FERIW's labour market experiences, outcomes and lives:

1. English and speaking with an accent, not expertise, is the problem

Speaking with a *foreign* accent, even if speaking flawless English, consigns FERIW to alterity within the nation and positions them within the Labour Market Integration (LMI) space as deficient and unskilled. The multilingual capital that FERIW possess is not valued as an asset to be leveraged within the LMI site, but they serve as markers of their foreignness and inferiority and sites for deskilling within the neoliberal capitalist apparatus. Accumulation by deskilling is a strategic tool and function of the multicultural state apparatus to ensure and preserve a cheap supply of labour for the economy.

2. Multiculturalism's Others:

Subtheme 1: Racism and the culturalization of racism

Subtheme 2: Intersectional identities

Subtheme 3: What colour are your credentials: Deskilling and devaluation

Within a seemingly benevolent welcoming Canada, immigrants are rewarded differentially based on factors including skin colour, ethnicity, nationality, culture, language, and class. In the labour market space, racialized immigrants' foreign credentials are coded to mean inferior, unqualified, and unskilled. FERIW's intersectional identities are central to their othering within the LMI site. The deskilling of racialized women within the LMI space remains a key strategy of the neoliberal economic framework, ensuring the maintenance of a stratified, gendered, exploitable labour force.

3. Precarity and life as a daily struggle

The state of permanent injury, as described by Mbembe (2003), can be aptly extended to the situation of FERIW in Canada. They are held in a perpetual state of personal and professional limbo, where their life's accomplishments and academic qualifications lie wasted and invalidated within the HSLM space in Canada. The cruelty of the uncertainty and the obscurity surrounding the pathway to getting their credentials recognized and securing employment in their profession inflicts a form of everyday violence on FERIW.

4. Health impacts of deskilling and dispossession of credentials:

Subtheme 1: Canada's (in)human rights and the right to work

Subtheme 2: Psychological impacts of uncertainty

Subtheme 3: Violence, credential dispossession, and permanent wound

Subtheme 4: Spirit injury

A significant number of immigrants develop health problems soon after they immigrate to Canada, despite having better health status compared to the local-born population due to mandatory health checks immigrants need to undergo to qualify for immigration. Settlement challenges and barriers deny racialized immigrants the ability to easily acculturate within Canadian society, resulting in unemployment, underemployment, lack of credential recognition, and racism. As a result, immigrants' mental health, physical health, and well-being are adversely impacted.

5. Resilience

Through their acts of resistance as resilience, FERIW are carving out new spaces and reframing their sense of self for themselves, their families, and their communities. FERIW employ a variety of strategies to deal with their settlement barriers. These include finding strength and comfort in family and social networks, engaging in additional education, including language classes, workshops, courses, programs, placements, and using technology to maintain connections and

research resources and jobs. They engage in daily acts of defiance and resistance, as they encounter racism and discrimination on a routine basis. Telling their stories was a counter-hegemonic act aimed at challenging the stereotypes surrounding immigrant women, and the deskilling and dispossession of their credentials.

6. Professional and social networks

Professional and social networks are identified as crucial for helping immigrant professionals navigate the HSLM site, build meaningful connections, and access settlement resources and supports with people who share common goals, including nationality, language, culture, and ethnicity. FERIW's lack of access to professional networks in particular represent a major barrier to their ability to get a job in, or related to, their profession. Additionally, immigrants rely on a range of sources for pre- and post-arrival settlement resources, including employment. They need to be provided with a diversity of resources and experiences to assist them in navigating the challenges of settlement and making well-informed decisions about their decision to immigrate in the first place.

8.4 An Integrated Decolonial Model of Change

The Canadian state continues to increase immigration quotas to achieve economic and nation-building objectives, as has been explored throughout this work. However, the socio-economic experiences and outcomes for FERIW highlight their marginalization in the LMI space, including poverty, precarity, and adverse health and well-being impacts of deskilling. Eleven key recommendations emerged from this study that are based on participants' narratives and recommendations for change, my embodied knowledge and experiences, and the analysis of the LMI literature. These recommendations put forward an integrated anticolonial, anti-racist action framework for change that seeks to bring about authentic and meaningful changes to policies, systems, structures, and knowledge recognition and validation. They seek the recognition of FERIW as equal and deserving of the same rights and recognition as the dominant White group, within the borders of the nation. This decolonial model of change would boldly advocate and campaign for the recognition and validation of immigrant professionals' skills, knowledge, credentials, and intersectional identities that add and enhance meaning and value to communities and workplaces. These recommendations seek to challenge hegemonic ways of constructing, recognizing, and rewarding racialized immigrant professionals, and their identities, knowledge, and credentials.

These recommendations include:

1. A national declaration of a state of crisis concerning the status of the labour market integration of immigrant professionals
2. Creation of a Department of Labour Market Integration for Immigrant Professionals within the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training, and Skills Development
3. Creation of a National Association of Immigrant Professionals
4. Provincial action
5. Targeted language training
6. Communicate honest realities
7. Professional placements
8. Professional mentors
9. State of multicultural languages
10. Collect and report hiring data
11. Decolonizing knowledge

8.4.1 A National Declaration of a State of Crisis Concerning the Status of the Labour Market Integration of Immigrant Professionals

A state of emergency is defined as:

When any level of government assumes authority it does not generally possess to respond to a crisis. This is done by invoking said authority under specific legislation and permits the government to expend funds, mobilize forces, or suspend civil liberties. (Wikipedia, 2023, para. 1)

Similar to a state of emergency, all stakeholders who work with immigrant professionals in their labour market integration in Canada need to demand a national declaration of a state of crisis in the labour market integration of racialized immigrants. “Over 1.3 million new immigrants arrived in Canada between 2016 to 2021, representing the highest number of recent immigrants recorded in a Canadian census” (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, 2023, Quick Facts section, para. 6). More than half of these immigrants were admitted under the economic class and over one third through skilled worker programs. The federal government has established immigration quotas of 500,000 yearly from 2022 till 2025 by which time it expects to admit 1.5 million immigrants. This represents the state’s most ambitious immigration plan to

date and is seen as vital to expanding the economy and addressing declining birth rates (Zimonjic, 2022). However, the major cities in Canada are facing housing crises, exacerbated by escalating inflation costs. Immigrants generally settle in the three major cities in Canada: Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver, with Toronto receiving the largest number of immigrants: 29.5% in 2021 compared to 12.2% for Montreal and 11.7% for Vancouver (Statistics Canada, 2022c, “Increasing shares,” para. 1).

More and more recent immigrants are struggling to find affordable, safe housing. Fourteen percent of the homeless population in Canada in 2019 were new immigrants (Gerami, 2019). The poverty rate for recent immigrants who immigrated to Canada in the last few years was 40.4% based on statistics from 2015 to 2018 (National Advisory Council on Poverty, 2020). Settlement barriers, including deskilling, housing and income precarity, racism, and marginalization all contribute to racialized immigrants’ greater risk for mental health conditions (Mental Health Commission for Canada, 2019). Yet, the federal government has not put forward any plans or details on addressing the housing precarity and settlement barriers that immigrant professionals face, which have been extensively detailed throughout this work. These barriers will further deteriorate, with a projected 500,000 immigrants expected yearly until 2025 (Zimonjic, 2022).

Participants in this study expressed anxiety over health, housing, and finances. Amelia worried about her own housing situation: “I still feel I’m facing a lot of challenges now. Housing and kids’ education” (July 23, 2021, Transcript 10). Many questioned the ethics and the contradictory logic of Canadian immigration policies whereby individuals qualify for entry to Canada; however, these same immigrants are not recognized as skilled professionals soon after arrival. The deskilling and devaluation of their credentials, undertaken in the service of capitalist accumulation, are couched within discourses of bureaucratic incompetencies. As Farah highlighted:

The thing is, you get immigrants because they are skilled, right. I had as many points as my husband had who was the principal applicant. Officer at that time said I could have gotten on my own. So when you recognize I have skills you allow me to come into the country and then you don’t accept them for the jobs. (August 4, 2021, Transcript 5)

A declaration of a national crisis will focus attention on the dehumanizing state of settlement and integration for newcomer immigrant professionals in Canada. The continuing deskilling and dispossession of FERIW's credentials persist year after year, along with ongoing expressions of concern from policymakers and stakeholders, many of whom are well-intentioned. These are accompanied by demands for increased resources to support programs aimed at helping racialized immigrant professionals integrate more successfully within the LMI site. I characterize the *foreign professional problem* as a strategy of neoliberal state expansion within the globalized capitalist accumulation by dispossession apparatus. Language is constituted within power. Being intentional about identifying and naming conditions rather than framing them in politically correct language and discourse, serves as a powerful tool to effect meaningful change.

8.4.2 Department of Labour Market Integration for Immigrant Professionals

A Department of Labour Market Integration for Immigrant Professionals (DLMIIP) needs to be created to work directly with professional licensing and accreditation bodies in each province that are responsible for regulating access to professions. One of the first tasks of the DLMIIP should be the formulation of an action plan outlining the resources and steps needed to systematically and quickly break down barriers to credential recognition. It is widely accepted that the lack of credential recognition is one of the primary contributors to immigrants' poor socio-economic status and health challenges in Canada (Premji et al., 2014; Subedi & Rosenberg, 2016; Vang et al., 2015). This situation amounts to a state of crisis, emphasizing the importance of engaging directly with licensing and regulatory bodies to influence and impact substantial and meaningful changes. Licensing and regulatory bodies need to be challenged on their existing hegemonic practices which produce and perpetuate the status quo and entrenched philosophy and thinking, beginning with the foundational assumption that foreign-trained degrees are inferior. These bodies wield tremendous power, and they need to be made accountable for the practice of that power. The literature highlights that one of the primary functions of licensing and regulatory bodies is gatekeeping, to keep certain bodies out of the profession (Bauder, 2003; Das Gupta, 2019; Guo, 2009). Licensing and regulatory bodies have historically sought to exclude racialized bodies from entry to certain professions, including nursing, medicine and law. Their practices and policies shape the realities for many immigrant professionals. This is supported by Farah, "I mean I had a lot of discussion. I went to a lot of

agencies and a lot of people also said it was a form of gatekeeping that they wanted to keep certain people out right” (August 4, 2021, Transcript 5).

One of the first priorities of the proposed DLMIIP should be to convene a series of roundtable events with policymakers, employers, professional regulatory bodies and associations, with representation from foreign-educated racialized immigrant professionals (FERIP), and other relevant stakeholders to develop plans for expedited pathways to credential recognition for immigrants. One of the strategic objectives of this initiative should include the establishment of customized mapping pathways, as recommended by Amelia: “A very clear, like a road map for the professionals, for the newcomers” (July 23, 2021, Transcript 10). These road maps should be developed for a variety of professions, to provide FERIP with clear and concrete pathways to follow, to obtain employment in related professions commensurate with their credentials, rather than the opaque processes that immigrant professionals currently navigate with settlement agencies.

A key aspect of the work of the DLMIIP should include an evaluation of accelerated bridging programs, which have proven to be of some success in helping immigrants practice in their professions or related fields, such as the International Pharmacy Graduate program at the University of Toronto and York University’s Bridging Programs for Internationally Educated Professionals (Alboim, 2002; Ardal & Hyde, 2022; Kaushik & Drolet, 2018). These programs need to be expanded to meet the extensive demand among immigrant professionals seeking employment in fields related to their professions. Additionally, financial resources and support need to be identified to help immigrant professionals with the costs associated with these programs.

Nyla highlighted the value of bridging programs with a placement component: “A lot of bridging programs are helpful because they also have a component of placement which was missing early on” (July 28, 2021, Transcript 11). Similarly, Lina described the Toronto Metropolitan University’s Workplace Communication in Canada bridging program as: “Great, is really helpful, especially to understand the Canadian workplace. Understand how we communicate, how we need to bring in our skills and transfer skills” (July 22, 2021, Transcript 1). In planning and developing expanded access to bridging programs, resources and support for childcare should be a feature of these programs. Childcare remains a critical issue for many FERIW who bear the main responsibility for childcare in their households. Nyla argued that: “[Speaking]

specifically from women's perspectives, there are wait lists wherever you go for childcare. Then most of the time the childcare is not close to your home or your workplace." Nyla advocates for "opportunities to have onsite childcare" to enable FERIW to better access job training, skills upgrading, and employment opportunities (July 28, 2021, Transcript 11). While the Ontario Bridge Training Bursary provides financial assistance for some users, additional dedicated financial supports are needed to help immigrants utilize these programs, while caring for their children, and earning a living.

A key function of the proposed DLMIP would be to streamline processes and consolidate resources and support within this agency. Immigrant-serving agencies (ISAs) should be consolidated under this department to facilitate the streamlining of their programs, resources, and practices. The range and number of programs and courses are often confusing for newcomer immigrants, and there are duplications of resources that can be utilized in more effective ways. There should be a central online repository where immigrant professionals can access resources and support instead of having to visit multiple sites and centres. Noura described the number of settlement resources and organizations as highly confusing: "Just filling quotas. A lot of bad things happen because of the settlement offices" (July 27, 2021, Transcript 6). Noura was advised by one ISA that she needed to take English classes. However, upon attending the first class, she was told she did not need the classes. Similarly, Ava described how language classes often had:

No plan, no objective. Put people randomly in classes just because you need to have certain proficiency level. I'll just go freely 20 class. There is no follow-up. There is no evaluation system. They don't have evaluation system because they don't have a program. There's no structure. (Ava, July 26, 2021, Transcript 2)

8.4.3 Creation of a National Association of Immigrant Professionals

There are numerous immigrant associations and institutions across Canada engaging in a range of important and impactful work. However, I believe that the consolidation of the work of many of these groups into a national think tank comprising community, industry and immigrant stakeholders, should be created to collaborate and boldly challenge oppressive practices that preserve the status quo. I recommend the creation of a National Association of Immigrant Professionals whose aim would be to devise policies and recommendations to lobby state,

provincial and local institutions on issues affecting FERIP, including eviction from the HSLM space. The proposed National Association of Immigrant Professionals would work to challenge barriers and gatekeeping practices in regulated professions and promote and campaign for the recognition and validation of racialized immigrant professionals and their credentials.

8.4.4 Provincial Action

The Province of Ontario announced plans in January 2023 to pass legislation to allow Canadian healthcare workers who are registered or licensed in other provinces to be able to start practicing in Ontario if they meet certain criteria. According to the Deputy Premier and Minister of Health for Ontario, “A highly-skilled health care worker from British Columbia or Nova Scotia shouldn’t have to pause their career or face barriers to practice here in Ontario” (Office of the Premier, as cited in Dino, 2023). While this is a much-needed step in the right direction to allow doctors and nurses the mobility to work in different provinces and alleviate the shortage of healthcare workers in Ontario, this should be extended to foreign-educated healthcare workers. As Nyla highlighted:

There’s a waitlist to get a family doctor. So why don’t we benefit from those people who are already here with several years of experience. They are good role models for others to join. Even if they can’t start as a physician, there are different professions that exist even in US. They’re different professions that exist within the medical field like Physician Assistant Programs and things like that that they can also benefit from. (July 28, 2021, Transcript 11)

The Assistant Physician program, first introduced in the state of Missouri, has been adopted by other states to deal with shortages of physicians. Assistant physicians are apprentice physicians who graduated from US medical school but did not get a residency placement (Singer & Pratt, 2023). These assistant physicians primarily provide care in rural and underserved areas of the state with limited supervision by a licensed physician. Many states are considering expanding this model to include international medical graduates. Canada should implement a similar model and include foreign-trained immigrant doctors so that they will be able to practice in Canada. The work of the proposed DLMiIP should include the development of an Assistant Physician pilot program for implementation. This would greatly alleviate the shortage of family doctors in Ontario. New research reveals that currently, “2.2 million Ontarians do not have a family doctor”

(INSPIRE-Primary Health Care, as cited in Arsenych & Favaro, 2023, para. 13). Nyla argued that:

I think there's also recognition that needs to be made in terms of in Canada, they looking at those doctors. The basic human body is the same. Why is it so difficult to pass the same exam if somebody has gone through similar training back home and work experience. Why not have accelerated programs to fast-track them to work. There are organizations like Doctors Without Borders; they go to places like Somalia to help those human beings. They are human beings. Nobody asked you to get those credentials evaluated before you touch that person, right? (July 28, 2021, Transcript 11)

Nyla's question speaks to the argument I have made throughout this work, that the knowledge and professional experiences of FERIP are invalidated because of factors including race, gender, ethnicity and nationality. Immigrant's raced foreign credentials construct them as unskilled, unqualified, and inferior.

The Ontario Government issued a mandate requiring professional licensing and regulatory bodies to eliminate the requirement for Canadian work experience, which has been a prerequisite for licensing in numerous professions, such as law, accounting, architecture, engineering, electricians, and plumbers. These regulatory bodies had until December 2, 2023, to remove the requirement or apply for an exemption (Keung, 2023). This represents a significant hurdle in the fight for credential recognition by many FERIP. This should serve as the initial step in an action framework aimed at dismantling all existing barriers to credential recognition of immigrant professionals, which have historically contributed to their delegitimization and marginalization.

8.4.5 Targeted Language Training

There are numerous language workshops, courses, and training programs provided by ISAs throughout Ontario. The literature, as well as the participants in this study, highlight the need for targeted language training to deliver customized training suitable to participants' needs and proficiencies (Alboim, 2002; Ardal & Hyde, 2022; Drolet et al., 2014). Participants' experiences, as well as my own volunteer experiences at ISAs, highlight the participants' frustration and poor learning outcomes when language classes often comprise people of different language levels and

abilities. Ava's experience supported this, "Language ... courses and workshops were very bad, waste of time" (August 16, 2021, Transcript 2). When I asked Ava to elaborate, she added:

I have submitted many comments/complaints and I even went to talk to the coordinator in Toronto. LINC programs—no objective and aim for the students. No goals for students. Read this etc. What is the final product? There are people years in the same language course with the same English level and they just keep on getting funding. (August 16, 2021, Transcript 2)

Industry and workplace language training would be an effective way of providing targeted on-the-job training with industry-specific technical language and communication, that would benefit both employers and employees (Austin & Rocchi Dean, 2006; Drolet et al., 2014). The state and provinces should provide incentives to employers to provide such training. In addition, industry-wide peer mentoring and support networks should be developed to support immigrant professionals' language training and ease their transition into their respective industries and workplaces.

8.4.6 Communicate Honest Realities

The state and its institutions, which include consulates and embassies responsible for promoting immigration abroad, as well as the Immigration Canada website, a primary global source of immigration information, have an ethical obligation to accurately represent and communicate the realities of the experiences of FERIP, including the settlement barriers they encounter in Canada. This applies to licensing and regulatory bodies. These institutions need to cease promoting an idealized version of Canada and instead convey balanced messaging on the actual realities of the experiences of racialized immigrants. By adopting this approach, prospective immigrants to Canada can access precise and realistic information essential for making well-informed, life-altering decisions about immigration. As Noura emphasized,

The immigration system they have to tell the truth that you will face lot of problems to getting work. We're trying to make it diverse.... But they can face this kind of microaggression because of race because of head cover because of accent. They have to tell these things. I think they have to be honest about it." (July 27, 2023, Transcript 6)

8.4.7 Professional Placements

Immigrant professionals accepted for immigration to Canada should be guaranteed and assigned a paid professional placement before they arrive in Canada. This placement would offer immigrant professionals an experiential component immediately upon their arrival in Canada and would help them integrate into workplace culture and practices. Additionally, a professional placement would help immigrant professionals understand the importance of professional networks in obtaining employment in Canada, and help them begin to access resources and support to build social and professional connections (Kaushik & Drolet, 2018; Sakamoto et al., 2010). Paid placements would enable immigrants to start earning a living which is a major barrier for newcomers, which would contribute to feelings of accomplishment, positively impacting their well-being. Participants in this study articulated that having a job related to their profession was critical to positive mental health and well-being. Many of the participants in this research highlighted that having experiential components to volunteer assignments, workshops, and courses, were extremely valuable resources to help them understand Canadian workplace culture, networking, and getting their “foot in the door.” For example, Amelia highlighted that: “If you are accepted for immigration to Canada, you should have a paid internship. Helps you to get all the things you mentioned, the Canadian work experience and the references” (July 23, 2021, Transcript 11). Farah underscored that:

Agencies help you theoretically. So, for example with the Catholic Association, I did a very long 3-month job training program—how to apply for jobs, how to do job search, prepare for interviews, shake hands, looking in the eye. Mock interviews which were videoed, and then everyone would critique them. So very comprehensive, but at the end of it, what you really want is that foot in the door, which it didn’t provide. I would have very much appreciated such programs.
(August 4, 2021, Transcript 5)

If the Canadian state is genuinely committed to providing a smoother path to integration for the large numbers of FERIP it accepts for immigration each year, it needs to engage in partnerships with employers to provide paid professional placements to newcomers as a step towards ensuring immigrant professionals can begin navigating LMI even before arriving in Canada to help ease their settlement barriers. If immigrants are indeed as valuable to Canada as the state professes,

then it needs to respect and guarantee their fundamental rights. This begins with facilitating a smoother path to labour market integration, and the right to work in their profession.

8.4.8 Professional Mentors

Immigrant professionals accepted for immigration should be matched to a professional mentor before their arrival so they can begin to understand and navigate LMI including the job search process, credential recognition, building professional networks and workplace language and culture. One of the questions I asked participants was if they had utilized any professional mentorship programs, and if yes, were any of these designed specifically for women? Only one of the participants, Kiran, had participated in a women's leadership mentoring program in Vancouver. Kiran expressed mixed reactions to the mentoring experience but did highlight that one of her mentors was instrumental in helping her rebuild her confidence and feel empowered (July 28, 2021, Transcript 9). Other participants agreed that mentorship programs for women would be extremely valuable, especially for building networks and understanding how to transfer their skills to related professions. While some federally funded ISAs have started offering more mentorship opportunities for skilled professionals, I understand from some of the participants in this study that these are very limited and specific to only a few professions, such as engineering and medicine.

8.4.9 State of Multicultural Languages

The current integration model places the responsibility solely on immigrants to linguistically conform to the dominant accent and way of speaking because speaking with a *foreign* accent means others will not understand you, employers will not hire you, and you will not be able to understand clients' needs. If we accept multiculturalism at face value, as a well-intentioned policy to integrate immigrants into Canadian society, in which diversity and equality are truly embraced and celebrated, not just at a cultural level but in all spheres of economic, social and political life, including the labour market, then integration should not be a one-way process. Within the current model, immigrants are solely responsible for conforming to the dominant way of life. The multitude of languages spoken by immigrants needs to be valued, leveraged and rewarded within organizations, rather than perceived as impediments to be overcome. Strategies to incorporate racialized immigrants' linguistic capital into workplace culture and practices can include expanding jobs that require bilingual and multilingual requirements beyond the two

official languages of the state and creating specialized roles within organizations and professions requiring proficiency in multiple languages (Li & Sah, 2019). Crucially, the proposed DLMiIP needs to work with professional licensing bodies to create mechanisms to integrate and validate the linguistic capital of FERIP within the credential recognition system as fulfilling core cultural competencies criteria.

8.4.10 Collect and Report Hiring Data

Organizations should be mandated to collect and report data on the recruitment and hiring practices of immigrants and marginalized groups. This could be coordinated through the proposed DLMiIP. The DLMiIP can then use this data to devise and implement effective and relevant policies and initiatives to mitigate discriminatory practices against the hiring of racialized immigrant professionals. It is important that employers and organizations understand that the state is committed to the elimination of deskilling and devaluation practices that impact immigrant professionals and that hiring decisions are being externally monitored.

8.4.11 Decolonizing Knowledge

Participants in this study, like numerous other FERIP, recognize that they are embedded within a binary consisting of Western standards versus *the rest*. They expressed that their credentials, along with their professional and social identities, are invalidated in Canada because of where they come from. Farah declared, “You call us because of our skills and then you say oh no, you have to go and redo your education” (August 4, 2021, Transcript 5). Like Farah, Zara questioned: “I cannot gauge the criteria like on what basis are they denying my degree, which is authentic, which is from the university that I was at, and it has a stamp of Ministry of Education. Everything is verified, attested” (August 4, 2021, Transcript 8). Several scholars have highlighted the role of universities as key sites for the creation, control, and reproduction of race thinking (Dei & Calliste, 2000; Henry et al., 2017). In his critical work on “Decolonizing the University: The Challenges and Possibilities of Inclusive Education,” Dei (2016) calls for a *reframing* of the school curriculum as part of a larger global initiative to:

demand a courageous confrontation with colonization; it must be named clearly, called by this name and faced directly; it must be mined thoroughly to expose its cumulative scaffolding and its long penetrating roots; and we must mobilize

collectively and indigenously as we do so to effect a transformative momentum.
(p. 26)

Engaging with and embracing Dei's (2016) call for radical political action to achieve decolonization, which "must always be visible; it must always be part of academic discourse; it must infuse academic projects" (pp. 28–29), this academic project calls for a mandatory decolonial curricular reframing that is built on authentic, not performative, anti-colonial and anti-racist theory and practice. This decolonial curriculum would be informed by the principles of education of decolonial liberation rooted in the works of some of the most influential and pivotal thinkers and activists in decolonial liberation struggles, including Frantz Fanon, Paulo Freire, Walter Mignolo, bell hooks, and Gloria Anzaldúa, Njoki Wane, George Dei, Frances Henry, and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o. A decolonial curriculum would be based on a community approach to educating that begins by recognizing, integrating and teaching racialized people's historical, cultural, social, and political realities, histories, and knowledge into a reframed curriculum. This model would integrate community elders, parents, students, and spiritual elders within a culturally inclusive framework.

All education and training programs and regimes, including those of professional and licensing bodies, should be required to integrate this decolonial reframed curriculum within their institutions. Such a framework would ensure that anticolonial and anti-racist histories, knowledges, principles and practices are embedded within all educational content, encouraging learners to develop a critical consciousness of ongoing colonization and oppression and move towards a social justice advocacy position. Such a model would centre race, gender, class, ethnicity, and other intersectional sites of reward and punishment. This framework would need to be adopted at every stage of the education curriculum from kindergarten to graduate work. If the knowledge and histories of racialized bodies are to be validated, recognized, and taught, then they need to be part of a comprehensively reframed education curriculum. Speaking directly to science education, Dei (2016) declares that:

There are other robust theories and philosophical perspectives that inform Indigenous Science knowledge that are as rigorous as Eurocentric science. It is delusional to view one's reality as the only reality worth talking about and one's tools for assessing this reality as the only tools available for understanding this reality. These delusions are the most dangerous of all delusions, and these

delusions allow colonial striving to ensue unabated taking hostage a substantive portion of the world's peoples, the world's land, and their knowledges. Colonial harms have and continue to be rationalized through this system of delusion through the knowledge of colonial science. (p. 54)

Social change starts with the recognition that each individual's knowledge and experience is valid and valuable.

8.5 Strengths and Limitations of the Study

This study extends the literature on the labour market experiences of FERIW and contributes to the research on the health impacts of the deskilling of immigrant women professionals, currently an understudied area of research. This work makes two original contributions to the field of labour market integration studies. It identifies the deskilling and dispossession of FERIW's credentials as colonial violence and positions this violence within the context of ongoing colonialism. The second original contribution of this research is through its framing of the violence of credential dispossession as spirit injury, which adversely impacts the essence and psyche of FERIW. This work also contributes to the LMI literature by examining how the LMI site functions as both a physical and discursive border of violence that shuts out FERIW through the invalidation and dispossession of their raced credentials, expertise and identities. This research adds to the literature on the strategies FERIW employ to resist and counter their marginalization and eviction from the HSLM space. The ultimate contribution of this work is that it speaks back to the ongoing colonization of gendered racialized immigrant labour within a neoliberal racial capitalist system, through counter-narratives of resilience as resistance, powered by participants' voices in this study.

The 12 participants interviewed for this study were from Pakistan (4), China (2), Colombia (1), India (1), Azerbaijan (1), Sri Lanka (1), Bangladesh (1), and Albania (1). I employed a combination of purposive and snowball sampling to ensure I recruited the desired number of participants for the study and to optimize the range and depth of the data collected. Purposive sampling ensured that I recruited participants who met the criteria for the study and were willing to share their labour market experiences in Canada. The sample size, however, did not include any African immigrant professionals. I felt that this was a limitation to the study, as the lived experiences of foreign-educated African immigrant women would have expanded our knowledge

about the diversity, range, and specificities of FERIW's LMI challenges and the unique strategies African immigrant women professionals employ to resist and mitigate LMI barriers and Othering. Because my data collection took place during the COVID-19 pandemic, it made participant recruitment and conducting interviews challenging. I believe the pandemic impacted my ability to recruit African immigrant women who may have been dealing with heightened stress, given that COVID-19 disproportionately impacted Black communities.

8.6 Future Directions of Research

So much continues to be written about the barriers to labour market integration for racialized immigrant professionals. Yet the settlement conditions and experiences for newcomer immigrants appear to be worsening. Given the projected expansion of immigration targets and the lack of policies aimed at improving the LMI of skilled immigrants, there is a growing urgency to further explore the health consequences of racial trauma, credential dispossession, and spirit injury of FERIW. While several studies have explored the health implications of settlement barriers on immigrants, there is limited research about the specific health impacts that FERIW suffer because of deskilling and dispossession of credentials.

ISAs have been identified as the first point of contact for many immigrants to help them navigate their integration into Canada, including labour market, housing, language, and healthcare needs. However, ISAs also serve as sites where hegemonic practices are reproduced by supporting and reproducing neoliberal-centric settlement services. Further study is needed to understand and seek strategies to decolonize the practices and roles of ISAs in serving and reproducing the hegemonic practices of the neoliberal state.

8.7 Conclusion

As I described in Chapter 1, I believe that in many ways, this research chose me. Questions relating to being labelled an immigrant, like so many other racialized citizens of Canada, despite residing in Canada for decades, and a visible minority, as opposed to the invisibility of Whiteness, within a binary of White versus non-White, have driven this research. During my employment at a major Canadian university, I would interact with many racialized immigrants who came to inquire about the availability of programs that would facilitate their ability to practice their professions in Canada. This included medical doctors, psychologists, and teachers.

The reality was always the same. In many cases, they would be required to start over and retake their degrees from a Canadian institution, to have a reasonable chance to work in their profession. I found this incomprehensible and unjust. In my volunteer work with newcomers, the experiences were similar. ISAs are spaces of frenzied activity, emotions and energy. As the first point of contact for many immigrants navigating their settlement in Canada, ISAs undertake a balancing act, tempering immigrants' expectations with the realities of the LMI site and life in Canada. One of the most pressing concerns and needs of newcomer immigrants is how can they practice their professions in Canada.

The disconnect between accepting immigrants into Canada, and simultaneously invalidating their credentials continues to be dehumanizing, immoral and constitutes a human rights violation. The despair, anger and emotional toll experienced by so many FERIW, their life's work and worth undone simply by immigrating to Canada, demand explanation, examination, and transformation. We urgently need to challenge these practices and, more importantly, to resist and eliminate them. I undertook this research to better understand the violence that was being inflicted on racialized immigrants within the LMI space. It became crucial for me to examine how a country that is self-styled as a beacon of democracy, human rights, equality, and diversity, could be actively engaging in the devaluation and deskilling of immigrants, subjecting many to poverty and marginalization.

Racialized immigrant Others reinforce the *imagined* modern, civilized, superior West, and White subject, presiding over dark strangers from foreign lands with foreign accents, cultures, colours, credentials, and practices. The participants in this study, like many other FERIW, have powerful life stories. They uprooted themselves and their families for a life of opportunity and promise in Canada. Canada sold them the *Canadian Dream*. Canada owes immigrants an unquantifiable debt for the myriad ways immigrants enrich this country. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Canada was worth \$2,139.84 billion US in 2022 (Trading Economics, n.d.). The GDP measures the country's economic activity in terms of goods and services produced. Canada's economy is currently ranked the ninth largest in the world based on GDP. Canada's immigrant population has contributed substantively to the country's economic and cultural wealth. Canada's economic plans and forecasts are based on increasing immigrant quotas to sustain and boost economic productivity. Racialized immigrants who elect to immigrate to Canada based on a Canadian proclaimed ideal of liberty, equality, and multicultural acceptance deserve and demand to be

treated on parity with the White dominant community. We are more than the colour of our skin, accent, culture, food, and festivals.

For decades, the human capital of FERIW has been eviscerated by a systematic strategy of de-credentialing, while the state's economy continues to expand on this accumulation through dispossession. The Canadian state enriches itself through the impoverishment of many immigrant professionals. As in the colonies, race continues to dictate if and where you live and work. The violence of credential devaluation and eviction from the HSLM can have detrimental impacts to FERIW's health and well-being, contributing to their lives of precarity and pain. Sovereign power ultimately determines who lives and who dies (Mbembe, 2003). Williams (2013) argues that slavery was ultimately abolished due to economic rather than moral reasons. He argued that the growth of industrial capitalism had displaced the monopoly enjoyed by mercantile capitalism leading to the unprofitability and eventual decline of the colonies. The changes I have detailed regarding Ontario enacting legislation to eliminate the Canadian experience requirement for several skilled professions are largely tied to economic needs. As demonstrated throughout this research, Canada's economy and growth are dependent on immigrant labour. Many provinces are facing unprecedented labour shortages of skilled workers, despite the availability of large numbers of these very skilled immigrant professionals in Canada. In Ontario, there is a growing need for workers in healthcare, education, computer science and logistics (Sharp, 2022). At the same time, many new immigrants are fleeing Canada because it is failing to meet immigrants' needs, including successful labour market integration and housing, resulting in "a real existential threat to Canada's prosperity", according to Daniel Bernhard, chief executive officer of the Institute for Canadian Citizenship (Thanthong-Knight, 2023).

Ontario has recognized that credential recognition is a key strategy to alleviate its labour shortages and achieve its economic goals. This underscores the power of immigrants to bring the Canadian economy to its knees. It emphasizes the power in collective decolonial organizing and advocacy to put forward an anti-colonial, anti-racist vision and action plan for the recognition and validation of racialized immigrants' value to Canada. This requires the collective mobilization of all stakeholders committed to advancing changes to the oppressive practices that perpetuate the marginalization of racialized immigrants, including labour market integration. The recommendations I have proposed constitute an authentic decolonial action plan to galvanize socio-economic changes to the status quo for FERIW.

We are demanding and claiming space, and we are changing and challenging ongoing colonial borders and hierarchies to resist and struggle collectively towards an anti-colonial, anti-racist state that will be reflected in the LMI site: currently, a space of deep turmoil and betrayal for racialized immigrants.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Recruitment Email

Hello,

My name is Lisa Chinchamie and I am a PhD student conducting research for my thesis, in the Department of Social Justice Education at the University of Toronto. **My study is examining the labour market experiences of internationally educated immigrant women, whose academic and professional qualifications are from their countries of origin.** The findings of this study will be used to advocate for changes to the system and culture of credential recognition and employment culture and practices that disadvantage internationally educated immigrant professionals. More information on this study, including eligibility criteria, can be found on the attached recruitment flyer.

Interviews will be online and will last for about 1-2 hours. Participants will **receive a \$25 gift card** for their participation.

If you would like to participate, **please contact me at [\[email address\]](#)**. I would also greatly appreciate if you could forward this recruitment call for participants to your contacts and/or candidates who you think might be interested in participating in the study.

Thank you and please contact me if you have any questions.

Lisa

Lisa Chinchamie [\[email address\]](#)

PhD Candidate, Social Justice Education

Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto

Appendix B: Consent Form

Project Title: Disposable Qualifications: Examining the Labour Market Experiences of Internationally Educated Immigrant Women

Name of researcher: Lisa Chinchamie, Ph.D. Candidate

Contact information of researcher: [email address]

Name and contact information of supervisor: Dr. Njoki Wane, [email address]

Project Description: The aim of this research is to examine the labour market experiences of internationally educated immigrant women, whose academic and professional qualifications are from their countries of origin, in order to better understand the relationship between international credentials and labour market integration and outcomes for immigrant women and what impact this has on the lives of these women. The findings of this study will be used to advocate for changes to the system and culture of credential recognition and employment culture and practices that disadvantage internationally educated immigrant professionals.

Description of Activities: Your participation in this study will entail a virtual interview (on a secure platform) lasting 1-2 hours, in which you will be asked questions relating to reasons for immigrating to Canada, some demographic information, your labour market experiences both in Canada and your country of origin, and your academic and professional qualifications. The interview will be audio recorded with your permission in order to be transcribed, coded and analyzed and will be erased once transcribed. You may end your participation in the interview at any time.

Confidentiality: The data collected will remain strictly confidential, unless required by the law. For example, if during the interview, a participant expresses an intention to harm themselves or to harm others, or details about apparent, suspected or current child abuse we would be required to break confidentiality and report this content to the appropriate authorities.

Your name and other information that may identify you will be de-identified and a numerical code number will be assigned that will correspond to your interview and transcription.

Pseudonyms will be used in the final published dissertation and any other related presentations and publications. All written materials will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher's home office. All interview audio recordings and transcriptions will be stored on an encrypted and password protected data file on the researcher's password-protected computer. Only the researcher and supervisor will have access to both written and digital materials. All data for this study will be destroyed 5 years upon the completion of the study. It is possible that the data collected for this study may be used in subsequent journal publications and conference presentations, but such use of the data would never breach confidentiality and no names or identifying information would be included.

Potential Risks or Harm: There are no anticipated risks or harm associated with participating in this interview. There may be some emotional or psychological discomfort caused by sensitive and/or personal questions. You can choose to decline answering any question that makes you uncomfortable.

Withdrawal: Participation in this study is completely voluntary. During the interview you can end your participation at any time and/or withdraw your information up to 2 weeks after the interview. **If a participant decides to withdraw from the study, permission will be asked to retain any data that has been collected so far. If the participant declines permission, all data pertaining to the participant will be destroyed and not included in the study.**

Potential Benefits: This study aims to understand the labour market experiences of internationally educated immigrant women in Canada and how these experiences impact their lives. One of the objectives of this study is to use the findings to advocate for changes to the system and culture of credential recognition and employment culture and practices that disadvantage internationally educated immigrant professionals in Canada.

Honorarium: Participants will receive a \$25 gift card from a retail outlet for participating in the study. **If a participant is unable to complete the interview or decides to withdraw their information up to 2 weeks after the interview, the participant will still receive the \$25 gift card. A signed receipt will be required upon receiving the gift card (see page 4 of this document for the Acknowledgement of Receipt of Remuneration).**

Value Judgements: At no time will value judgments will be placed on the interview or the data collected.

Questions about the Study: If you have any questions or concerns, you may contact me, my supervisor Dr. Njoki Wane or the Ethics Review Office.

Lisa Chinchamie, Ph.D. Candidate, OISE, University of Toronto

Email: [\[email address\]](#)

Phone: [phone #]

Dr. Njoki Wane, Professor, OISE, University of Toronto

Email: [\[email address\]](#)

Phone: [phone #]

Ethics Review Office

Email: ethics.review@utoronto.ca

Phone: 416 9463273

Thank you in advance for your participation in this study. You will need to sign 2 copies of this form. You will keep one copy for your records.

CONSENT: Your signature indicates that you consent to participate in this study, that you have read and consent to the conditions outlined above, that the purposes of the study have been explained to you, that you understand your rights as a participant in the study and that your questions and concerns have been addressed.

I _____ (Please ***print*** your name)
have read the above statements and freely consent to participate in this research:

I agree that:

This interview may be digitally recorded. Yes _____ No _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please initial if you wish to receive a copy of the summary of the findings of this study upon its completion: _____

Research Participant's Acknowledgement of Receipt of Remuneration

Research Title: Disposable Qualifications: Examining the Labour Market Experiences of Internationally Educated Immigrant Women

Researcher: Lisa Chinchamie, Ph.D. Candidate, OISE, University of Toronto

Supervisor: Dr. Njoki Wane, Professor, OISE, University of Toronto

In appreciation of my participation in the above research, I acknowledge that I have received a gift card in the value of \$25.

Participant's Name: _____

Participant's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix C: Interview Questions

1. How old are you?
 - a. 25 to 35 36 to 46 47 to 57 58+
2. When did you arrive in Canada (year and month)?
3. Did you arrive alone or with a partner/spouse or family?
4. What is your country of origin?
5. What part of the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) do you currently reside? Do you live in rented accommodation, live in your own your home, or some other arrangement (please specify)?
6. What is your current marital/relationship status?
7. Do you have kids, if yes, how many and what are their ages?
8. How many people live in your household. Please say who they are and please specify your relationship to them.
9. What is the overall household/family income? Monthly or annually.
10. Which language(s) do you speak? How would you describe your level of English proficiency - basic, intermediate, proficient, fluent?
11. What is the highest degree(s) you have obtained and in which discipline, prior to immigrating to Canada? (e.g. bachelor/undergraduate/graduate/post graduate degree and in the arts, education, business, engineering etc.)
12. What was your profession before immigrating to Canada and for how long did you work in that that profession? Were you happy with your employment?
13. What were the reasons that led you to immigrate to Canada?
14. What were your professional expectations in coming to Canada?
15. How would you describe your level of satisfaction with your life in Canada, to date – completely satisfied, somewhat satisfied, not satisfied, deeply dissatisfied? Please explain.
16. How does your life in Canada compare to your life in your country of origin?
17. What job(s) have you done in Canada? For how long?
18. How would you describe your initial job search experience, as an internationally educated immigrant? Did you look for a job in your profession? If not, why not?
19. If relevant, did you contact any of the professional regulatory bodies (e.g. Law Society of Canada, Ontario College of Teachers, Ontario Medical Association etc.) to apply for accreditation of your credentials in Ontario. If yes, what was the experience and outcome?

20. Have you done any additional schooling/training since immigrating to Canada? If yes, (Type/Institution/Length) and what were your reasons for undertaking additional education/training. How has this helped in your employment goals?
21. Are you satisfied with your present job? What challenges do you experience in your current job?
22. Is your current job unionized?
23. Do you think your race, gender, ethnicity, nationality, or culture have impacted your job search or work experience? If yes, how?
24. What kind of federal/provincial supports or resources have you used in your job search in Canada including any pre-arrival services?
25. How effective were these supports in your job search?
26. What policies or practices do you think the federal/provincial government need to implement or change to better help internationally educated immigrants integrate in the job market?
27. Have you been able to make use of any community or social supports or networks to help with your labour market experiences and searches?
28. Are you an active member of any cultural, social, professional, or volunteer organizations? If yes, what has been your experience as a member?
29. If you have not been able to find work in your profession, how has this impacted your quality of life overall?
30. What do you think are the barriers that internationally educated immigrant women face in finding employment in their profession?
31. Are you aware of/have you been a part of any mentorship programs for women in Canada?
32. Have you heard of the term multiculturalism regarding Canada? What do you think of Canadian multiculturalism? Do you think it has helped you in your work and life in Canada? Do you feel welcomed in Canada?
33. Is there anything you would like to add, that I have not asked you?