THE IDEAL IMMIGRANT: DECONSTRUCTING IMMIGRANT SUCCESS STORIES IN ONTARIO IMMIGRANT SETTLEMENT AGENCIES

by

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A thesis submitted to the Department of Sociology

In conformity with the requirements for

the degree of Master of Arts

Queen’s University

Kingston, Ontario, Canada

(September, 2017)

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Abstract

A common narrative of “successful” immigrants often depicts individuals who are hard working, resilient in adverse situations, and have a positive can-do attitude. Such characterization of newcomers attributes immigrant success to individualistic qualities and ultimately fails to acknowledge systemic barriers that immigrants encounter in their efforts to settle and integrate in Canada. Using immigrant success stories published by immigrant settlement service provider organizations (SPOs) in Ontario, this study is informed by Foucault’s concepts and other theories of race and racialization as a framework to examine the discourses and practices mobilized within immigrant settlement sector. Neo-liberalism is analyzed from the perspective of governmentality as a multitude of rationalities, practices, and techniques linked to governing mechanisms that (re)produce responsibilized citizen-subjects. I examine the ways in which the shift towards a more unstable and competitive funding regime since the 1990s have resulted in the marketization and de-politicization of settlement support for newcomers. Inscription devices are thus essential neo-liberal techniques through which the state funders can govern the settlement service agencies and their clients “at a distance.” Furthermore, I discuss a “triangulated” racial framework and various citizen and non-citizen subjects to consider the racializing effects of constructing a figure of an ideal immigrant. I argue that the stories suggest ideal immigrants are enterprising subjects who make “rational” and “reasonable” choices to think and behave in particular ways. Structural barriers that immigrants encounter in their efforts to settle in Canada are thus de-politicized as personal issues and immigrants are responsibilized for their own settlement and integration. I particularly problematize “Canadian experience” as a discourse to deconstruct the racializing effects for immigrants who are de-skilled and forced to participate in precarious and unpaid work. The findings of this study suggest that, within neo-
liberal governmentality, particular practices, techniques, and discourses are mobilized by state funders and settlement service providers to reproduce certain subjectivities and realities for new immigrants in Canada that ultimately have racializing, responsibilizing, de-politicizing effects.
Acknowledgement

I want to first thank my supervisor, Dr. Cynthia Levine-Rasky, for her continuous support and guidance throughout this journey. This project and its completion would not have been possible without her patience, openness, and encouragement along the way. It is hard to describe in words how much I have learned and benefited from her mentorship and expertise in the last two years. Completing this project was not an easy process for me and I am truly grateful for her unwavering support.

I also would like to thank my committee members, Dr. David Murakami Wood, Dr. Sharryn Aiken, and Dr. Annette Burfoot for their support and constructive feedback for my work. Their suggestions and questions have prompted me to reflect on my approach and my analysis in a more critical manner. I really appreciate the amount of time and efforts they have invested in my project despite their extremely busy schedules.

Finally, I would like to thank my family and friends for their support and love throughout this process and in general. I am so grateful for all the friendships and connections I have made at the Sociology department and the campus of Queen’s University. I especially want to thank Ashley, Ozge, and Derya for supporting and motivating me on days when I could not see the light at the end of the tunnel. Thank you for your encouragement and friendship.
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Introduction

In accordance with C. Wright Mills’ discussion on developing sociological imagination, which “enables us to grasp history and biography and the relations between the two within society” ([1959] 2000:6), this study emerged out of my personal reflections on my work experiences within the immigrant serving sector in Calgary. I worked at an immigrant serving agency for three years in roles that consist of front-line roles in supporting immigrant women and youth. One of my responsibilities included selecting applicants with my supervisor to assess their eligibility for an employment skills training program designed to support young immigrant mothers. The targeted client would be an immigrant or refugee woman under 30 years old with young children. The program was co-funded by two federal agencies: Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) – which has since been renamed by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) – and Service Canada, which falls under the department of Employment and Social Development Canada. Many settlement programs in this settlement agency were in a constantly struggle to recruit participants. However, this specific employment training program had a waitlist because participants would be paid minimum hourly wage and could have their childcare fees subsidized. Every six months we went through a selection process of suitable candidates who registered for the program. During our post-interview discussions about the applicants, I soon realized the selection was based more on whether the applicants could potentially be a program “success” and less on how much the program could support them in their job search. Some candidates were disqualified based on their lack of “positive attitude” or insufficient work experience, which would make it more difficult for the program coordinator to fulfill the job placement component of the training. I was surprised and confused about the selection process since “positive attitude” and work experience
were not listed as part of the eligibility criteria in the program advertisements not were they requested by the funders.

Furthermore, the applicants were repeatedly reminded that this program was similar to a full time job, as it required six months of full-day training. The concern with participant commitment is linked to successful program outcomes. Many procedures were established to ensure commitment and “professionalism” from the participants. For instance, once the applicants had been chosen to be in the program, they were asked to sign an informal contract to ensure their commitment to complete the six months of full-day training. This protocol was to prevent withdrawals from the program, which would reflect negatively in reports of program outcomes.

Furthermore, I was never fully comfortable with the inflexibility of the programming because it imposed an intense amount of pressure on the participants. By being in the program, participants were expected to be away from their children from 9:00 AM to 4:30 PM Monday to Friday for six months. As a program staff, I was expected to be strict with the participants regarding professionalism for the purpose of assisting them to be ready for future employment. The participants could not be absent from the training unless there were extreme circumstances. Therefore, many of them would still come to class in the morning even after spending a night at the emergency room with their child. Commitments as such were praised within the program and the agency. Participants were also discouraged from searching or applying to any jobs while they were still in the training program. If a participant found employment whilst in the program, it was considered incomplete by the funders and would not count as a successful outcome, which always seemed counterproductive to me since the objective of the program was to help participants to become employed. Thus, even though the program had assisted many participants
with employment opportunities, I was always disenchanted with the discrepancy between the official discourse of “empowering immigrants” and the settlement practices that were oriented around disciplines and outcomes. Was this kind of expectation and practices required for “successful” immigrant settlement and integration?

Another part of my roles included writing “success stories” of program participants for funders’ reports to demonstrate the effectiveness of the program and the agency to support newcomers. In these narratives, “success” translated into participants who had overcome employment barriers with help from the training. However, the type of challenges that can be documented were limited to only those that could be resolved by employment skills trainings. Structural barriers, such as a lack of recognition of foreign-trained doctors and engineers, often could not be explicated in the success narratives or other funder reports due to fear of funding cuts. While many program participants had benefited from the program in various ways, I began to question the notion of success in immigrant serving programs and services. What are the power dynamics involved in the construction of these narratives of success? What is the political context in which these success tales may be understood?

In a sense, this study documents my attempt to exercise my sociological imagination to better understand my experiences in the immigrant settlement sector. I hope to deconstruct the discourse of immigrant settlement through an analysis of success stories and examination of settlement regulations. Within the settlement sector, immigrant success stories or testimonies are commonly seen on their websites and promotional material. By analyzing success stories published by immigrant serving agencies, I set out to answer the following questions:

• To what extent are the discourses of the success stories linked to an increasingly marketized funding structure and what are the impacts of such shifts on settlement support for immigrants?
• How is “success” defined in these stories? In what ways are immigrants characterized as successful?
• To what extent are these program success stories reflective of the economic and employment realities of newcomers in Canada?

In Chapter 1, I present the theoretical and methodological frameworks used in this study. Chapters 2 to 4 are organized around the three questions posed above. Chapter 2 entails a discussion on the historical and political contexts through which immigrant settlement support became “marketized.” Chapter 3 provides an analysis of immigrant success through the figure of a neo-liberal enterprising self. Chapter 4 focuses on the discourse and implications of immigrants lacking “Canadian experience/education” and discrimination against foreign education and training. I end with a concluding chapter that considers the contribution of this thesis in the settlement literature and directions for future research.
Chapter 1
Theory and Method

This chapter provides an overview of the theoretical and methodological frameworks used in this study. In the first section, I draw on Michel Foucault’s concepts of power/knowledge, discourse, subject formation, and governmentality to establish a theoretical basis for my later discussions on the complex network of forces and power relations, particularly the indirect governance of immigrant subjects through non-state actors and self regulative practices. I also refer to other studies of governmentality to conceptualize neo-liberalism as “an art of government.” Foucault and others’ work is useful for examining the success stories as reinforcing, maintaining, legitimizing, and stabilizing particular discourses about immigrants and their settlement in Canada. Following this, I then discuss the significance of racing neoliberalism and introduce key concepts in race and racialization studies. The last section of this chapter discusses grounded theory and critical discourse analysis to situate the methodological approaches and techniques used in this study.

1.1 Foucauldian Concepts

*Power/ Knowledge and Discourse*

Foucault’s work is potentially useful in exploring how power and knowledge constellations produce particular expressions of immigration and immigrant settlement. According to him, power is “everywhere,” as he explains in *History of Sexuality*:

> The omnipresence of power: not because it has the privilege of consolidating everything under its invincible unity, but because it is produced from one moment to the next, at every point, or rather in every relation from one point to another (Foucault 1990:93).

He conceptualizes power to be *relational* and exercised within the networks of micro-level interactions and actions (Foucault 1982). Therefore, in Foucault’s framework, power is not
centralized within a particular entity or possessed in the hands of a select few; rather, power is present through actions and behaviours of individuals (Foucault 1980, 1995).

Foucault’s notion of power is different from its conventional definition as states of domination in which mechanism, institutions, or individuals are viewed as exerting power over other dominated groups. While he acknowledges the existence of “top-down” modes of power where inequalities develop out of unequal power relations, he contends that power is not a structure of binary and opposing relations between rulers and the ruled (Foucault 1990). He asserts that the modern notion of power is not one of juridical nature which served to repress and prohibit human subjectivities; it is, in fact, productive:

What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn’t only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body, much more than as a negative instance whose function is repression. (Foucault 1980:118-119; emphasis added).

Furthermore, power is always linked to knowledge, or truth claims, particularly of social and human sciences that produces systems of thoughts and ideas about “human nature” and/or the essentialized notion of a “self” (Hall 1997). Power and knowledge are interrelated in Foucault’s conceptualization in the sense that power and knowledge are not separate entities that exist exclusively:

We should admit…that power produces knowledge (and not simply by encouraging it because it serves power or by applying it because it is useful); that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations. (Foucault 1995: 27)

The power/knowledge relation is also situated in particular contexts and histories, establishing discursive practices according to certain bodies of knowledge (Hall 1997).
Discourse does not merely refer to language, texts, ideas or speech; it is “a unit of human action, interaction, communication and cognition” (Edwards 2008:22) that manifests across various forms of language and conduct, located within different structures and organizations (Hall 1997). Stuart Hall notes that Foucault examined discourse “as a system of representation” (1997:44) and that he was concerned with knowledge production through discourses. Discursive practices are embedded within particular systems of rules and patterns “in technical ensembles, in institutions, in behavioural schemes, in types of transmission and dissemination, in pedagogical forms that both impose and maintain them” (Foucault 1997:12). Discourses are situated in various forms of knowledges and realities; they are thus shifting and open to negotiation. Discourse and the society or reality in which it exists are dialectically linked in the sense that they shape and regulate one another. The emergence of a discourse is associated with power relations involved in creating, maintaining, and legitimizing certain systems of thoughts, values, beliefs, knowledge, and ways of being. Therefore, discourse is contingent upon the historical, political, cultural, temporal, geographical and social contexts from which it has emerged. For this study, Foucault’s notion of power/knowledge is useful in understanding the (re)production of power and knowledge within the immigrant serving sector in Canada through a network of heterogeneous discourses, techniques, and practices that have de-politicizing and racializing consequences for immigrants.

Subject formation

For Foucault, the notions of humanity, subjectivity, and individuality are not “natural” in the sense that they are produced within particular histories and contexts. In this conceptualization, human beings are not presumed to be autonomous and sovereign individuals (McHoul and Grace 1993). As he asserts:
It is ... a mistake to think of the individual as a sort of elementary nucleus, a primitive atom... In actual fact, one of the first effects of power is that it allows bodies, gestures, discourses, and desires to be identified and constituted as something individual...the individual is one of power’s first effects... and at the same time, and to the extent that he is a power-effect, the individual is a rely: power passes through the individual it has constituted. (Foucault 2003: 29-30)

As an power-effect, the subject constitutes itself through different social practices that are rooted in particular historical processes and different forms of subjectivities are formed based on the various relations to the self (Kelly 2013). Human subjectivities are constituted and self-constituted through techniques and practices within certain power/knowledge networks that are context specific (Foucault 1982). As oppose to the top-down governing relations between medieval rulers and the ruled subjects, modern power relations operate in more circulatory and indirect manners as power becomes decentralized (Foucault 1980). Power is thus exercised through discursive practices that establish certain forms of subjectivities as more legitimate than others.

Foucault links micro-practices of subjectivity with macro-level forces through which governing rationalities “guide” and regulate the subjects themselves as well as others (Foucault 1991). He asserts that subject-making in Western civilization is linked to what he calls technologies of domination (by others) and of the self (McHoul and Grace 1993). Technologies of domination “determine the conduct of individuals and submit them to certain ends or domination, an objectivizing of the subject” whereas technologies of the self “permit individuals to effect by their own means, or with the help of others, a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality” (Foucault 1997:225). These technologies intersect and constitute the governing practices that are mobilized
by individuals and collectives to regulate each other and themselves – this is Foucault’s notion of *governmentality* (Foucault 1991).

**Governmentality**

In Foucault’s later works, he became more concerned with how knowledge is produced and reinforced through discourses in institutional practices to govern and shape subjectivities (Lemke 2000). The notion of *governmentality*, or governmental rationality, is associated with Foucault’s earlier concepts of *bio-power* and *bio-politics*, which broadly refer to practices deployed to regulate bodies and populations (Foucault 1984). It is “an ensemble formed by the institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, the calculations and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific albeit complex form of power” (Foucault 1979:20). Moreover, governmentality refers to the formal and informal governance of others and of the self through a particular set of practices that “constitute, define, organize, and instrumentalize the strategies that individuals in their freedom can use in dealing with each other” (Foucault 1997:300). These particular technologies consist of indirect and calculated ways of governing the desires, beliefs, thoughts and behaviours of governed subjects (Dean 1999).

Governmentality, in short, consists of the mentalities, rationalities, and techniques in shaping the conduct of others and the self. Theorists of governmentality studies have since extended Foucault’s concepts of power, discourse, and subjectivity in their works to illustrate the ways in which power is exercised within liberal and neo-liberal governmentalities to shape and govern the desires, choices, and actions of institutions and individuals *through freedom* (see Burchell 1993; Dean 1994, 1999; Miller and Rose 1990; and Rose and Miller 1992).
Neoliberal Governmentality

For this study, I mainly draw on studies of governmentality to refer to neo-liberalism as particular forms of rationalities, practices, and techniques that are linked to mechanisms of governing and producing responsibilized citizen-subjects. Thomas Lemke contends that the concept of governmentality is valuable in examining neo-liberalism as “a political rationality that tries to render the social domain economic and to link a reduction in (welfare) state services and security systems to the increasing call for ‘personal responsibility’ and ‘self-care’” (2001:203).

Before further discussing neo-liberal governmentality, it may be helpful to first consider Foucault’s understanding of liberalism as an “art of government.”

Foucault conceptualizes liberalism as a form of governmentality distinct from the previous forms of coercive disciplinary authorities and actions that emerged in eighteenth century Europe. He contends that liberalism has a “productive/destructive relationship with freedom” (Foucault 2008:64) in the sense that it produces certain forms of freedom but at the same time, it must establish ways to limit and control such freedoms through indirect means. Over the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, under the rule of welfare states, liberalism became characterized by the invention of “the social” as a unit of governance to protect national wellbeing; liberals also advocated for restrictions on state control based on beliefs about preserving the autonomy of the economy and individual citizens (Rose 1996). The governed subject in liberal democracies was re-conceptualized as a citizen entitled to social protection in exchange of his/her social obligation and responsibility; political objectives of the state were thus linked with self-regulating capacities of the subject through education and persuasion by certain knowledge “experts” (Rose 1996).
Under neo-liberalism – or “advanced liberalism” in Rose’s term – there is a greater preoccupation with individual autonomy and the “free” market (Kelly 2014). The market, along with a political economic rationality based on calculations of cost benefit and efficiency, has transformed from an object of governance to the organizing principle of all social, political, and economic relations (Lemke 2001). Neoliberal subjects are paradoxically freed from direct coercion or domination of the state but ultimately constrained by covert forces of self governance through mechanisms and practices of privatization and responsibilization (Brown 2005). Ong indicates that “[in] advanced liberal nations, neoliberalism has been defined as a mode of ‘governing through freedom’ that requires people to be free and self-managing in different spheres of everyday life – health, education, bureaucracy, the professions, etc” (2007:4). Thus, within the neoliberal framework, the rational action of neo-liberal subjects is linked to each person’s capacity to be entrepreneurial and competitive (Lemke 2001). Brown (2005) suggests that neoliberalism produces a new kind of homo economicus subjects who conflate morality with a political-economic rationality that is mainly concerned with maximizing private interest and minimizing public intervention. This neoliberal moral rationality replaces formal rules or policies to regulate people’s attitudes, thoughts, and relations with others. Under neo-liberal governmentality, political power has not faded or diminished into the background; rather, it is relocated through indirect technologies and new relations formed between the state and non-governmental or private actors (Lemke 2001). In other words, governance of populations has shifted into more informal and private spheres, involving a multitude of non-state entities ranging from private corporations to the self (Goldberg 2009).

I use Foucault and others’ works on governmentality to understand how relations of power produce, maintain, and reinforce certain discourses about immigrants and immigration.
Examining neo-liberalism as governmentality is useful in deconstructing the various indirect and calculative techniques that correspond with the marketization of settlement support. In Chapter 3, I further draw on Nikolas Rose’s work on neo-liberal governmentality and the “enterprising self” to examine the ways in which the SPOs are involved in reproducing images of immigrants as enterprising subjects.

The ways in which different social groups are racialized have specific historical, geographical, political, and cultural contexts. In the following section, I first discuss the importance of merging theories of race and racialization with neoliberal governmentality. I then introduce key concepts in race and racialization theories to situate the framework in which I conceptualize immigrants as *racialized* subjects in Chapter 3.

1.2 Race and Racialization

*Racing Neoliberalism*

Rhee conceptualizes the mechanisms of neoliberalization – which she broadly links to market-based ideologies seeking to limit state control – and racialization in modern subject-making as occurring simultaneously and these processes enact as governmentality of a “neoliberal racial project” (2013:562). Roberts and Mahtani (2010) similarly discuss the significance of *racing* neoliberalism, which they mainly define as institutions and policies that exercise market-oriented and individualizing practices and ideals. They recognizing that “race and racism are inextricably embedded in the neoliberal project” (Roberts and Mahtani 2010:250). On understanding the relationship between race and neoliberalism, they contend that “it is important to examine not just the momentary eruptions of race or racism that seemingly result from neoliberal policy reforms, and instead consider race as an organizing principle of society that neoliberalism reinforces and modifies” (Roberts and Mahtani 2010:254).
From the perspective of neoliberal governmentality, racializing and racist practices are mobilized through various forms of language, practices, and knowledges that may not have direct references to “race” but that nonetheless have “racist effects” (Jakubowski 1997:43; Lentin and Titley 2011). Such practices de-politicize racial disadvantages embedded within modern political and economic formations by disengaging state obligations for eliminating racial inequalities and by rejecting claims of race-based politics (Davis 2007). The deregulation of economic activities and privatization of public services have contributed to a shifting of structural and systemic issues into private and personal realms. With more emphasis placed on meritocracy, liberal democracy, and individual freedom, the states of advanced liberal democracies can no longer engage in explicitly racist discourses and practices as it had been in the past. Davis (2007) asserts that meritocracy silences claims of racism by attributing structural and political causes of racial inequality to personal flaws and individual failure to work hard. The absence of direct reference to race and the denial of racism mute racially coded discourses. Muted racism and muted racialization are part of the current political-economic discourses and rationalities that proclaim race-blind realities, which renders it possible for race to be deemed irrelevant and to deny claims of racism against racialized individuals. In other words, technologies of domination and of the self are mobilized in particular neo-liberal discursive practices that serve to normalize racialization and racist effects as race-less “common sense” (Rhee 2013). Within neo-liberal logic, race becomes invisible from public discourses as it moves into personal and private spheres. Therefore, by examining neo-liberal rationalities in conjunction with racializing mechanisms – that is, by racing neoliberalism – I hope to deconstruct and uncover the ways in which race continues to manifest in actions, techniques, and discourses that claim to be race-less. In the section that follows, I first provide a review on
scholarly discussions about the terms “race” and “racialization” before examining the role of race and racializing in historical and contemporary immigration policy of Canada.

_Race and Racialization_

Many scholars have situated the origins of the race concept – at least in the modern notion of group classification – to be between sixteenth to eighteenth century and closely linked to European explorations and imperial expansions into the “New World” (Goldberg 1993; Fleras 2012). The emergence of the racial conceptualization coincided with the vast cultural and intellectual developments in Europe and a racial hierarchy would later be reified through scientific reasoning during the Enlightenment period (Winant 2000). Though other ancient empires and civilizations had also had systems of human classifications, the Europeans were the ones to invent the quasi-scientific ranking of different “racial” groups based on physical attributes (Fleras 2012). Some have suggested that the race concept was used by Europeans to justify unequal treatment of non-European groups (Banton 2005). By viewing Indigenous peoples in the African and American continents as sub-human or non-human, colonizers claimed authority and the “natural” right to control and govern non-Europeans based on racial superiority (Thobani 2007). In the 1950s, as a response to the Jewish genocide during the second World War, the United Nations recruited international scientists to examine the validity of the race concept in explaining human diversity. The findings yielded no correlation between race and phenotype. They concluded that the race concept, rather, was established from histories of racism and racialized discourses (Kobayashi and Johnson 2007). The European encounters with “strange”, “savage”, and “uncivilized” beings that were vastly different from them prompted the development of racial categories and hierarchy based on gendered, sexualized, and racist imaginations of the Europeans (see Stoler 1995; Nagel 2003).
Over the last few decades, sociologists have, by and large, established a consensus of understanding that “race” as an ordering mechanism for social groups is a social construct with little or no biological validations (Brace 2005). Despite the arbitrary nature of the race concept, scholars have asserted that analysis of race is important because racial discriminations and inequalities continue to exist in the lives of racially coded groups (Fleras 2012, 2014). Some scholars have argued against using “race” as an analytical concept to avoid further validation that “race” has any biological truth (Miles and Torres 2007). Using racialization as an analytical tool, therefore, is useful for problematizing race as a fixed and stable concept and for illustrating race-making as political processes that are enforced through structural and systemic forces (Small 1994; Miles 1989; Kobayashi and Johnson 2007; and Fleras 2012).

Michael Banton’s (1977) work is considered one of the first studies of racialization theory in sociology (Murji and Solomos 2005). He defines racialization as processes through which race and racial categories are mobilized in reference to the historical misrepresentation of a racial hierarchy based on phenotypical differences (Banton 2005). Thus, he cautions against the defining mechanisms as “racialization” when the examined phenomenon does not involve explicit reference to race; he suggests that the extension of the terminology must clarify “who does the racializing and for what reasons” (Banton 2005:66). However, Miles (1989) argues that non-visible characteristics have also been used to signify group differences, such as the racialization of Jewish people in political discourses (Miles 1993). Miles and Brown (2003) also define racialization as a process of categorization that create group differentiation and define an Other through imagined and real (visible and non-visible) variations in human biological characteristics. Their definition highlights the social psychological process of meaning making in racialization that draws on imagined or partial signification of biological differences. I use Miles
and Brown’s definition of racialization to consider the fluidity and instability of racializing mechanisms and concepts. By using this conceptualization of racialization, I wish to highlight the power relations and subject-making processes within the current racial dynamics that have emerged out of Canada’s establishment as a White settler state (see section 3.1).

Race in Canadian Immigration Policy

The term “race” was officially incorporated into Section 38(c) in the Immigration Act of 1910, that allowed immigration to be regulated based on the “races” of immigrants (Jakubowski 1997). The Act was later amended in 1919 that prohibited:

any nationality or race of immigrants of any specified class or occupation…such immigrants are deemed undesirable owing to their peculiar customs, habits, modes of life, methods of holding property and because of their probable inability to become readily assimilated or to assume the duties and responsibilities of Canadian citizenship (cited in Jakubowski 1997:16, original emphasis).

The inclusion of this clause officially legalized discriminatory selection of future citizens by nationality or race. However, as I will show in the discussion below, it is evident that Canadian immigration policies prior to 1910 was saturated with racist and racializing discourses that “exalted” British-ness as superior to other cultures and “races.”

At Canadian Confederation in 1867, the first Canadian Prime Minister John A. Macdonald declared that Canada was “a white man’s country” (Macdonald as cited in Dua 2007:446). Subsequent immigration policies would reflect his vision of a White – namely, Anglo-Protestant – Canada as he and other politicians established policies to recruit people from Britain and the United States while selectively admitting “acceptable” groups for labour and nation building purposes and actively prohibiting “non-preferred” peoples from permanently settling in Canada (Simmons 1998; Aiken 2007). The criteria for assessment the desirability and suitability of immigrants were mainly based on labour demands and perceived degree of similar
with British values and traditions. From 1896 to 1914, there were approximately 2.5 million immigrants who came to Canada, with the majority of them from Britain and the United States and around half a million from continental Europe (Hawkins 1991). Immigrants from Northern Europe, such as Germany and Scandinavian countries, were considered similar enough to Britons that they were included in the “preferred” groups. A government memorandum 1910 stated a list of preferred countries, including the United States, the British Isles, and certain Northern European countries (France, Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, Germany, Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Iceland) while excluding people with other nationalities who are “unlikely to assimilate and who consequently prevent the building up of a united nation of people of similar customs and ideals” (Manpower and Immigration 1974:9-10 cited in Jakubowski 1997:16).

Groups from Southern, Central, and Eastern Europe were selectively accepted and excluded depending on the economic and political contexts. For instance, Clifford Sifton, who was the Minister of the Department of the Interior from 1896 to 1905, aggressively recruited agriculturalists across central and Eastern Europe to fill the need for farmers in the Prairie provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta (Kelley and Trebilcock 1998). Thus, during the Sifton years, there was a huge growth in population of people from Ukraine, Poland, Romanian, Hungary, and Russia (Knowles 2007; Stasiulis and Jhappan 1995). However, other politicians were outspoken about their opinions against Sifton’s “open door” policy. Thomas Sproule, a Conservative MP, stated during a House of Commons debate in 1903 that immigrants from Eastern and central Europe were “the undesirable elements of Europe … who are imbued with instincts and natures which have not in themselves any tendency to elevate humanity but rather to lower it in every particular” (Library of Parliament 1903 cited in Kelley and Trebilcock 1998:131). Frank Oliver, who was Sifton’s successor as the Minister of the Interior from 1905 to
1911, also disagreed with his predecessor’s policy on immigration. He was vocal about his ministry’s objective to discontinue admission of immigrants from central and Eastern Europe (Kelley and Trebilcock 1998; Knowles 2007). Another compelling example is the rejection of Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi regime during the 1930s and during the second World War. The head of the immigration department at the time, F. C. Blair, was anti-Semitic and he vigorously restricted admission of Jews into Canada. Between 1933 and 1939, Canada only accepted 5000 Jewish refugees from Europe, which was significantly less than the tens of thousands of Jewish refugees admitted into other European countries (Abella and Troper 1982).

Immigrants from outside of Europe were targeted in several immigration policies and regulations during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The *Chinese Immigration Act* of 1885 was the first regulation that restricted immigration based on ethnicity. The Act was a response to the growing anti-Chinese movement as Chinese workers – who were recruited for the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway between 1881 and 1884 – became the scapegoat for the growing unemployment rate (Lai 1988). A head tax of $50 was required for every Chinese person seeking to enter Canada and was later revised several times as it was ineffective in deterring large influx of Chinese immigrants; it was increased to $500 by 1903 (Knowles 2007). A more restrictive law was passed in 1923 to ban most Chinese people from entering the Canadian border except for diplomats and government officials, children who were born in Canada, merchants, and students attending university or college. Other exclusionary policies, including the *Gentlemen’s Agreement* and the *Continuous Journey Regulation* of 1908, were similarly implemented to prohibit immigration from Japan and India during the early twentieth century (Galabuzi 2006; Jakubowski 1997).
Immigration drastically declined during the periods of World War I, the Great Depression of 1929, and World War II, reaching its lowest intake at 7576 people in 1942 (Jakubowski 1997; see also Elliot and Fleras 1996). Economic development in Canada after the second World War stimulated immigration levels and despite the growing labour demands, differential selection of immigrants based on race and ethnicity persisted. In 1947, Prime Minister Mackenzie King spoke against immigration from Asia to defend Canada’s rights to select “desirable future citizens” and that mass immigration “from the Orient would change the fundamental character of the Canadian population” (Manpower and Immigration 1974:205 cited in Jakubowski 1997:17; see also Triadafilopoulos 2013:15). On top of explicit racism expressed in legal and political discourses, state authorities were granted discretionary powers through policies that sustained and reinforced racist discourses and practices.

In 1960, Prime Minister John Diefenbaker passed the Bill of Rights which condemned discrimination based on race, colour, national origin, religion, or sex (Knowles 2007). It became more difficult to defend immigration regulations with explicitly racist terms; thus in 1962, new immigration regulations were introduced that replaced race-driven criteria with skill-based assessments in hopes of attracting highly skilled workers. Immigration regulations were revised in 1967 and a points system was introduced as a more objective measure of applicants based on short-term factors (arranged employed or designated occupation, knowledge of English and/or French, relatives in Canada, and area of destination) and long-term factors (education and training, personal qualities, occupational demand, occupational skill, and age) (Manpower and Immigration Canada 1974 cited in Kelley and Trebilcock 1998). Applicants who received 50 points or more out of 100 were admitted into the country regardless of their “race”, ethnicity, or nationality. The point-based system largely corresponded to changes in the post-WWII
workforce and economy in Canada. Prosperous economic development after the Second World War meant that there was no shortage of jobs and even lead to businesses and employers advocating for a more liberal immigration policy in order for them to recruit labour (Kelley and Trebilcock 1998). The shift towards a knowledge and service based economy also rendered the need to seek highly skilled and educated workers (Ministry of Manpower and Immigration 1966). Furthermore, Triadafilopoulous (2013) argues that a mixture of changes in global and domestic normative ideologies resulted in the liberalization of Canadian immigration regulations in the 1960s; world events during the mid-twentieth century – including the Holocaust, decolonizing processes of colonized regions, and the global rise of a rhetoric of human rights – combined with the emergence of liberal democratic principles within Canadian politics also contributed to the ultimate removal of overt discriminatory terms in Canada’s immigration policy.

Although after the 1960s the discourse of the immigration regulations and policies became “deracialized” which replaced overt references to racial terms or racism with a “skills” discourse, it was nonetheless possible to reproduce racializing effects in its implementations (Aiken 2007). For instance, resources for the recruitment and assessment of immigrants were unequally allocated to prioritize “developed” countries with white populations; from 1962 to 1969, approximately 78% of recruitment expenses were spent on developed countries (Jakubowski 1997). Furthermore, immigration officers were given discretionary powers to make subjective decisions in their assessment of applicants that included granting up to fifteen points arbitrarily under “personal qualities” category that assessed the applicant’s suitability for long-term settlement (Thobani 2000b; Abu-Laban 1998; Kelley and Trebilcock 1998; Jakubowski 1997). I further discuss the implications of the points system in Chapter 4.
The *Immigration Act* of 1976 was stripped of explicitly racial terms. The Act linked bilingualism to the “cultural and social fabric of Canada” (Library and Archives Canada 1976), reinforcing the historically racialized conception of “Canadian-ness” with English and French characteristics (Thobani 2000a). By replacing racial terms with a discourse of cultural characteristics, the Act engaged with a form of “new” racism (Gilroy 1992; Barker 1981). Razack (1998:60) contends that the “culturalization of racism… thrives in a social climate that is officially pluralist” where the illusion of cultural diversity and equality are used to deny responsibility for racism. Cultural differences are used to explain oppression, inequalities, and marginalization of racialized groups. Within the framework of culturalized racism, the 1976 *Immigration Act* provided the “race-less” context in which the “non-preferred races” of previous immigration regulations became designated as *culturally* distinct from the nationalized Canadian figure (Thobani 2000a). National membership was thus reorganized in terms of the social, cultural and linguistic compatibilities.

**Racializing Others in a Multicultural Society**

Sara Ahmed contends that a national imagination is maintained not only through the image of a stranger that can be accepted or expelled from the national borders, but also “requires the proximity of ‘strangers’ within that space” (Ahmed 2000:100). Ahmed provides an analysis of the Australian *National Agenda* regarding multiculturalism to illustrate that the detachment of “differences” from their historical and political contexts allowed the government to insert authority to manage such differences. The discourse of cultural differences asserts the rights of individuals to access equality, universalizing and neutralizing the differences as “diversity.” In such framework, culture is perceived as a homogenous entity that the ‘strange’ Others possess or want to express; it is someone’s heritage and fixed in the past.
Multiculturalism, Ahmed (2000) argues, is the inclusion of cultural differences that do not threaten the White Australian national body. At the centre of the narratives of multiculturalism is the figure of a “typical” (white male) Australian who is tolerant of differences. In other words, “cultural differences” as a discourse is framed within a set of dominant values embodied by the idealized Australian citizen-subject who is tolerant of diversity. Ahmed’s analysis of multiculturalism policy in Australia reveals that two types of strangers are required for a multicultural national identity: strangers that can be included in limited ways and stranger strangers whose differences are unable to be assimilated into the dominant society. Thus, selective ways of including some Others are used to exclude some other-Others. Ahmed argues that the multicultural discourse de-politicizes historical creation and exploitation of racialized Others as harmonious narratives of collective history. Legal and political systems that have been historically linked to colonial and imperial practices are neutralized as apolitical structures that can accommodate cultural differences. Any differences that challenge the neutrality of such structures are considered to be failing or betraying the nation and its multicultural identity.

In the Canadian context, Ng (1995) examines the official policy of multiculturalism as an ideological framework that produces conditions and discourses for the state to manage class interests among the diverse cultural and linguistic groups within the national border. The policy manages resources between different interest groups while protecting the interests of social and political elites. The policy thus does not resolve or address the gendered, racialized, and classed relations that have arise from Canada’s particular historical and political contexts. For example, the policy of multiculturalism effectively “forgets” (Stoler and Strassler 2000) the histories of European colonial exploitations of Indigenous resources and communities while simultaneously
de-politicizing and dismissing the resistance from Aboriginal communities concerning the ongoing colonization of their land, cultures, and resources.

Since the 1970s to the present moment, the ideals of multiculturalism in supporting cultural pluralism in social integration appear to be in contention with the dismantling of the welfare state and emergence of rationalities that emphasize individual responsibility and self-sufficiency (Ritchie 2017). This is not to say that multiculturalism as an ideology has become insignificant as a framework to govern cultural pluralism within a liberal or advanced liberal democratic context. Rather, multiculturalism, in both policy and popular discourses, has been used to promote Canada’s national image and enhance its competitive edge for global capital. This is evident in Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s speech at the 2016 World Economic Forum in Switzerland when he lauded Canada’s capacity to be “resourceful” through “diversity,” which he attributed as the source of creativity and innovation (Trudeau 2016). Thus, within neo-liberal rationalities, multiculturalism has been modified to correspond to the marketization of public goods. I will further discuss the neo-liberal restructuring of the public sector in relation to immigrant settlement support in Chapter 2.

1.3 Methodology

This study is informed by grounded theory methods and critical discourse analysis in the collection and analysis of my data. I draw on Kathy Charmaz’s constructivist approach of grounded theory during the processes of selecting and coding the success stories. The framework of critical discourse analysis fits well with my interest in examining the stories as discursive practices. In the following section, I first discuss the key concepts in grounded theory and critical discourse analysis before providing a brief account of my data collection process.

Constructivist Grounded Theory
Grounded theory was formally introduced with the publication of *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research* by sociologists Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss in 1967. They advocated for a method that would allow data to guide theory development rather than using logically-deductive theory to inform research data. In other words, they aimed to move social scientific research away from verification of available theories to creation of new theories (Charmaz 2014). Grounded theory was defined as “the discover of theory from data systematically obtained from social research” (Glaser and Strauss 1967:2). The key aspects included simultaneous data collection and analysis, constant comparative analysis, memo-writing techniques, theoretical sampling, and post-analysis literature review (Charmaz 2014).

Since the 1980s, Strauss, along with Juliet M. Corbin, elaborated grounded theory as a verification method as they focused more on the techniques and applications (Charmaz 2014; Corbin and Strauss 1990; Strauss and Corbin 1998). Grounded theory has since been adopted, expanded and modified by researchers in various disciplines. Charmaz views the various adaptations of the original grounded theory as affiliated methods rather than divergent approaches. She asserts that studies of grounded theory can be identified through the actions of the researchers, such as conducting data collection and analysis simultaneously in an iterative (repetitive)process; drawing on data in service of developing new conceptual categories; developing inductive abstract analytic categories through systematic data analysis; and emphasizing theory construction rather than description or application of current theories (Charmaz 2014:15).

Charmaz takes on a constructivist approach of grounded theory, which “not only theorizes the interpretive work that research participants do, but also acknowledges that the
resulting theory is an interpretation” (Charmaz 2014:239). She emphasizes the interaction between the researcher and the data, stating that “viewing the research as constructed rather than discovered fosters researchers’ reflexivity about their actions and decisions” (Charmaz 2014:13). Researchers are thus not neutral or outside of the data they investigate; their social positions and past experiences influence their interpretations of the data.

**Analyzing Documents**

In this study, I examine the success stories as documents that reproduce existing discourses about immigrants and immigration by various groups, including state agencies and settlement service providers. It is helpful here to discuss Prior’s (2003) approach in analyzing documents. She asserts that a document is not necessarily defined by its material form or intended purposes; rather, it depends on “factors and processes that lay beyond their boundaries” (Prior 2003:4). In fact, documents should not be viewed as fixed or stable items; they are dynamic objects participating in “fields, frames, and networks of action” (Prior 2003:4).

Prior’s discussion draws on actor network theory, which describes a web of heterogeneous relations in the social and natural spheres “that produce and reshuffle all kinds of actors including objects, subjects, human beings, machines, animals, ‘nature,’ ideas, organizations, inequalities, scale and sizes, and geographical arrangements” (Law 2009:141). In other words, rather than assuming any subject or object as static or singular, the goal is to investigate the networks of relations between human and non-human actors in question. The assumed status of documents as a neutral tool presenting objective facts, then, are de-stabilized and instead, documents become a network of actions that “construct and stabilize objects and things, identities and processes” (Prior 2003:168). She cautions researchers on being attentive to the production and consumption of documents and their social settings. She asserts that the “key
to the research process” of documentation is to be aware of “how the document fits into the entire network of activities and agents of which it forms a part” (Prior 2003:168). Her conceptualization reiterates the relational and contextual nature of social practices and actors that Foucault has discussed. The particular historical, cultural, political, and economic contexts within which the success stories manifest as a particular form of document are pertinent in understanding how certain subjectivities are constructed, represented, maintained, and rendered administrable.

**Critical Discourse Analysis**

In order to deconstruct the discursive practices and networks of power involved within the immigrant success stories, my research was informed by the theoretical and methodological frameworks of critical discourse analysis (CDA). CDA, as Wodak (2001) asserts, is a *program* of research that encompasses a variety of theories, methods, and studies; it is not a singular theory or method with a rigid set of rules to follow. Fairclough (1995) contends that his approach of critical discourse analysis aims to unmask and critique the links between texts and social process and power relations which are usually not apparent to people who interpret these texts. Most works of CDA intends to demystify ideologies embedded in discourses and related social practices. In the broadest sense, CDA intends to discover the role of discursive strategies, practices, and structures (re)produce unequal power relations (Jahedi et al 2014).

Fairclough and Wodak (1997:275-277) establish eight principles of critical discourse analysis: 1) CDA addresses social problems; 2) power relations are discursive; 3) discourse constitutes society and culture, as well as being constituted by them; 4) discourse does ideological work; 5) discourse is historical; 6) the link between text and society is mediated; 7) discourse analysis is interpretative and explanatory; and 8) discourse is a form of social action.
These tenets of CDA form the premises for my examination of the success stories as reinforcing, maintaining, legitimizing, and stabilizing particular discourses about immigrants and their settlement in Canada. Scholars have used CDA to examine the Canadian discourses of integration (Li 2003), gendered racial violence (Razack 2002; Jiwani 2011), racism and racialization of immigrants in media (Hier and Greenberg 2002; Tator and Henry 2006; Bauder 2008); and diversity/multiculturalism (Bannerji 2000). This study follows these studies of racialization and immigration to deconstruct the discourses and power/knowledge mobilized within the immigrant serving sector.

Data Collection

Immigrant success stories are published in a variety of spaces for different purposes and applications, including government reports, newspapers, community newsletters, books, and magazines. The Canadian Immigrant magazine, for instance, presents an annual competition for the Top 25 Canadian Immigrant Award that is sponsored by the Royal Bank of Canada and their website publishes stories of immigration from the winners of the award (Canadian Immigrant 2017). In my search for success stories, the annual reports of the agencies present the most consistent and available site to gather data. To search for a more complete list of settlement service providers in Ontario, I used the list of SPOs published on the Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) website for new immigrants who are seeking settlement services. In doing so, I was also ensuring that the SPOs are funded by IRCC rather than sponsored by private or non-state entities to adhere to the premises of my research questions. The IRCC was previously named Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) and while the department has officially changed its name, many documents and information are still distributed under CIC
rather than IRCC. Thus the two acronyms IRCC and CIC will be used interchangeably throughout this thesis.

The IRCC website provides a filter function for SPOs where users can input keywords or phrases to narrow down a search for SPOs based on location and types of services provided (IRCC 2016a). Out of the 567 SPOs in Ontario, the key word “daily life” yields the most results with 455 agencies, followed by “youth” at 251 hits and “language training” at 245. Table 1 includes a list of keywords and phrases that have produced high number of SPOs. The numbers are a glimpse into the type of services and programs that are IRCC is funding in Ontario.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Keywords/Phrases</th>
<th>Number of Resulting SPOs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daily life</td>
<td>451</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language training</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refugee</td>
<td>244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job</td>
<td>235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentor</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francophone</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When I accessed the website in July 2016, 567 SPOs are listed for the Ontario region. I then used the websites for all the organizations to search for annual reports published within the last five years. Since the number of available reports was inconsistent (i.e. some organizations may have a complete list of annual reports for the past ten years while other organizations may only have one or two available documents), in order to avoid including too many stories from the same SPO, I used a maximum of four stories per service provider from reports that were published within the last five years. Not all organizations had annual reports and when they did,
not all included immigrant success stories. I only included stories concerning immigrants and excluded individuals who revealed their refugee status.

My data collection yielded 30 success stories from 12 SPOs that were found through the list provided on the IRCC website. I used line-by-line coding during the initial coding process to examine the narratives in detail in terms of the actions, meanings, and behaviours described in them. This coding resulted in 484 codes, which were then sorted into 21 categories so I could better grasp any overlapping themes or concepts that emerged from the narratives. I then conducted two more rounds of coding and integrated the codes into five major themes: possessing positive traits, building community, needing to be coached on becoming Canadian, Canadian dream, and overcoming barriers by gaining skills. After conducting my literature review, the themes were then consolidated into three areas of focus: governing settlement services, immigrants as enterprising subjects, and problematizing “Canadian experience”.

Chapter two to four are organized based on the three themes that emerged from the data.

1.4 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I have provided the theoretical and methodological frameworks of my study. Foucault’s works on power/knowledge, discourse, subjectivity, and governmentality have illustrated the different ways in which particularly human subjects are socially constructed in relation to external institutions and self knowledge. I also highlighted the significance of examining neoliberalism in conjunction with theories of race and racializing. A brief examination of the role of race in Canada’s immigration policy illustrated the ways in which explicitly racist ideologies in policy have transformed into race-less and race-blind discourses that nonetheless produce racializing consequences. The next section considered the
methodological approaches of grounded theory and critical discourse analysis. Lastly, I discussed the methods and strategies implemented in my data collection and analysis.
Chapter 2
Governing Settlement Services

As discussed in Chapter 1, liberal and neo-liberal arts of government have resulted in a shift away from coercive means of governmental rule and towards the possibilities for the state to “govern at a distance” through an array of relations, networks, practices, and processes. Under neo-liberal governmentality, however, the reduction of direct state intervention has enhanced the state’s capacity to govern at a greater distance through new relations and practices based on privatization, de-regulation, and competition of welfare provision (Brown 2014). In particular, welfare governance through state agencies has been replaced by the development of neo-liberal techniques and “autonomous” entities outside of state bodies that are mainly regulated through market-driven rationalities. Welfare responsibilities formerly assigned to the state are now off-loaded to quasi-autonomous non-governmental organizations (non-for-profit groups funded by the government to serve civil society), professional bodies, and private businesses. A variety of community, ethno-cultural-specific, and multi-service agencies for newcomers to Canada have been established as part of the networks and relations through which the state is able to govern society and citizens “at a distance.” This chapter entails a discussion on particular neo-liberal technologies used by settlement service provider organizations (SPOs) that have enabled the Canadian state to govern groups and individuals from afar. I will first discuss the marketization of settlement services that occurred as the funding regimes underwent significant restructuring in governmental principles. The second section will examine the ways in which settlement practices techniques, and discourses have effectively de-politicized structural inequalities and systemic discriminations experienced by immigrants.
2.1 Marketization of Settlement Work

Within neo-liberal rationalities, the authority and powers of expertise in positivist knowledge of human conduct under liberal governance have been replaced by “the calculative regimes of accounting and financial management” (Rose 1996:54). The “grey sciences” of an audit-based culture, consisting of techniques of enumeration, calculation, monitoring, and evaluation, have emerged as key mechanisms of neo-liberal governing at a distance (Rose 1996; Brown 2014). Welfare provision has been “marketized” as governmental practices and techniques are presumed to be driven by an idealized “free market” that regulates relations through choice-making. Welfare agencies, such as departments of social welfare, housing and public health, then behave as “buyers” who can choose to purchase services from a selection of competing non-profit or private organizations (Rose 1996). Since the 1990s, the devolution of service delivery to non-state entities coupled with a destabilized and competitive funding structure has resulted in the marketization of immigrant settlement support.

In the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, informal and small-scale “settlement” assistance for non-British/French immigrants in early twentieth century was mostly offered by members of ethnic communities, churches, and voluntary organizations. The notion of “settlement” at the time was concerned with “Canadianizing” (or assimilating) immigrants through trainings on Canadian values and English or French language skills (Amin 1987). After the second World War, mass migration from Europe resulted in increased demands for immigrant settlement assistance. Consequently, the types of support and programs offered by churches, voluntary agencies and settlement houses grew in number. YWCA/YMCA and the Red Cross were among the key voluntary organizations that supported immigrants and refugees in terms of essential settlement needs, such as housing, food, education, translation, and English
classes (Amin 1987). Most of the “settlement workers” were female volunteers with strong Christian affiliations. As the number of immigrants grew, various immigrant support agencies and ethnic organizations began to emerge. Funding for settlement support at the early stages mostly came from the church or private donors. It was not until 1970s that the federal government began offering short-term grants to community agencies for immigrant settlement services and programs in Ontario (Amin 1987).

Over the next few decades, sources of funding for immigrant services shifted away from private, religious, and community donors and settlement Service Provider Organizations (SPOs) became heavily dependent on government grants (Sadiq 2004). This financial dependence on state funders was intensified when the funding model was restructured in the 1990s. The restructuring was part of a larger shift in governmental rationalities that sought to reduce state interventions (Arat-Koc 1999). Corresponding with the shift, a new form of governmentality informed by neo-liberal logic emerged, highlighting competition, privatization and deregulation as central in the planning and operations of welfare provision. This “neoliberal governance paradigm” (Evans et al 2005:77) is characterized by: an emphasis on management and performance measurement; a decline in policy work; an increase of competition within the public sector; fiscal constraint; private sector business practices; and deregulation. Therefore, many social services and welfare responsibilities that were previously administered and delivered directly by state agencies have been contracted to the “third sector,” which mainly consists of non-governmental and voluntary organizations (Sadiq 2004). Wolch (1990) refers to non-governmental organizations as the “shadow state” as they began to adopt the responsibilities and operations that used to be run by state agencies.
In 2003, the Canadian Council on Social Development published a report indicating concerns from various non-governmental agencies in regards to the funding restructures and their impacts on non-profit and voluntary groups since the 1990s (Scott 2003). The report indicates that while there are a range of funder sources for non-profit agencies, the majority of funding came from federal and provincial governments. The study outlines the following funding realities of the non-profit groups in Ontario: 1) a shift from funding organization based on their mission to funding project-based contracts that give the funders more control; 2) funding is short-term and unstable; and 3) increased reporting and evaluation requirements, intensifying administrative protocols for SPO staff working with limited resources (Scott 2003). Government grants and contracts typically make up 60% to 100% of the funding for most settlement programs and projects in SPOs (Richmond and Shields 2004). For most of the SPOs I examined in this study, federal and provincial funding combined make up around 60% to 90% of total funding per agency (eg. World Skills Employment Centre 2015).

For the immigrant settlement sector, Settlement Renewal Initiative was introduced by the federal government in 1995 through which settlement service provision and administration were devolved from the federal to provincial authorities “while simultaneously cutting funding for immigrant services throughout the provinces” (Mukhtar et al. 2016:391). Furthermore, funding structure changed from stable long-term grants to competitive contract-based agreements. Meanwhile, on the provincial level, the elected Progressive Conservative Ontario Premier Mike Harris administered a series of budget cuts in social assistance and devolved social service delivery to municipalities and non-governmental agencies (Sadiq 2004). Thus many provincial settlement services were removed or devolved on SPOs in the form of purchase-of-service funding contracts (Stasiulis et al. 2011; Sadiq 2004). These two major policy changes in the
1990s were the beginning of a series of changes in the funding mechanisms of the settlement sector.

One key element of the national Settlement Renewal Initiative involved a negotiation of federal-provincial agreements for provincial governments to take over settlement service delivery. The governments of Quebec, British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, New Brunswick and Newfoundland and Labrador signed agreements in the 1990s with the federal government to assume responsibilities of providing settlement support. Ontario, however, was not interested in such agreement from 1995 to 2003 under the Conservative leader at the time (Seidle 2010). As discussed earlier, funding for settlement assistance from the province was reduced in 1995. Negotiations between Ontario and the federal government only began in 2003 when the Liberal government was elected. The Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement (COIA) was signed in 2005, and it included the involvement of municipalities in a federal-provincial agreement for the first time in Ontario (Stasiulis et al 2011). The five-year agreement brought in an additional $920 million from federal funding for the province (Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration 2005), allowing for an increased number of SPOs and settlement services across the province (Seidle 2010). Under this agreement, funding was predetermined for each year until 2010, regardless of changes in immigration pattern. It was extended until 2011 but was not renewed thereafter. Since 2012, federal funding for settlement services in Ontario has been based on a national settlement funding formula which calculates funding allocation determined by the number of incoming immigrants to each province (IRCC 2011). As immigrant intake has been declining in Ontario, the overall funding has been significantly reduced and impacted the human resources capacity of SPOs. OCASI published a report in 2016 that highlighted the negative effects of the restructured funding systems on settlement agencies across Ontario. Out of the
SPOs that they surveyed, 55% reported employee layoffs and 36% reported reduced work hours due to funding cuts (Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants 2016:12-13).

The overall implications of these funding changes for the immigrant settlement sector have been multifold. First, the shift from stable and core-based funding to short-term project-based contracts has placed more restrictions on the agencies in terms of the services they can provide. Second, the marketized funding mechanisms encouraged competition between settlement agencies; educational institutions and private corporations can also compete for some of the grants to provide settlement services (Evans, Richmond and Shields 2005). This has resulted in a lack of collaboration between settlement agencies. Third, when collaboration did occur between agencies, power relations between agencies are often imbalanced due to funding restrictions that require small ethnic-based community agencies to join or partner with larger multiservice organizations. Without the partnership, smaller agencies were mostly disqualified for government funding and had to rely on contracts from the larger SPOs for revenue (Sadiq 2004). Fourth, the contract-based model of funding has destabilized the financial structures of the agencies, leading to salary cuts, reduced work hours, and employee layoffs while additional accountability measures are increasing the overall administrative workload for SPO staff (Evans et al. 2005).

In sum, this shift from a state-welfare logic to market-based model in the immigrant settlement sector has resulted in the deployment of neo-liberal technologies within the funder-recipient relationship in the form of short-term project-based contracts and intensified processes of evaluations. Therefore, rather than diminishing the state’s authority over immigrant settlement matters, the devolution of formerly state-run social support to civil society is a translation of
state control into a diverse set of regulatory practices through the restructured funding and accountability measures that resulted from the marketization of settlement work.

2.2 Governing at a Distance

Rather than coercive and repressive means of ruling individual and collective lives, liberal and advanced liberal democracies govern populations based on certain claims about individual freedom and rights (Rose 2004). Government of neo-liberal subjects, therefore, requires indirect mechanisms of rule that enable “government at a distance” in the sense that political authorities can rule from afar through operations and practices of non-state experts and entities (Rose 2004:49; see also Miller and Rose 1990:2). Translation mechanisms are involved in linking objectives of political authorities with distantiated practices and techniques of governed subjects (Rose 2004). Translation shifts certain modes of thinking from “centers of calculations” – where materials collected from afar can be accumulated, analyzed, and applied for governmental purposes – to a multitude of distant locations (Miller and Rose 1990, 2008; see also Rose 2004). Through acts of documenting, calculating and evaluating, it becomes thinkable and doable to intervene and regulate human subjectivities.

Certain “human technologies” make it possible for rationalities of a political center to materialize as practical means in various sites. These technologies consist of heterogeneous assemblages of people, practices, mechanisms, structures, and objects that render political rationalities thinkable and operable in material realities “at a distance.” As Rose (2004) writes,

[a] technology of government, then, is an assemblage of forms of practical knowledge, with modes of perception, practices of calculation, vocabularies, types of authority, forms of judgment, architectural forms, human capacities, non-human objects and devices, inscription techniques and so forth, traversed and transected by aspirations to achieve certain outcomes in terms of the conduct of the governed (which also requires certain forms of conduct on the part of those who would govern). (Rose 2004:52)
As Rose, O’Malley and Valverde (2006) indicate, governmentalities of advanced liberal democracies use a variety of techniques that make it possible for the state to be absolved of many of its previous obligations in providing care for collective welfare. Instead, state authorities can govern quasi-autonomous non-state entities at a distance through calculative means of budgets, audits, standards, and other technologies. In this chapter, I focus particularly on the use of inscription devices by funders as a technology of government that link state funders, SPOs, and new immigrants in a heterogeneous web of power relations. I then use findings from the success stories to discuss the ways in which settlement SPOs provide “technical solutions” (Ferguson 1994) that depoliticize settlement and integration barriers for newcomers as apolitical and ahistorical while simultaneously maintaining and extending state governance.

**Inscription as Governmental Techniques**

Inscription techniques refer to a wide range of maps, charts, tables, figures, numbers, and texts through which distant space, people, and things are made visible and governable to the political authorities (Miller and Rose 2008). They make the domains of governance possible to evaluate, calculate, and intervene in accordance with the will to govern. As Miller and Rose argue,

> [m]aking people write things down and count them - register births, report incomes, fill in censuses - is itself a kind of government of them, an incitement to individuals to construe their lives according to such norms. By such mechanisms, authorities can act upon and enrol[1] those distant from them in space and time in the pursuit of social, political or economic objectives without encroaching on their freedom' or 'autonomy' - indeed often precisely by offering to maximize it by turning blind habit into calculated freedom to choose. (2008:67-68)

The information and number collected from governed subjects render political objectives calculable and therefore manageable for authorities at the center. The accumulation of inscriptions makes it possible for distant events, places, and people governable in the sense that
political authorities can manage populations and entities from afar by using the accumulated data to calculate, to legitimize plans and strategies. Within neo-liberal governmentalities, inscription techniques that can be collected, analyzed and controlled are thus crucial for governance from afar (Miller and Rose 2008).

As discussed earlier, key aspects of the marketization of settlement support include the increasingly competitive funding structure and rigid accountability measure. Funding applications require particular documentations of achievements from the SPOs while recipients of most state funding require extensive recording and reporting of service deliveries. The recording, tracking, and reporting of settlement service provisions enact as neo-liberal technologies of government at a distance. Inscriptions devices, particularly written reports and statistics, are thus of key relevance in the context of governing immigrant settlement in contemporary Canada.

The funding structure and guidelines established by state funders – particularly Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) – determine the scope within which particular goals, outcomes, practices, and techniques are to be recorded and reported by the SPOs to sustain or obtain more funding. Most funding comes in the form of contribution agreements, which require eligible recipients to achieve certain performance goals and may be audited quarterly and annually in order to receive payments (CIC 2016). Settlement programs and SPO operations are, thus, contingent on compliance with reporting protocols.

While some of the funding can be used for provision of “indirect services” – which mainly involves development and sharing of materials and information as well as partnership with local organizations, employers, regulatory bodies – the majority of CIC Settlement contribution grants are awarded to organizations and individuals providing “direct services” that
consist of the following five categories: 1) Needs Assessment and Referrals; 2) Information and Orientation; 3) Language Training and Assessment; 4) Employment Related Programming; 5) Community Connection (CIC 2016; see also IRCC 2015). SPOs with programs and projects funded through CIC contributions are required to report program outcomes according to the five categories. The funding guidelines are thus a technology of neo-liberal governmentality through which immigrant settlement support is translated into practicable, recordable, and measurable services and activities. Without adhering to the guidelines for reporting and service provisions, SPOs would not receive funds that are essential for their operations.

Reporting occurs mainly through narrative/statistical project reports and data systems, such as the Immigration-Contribution Accountability Reporting Environment system, also known as iCARE (IRCC 2013). iCARE is a nation-wide database launched in 2013 by IRCC as a standardized approach to collect information on the delivery of settlement and integration services. According to an internal audit of the Administration of Grants and Contributions for 2013 and 2014, iCARE provides a consistent framework within which the SPOs across Canada (except Quebec) are monitored and evaluated to ensure that SPOs are fulfilling the targets of their contribution agreements (IRCC 2016b). Under the increasingly competitive and unstable neoliberal funding regime, SPOs must adhere to the funders’ terms to secure funding. As Miller and Rose have argued, the authorities at the center of calculation determine the types of information that can be recorded into databases and reports in order to govern subjects at a distance. New immigrants receiving settlement support from SPOs are translated into calculable numbers and outcomes in reporting databases such as iCARE, making it possible to evaluate the “performance” and “efficiency” of SPOs based on records of clients served and services used (IRCC 2013).
iCARE also requires detailed personal information about the clients to be collected and reported. For instance, in order to input information into the database, it requires the clients’ unique immigration identification number to “validate” their eligibility – i.e. refugee or immigrant status – to access settlement services (IRCC 2013). Without obtaining the identification number, services offered to the client cannot be reported as an outcome. The conduct of SPO workers are thus shaped by reporting requirements such as the “validation” of clients. Data reported from SPOs is then compiled and analyzed by IRCC regarding immigrant settlement and integration trends, patterns, and usage of services to create statistics, reports, and policies, which in turn affects the future funding criteria. As an inscription device, iCARE governs at a distance the actions and rationalities of the SPO staff, whose interactions and communication with immigrant clients are shaped by funding and reporting guidelines. Settlement support thus is governed through marketized funding structures and inscription techniques that enable clients, services, and activities to be rendered recordable and calculable in cash terms.

My discussion in the section below includes examples of the ways in which practices of settlement support are shaped and governed within a marketized funding regime. The success stories illustrate how provision of services, such as needs assessment and workshop trainings, act as neo-liberal technologies of government that allow funders to shape “at a distance” the conduct of the SPOs and their clients in particular ways. I argue that SPOs offer services and trainings as technical fixes that de-politicize structural and systemic issues of immigrant settlement. The success stories can then be viewed as careful selections by the SPOs to “showcase” particular types of immigrants and services in order to comply with the increasingly marketized funding guidelines.
2.3 De-politicizing Settlement Support

Under neo-liberal governmentality, training workshops are a technology that *translates* the rationalities, strategies, and calculations of the state funders – who are the center of calculation for settlement services – into practices and techniques occurring in distant places. Within the success narratives, the SPOs effectively de-politicize settlement barriers using a formalized system of needs assessment and service referrals, and offer programs and workshops that reframe the concerns and hardships of their clients as technical issues. Such issues are thus rendered governable through a range of neo-liberal technologies and discourses associated with skills and/or knowledge enhancement.

A Checklist of Services

The immigrant success tales indicate a general pattern of settlement goals and practices that are consistent with the funding guidelines set out by the IRCC. The following excerpts exemplify a series of “client intake” processes that are consistent throughout the narratives:

- She decided to start by learning English (LINC program), and later became a client of [SPO] where she received a needs assessment and was referred to community agencies and other resources to meet her settlement needs and goals. She also attended many of the programs and activities offered at [SPO]. (Story 7)

- Upon coming to Canada, she became a [SPO] client and accessed a number of services. [She] received support through settlement services and then went on to graduate from both [SPO]’s Job Search Workshops and Enhanced Language Training (ELT) program. In June 2015, [she] completed an eight-week co-op placement with [SPO]’s ESL & Immigrant Services department. (Story 8)

These narratives reflect the general settlement pathway that IRCC intends for newcomers to undertake: receive a formal assessment of needs, take a language course to improve their English or French, and access other state-funded services, particularly trainings related to employment. This pathway corresponds with the funding guidelines determined by IRCC/CIC. Through governmental technologies such as iCARE, state funders are able to govern at a distance as their
settlement objectives are translated into a checklist of services that SPOs can offer to clients. The reporting of settlement support, then, fails to capture settlement needs and goals of immigrants that do not fit within the framework established by funders.

Due to the competitive and unstable funding environment, SPOs are becoming business-like in their operations. In order to obtain future funding, service providers must illustrate cost efficiency through the number of clients they can serve and services they can offer. This is manifested as the provision of multiple service referrals that is a common practice among SPO workers. In one of the narratives, the client was referred to other programs and services rather than the federal internship program in which she was interested:

Just in time, a graduate of the Federal Internship for Newcomers Program (FINP) informed my sister that the program provides exposure to newcomers interested in working in the public service. It was then that I researched and registered online with [SPO]. The following day, I visited their office to find out more about the program. After they learned what I was looking for, I was referred to further skills assessment, job search workshops; and then to the Ottawa Job Match Network (OJMN) program. (Story 14)

Her story does not state the reason for not being referred to the program of her interest. She was, instead, referred to at least three different services provided by the same SPO. Employees of a particular SPO tend to limit the referrals within the organization or the networks of partner agencies because they do not want to “lose their business” to another competitor agency who may be providing similar services (Geronimo 2000; Sadiq 2004). Instead of encouraging collaboration between settlement service providers, governance through neo-liberal techniques has regulated workers and agencies to normalize market-based practices (Mukhtar et al. 2016).

Lacking Technical Skills and Knowledge

The referral and workshop training model under neoliberal funding regime has responsibilized the (im)migrant clients to be self-sufficient in the sense that risk and decision
making in welfare become individualized through discourses of skills/knowledge deficiency and personal development. In many of the success narratives, the service referrals for the individuals are often associated with workshops and trainings that would provide technical solutions for settlement in the form of information on labour market, job search, business communication, Canadian workplace culture (see Chapter 4) and employee rights. Attitude and confidence are also common factors of settlement barriers discussed in the stories.

In one story, the individual states that she was eager to start a new career in healthcare in Canada even though she had an accomplished career as a teacher, school owner, and active political participant in her home country. Her story does not elaborate on her reason for pursuing a new career path in Canada, only that she “decided to follow a long cherished dream of working in Healthcare.” There is no discussion about whether she attempted to continue her teaching career before considering an alternative option. The following narrative describes the services and assistance she received from an employment counsellor when she contacted a local SPO:

The first person I met at [SPO] was my Employment Counsellor... She was so welcoming and supportive and encouraged me to sign up for a Career and Labour Market Information Session to help explore my career options. It was a very detailed session where I learned for the first time about informational interviews, how to set them up for myself and how to complete the all important follow up. By now I knew I was interested in a career as a Medical Laboratory Assistant/Technician and with this information I went about setting up several informational interviews with people in the field. These important interviews were made possible due to the opportunities with [SPO]. Equipped with career information, industry knowledge, and required skills, I was now convinced that this was the career I wanted to pursue and with the support of [SPO], I went back to school to start the process of turning my dream into reality. (Story 15)

Many researchers have examined structural challenges that internationally educated teachers experience in Canada, particularly with the accreditation and recertification processes (Schmidt 2010; Deters 2008; Beynon et al. 2004). The omission of any details about her considerations of
continuing a teaching career in Canada thus can potentially de-politicize systemic barriers that she might have encountered as a personal choice to change careers. The issue of employment is further individualized as she is portrayed as not knowing her career options and the proper techniques (i.e. information interviews) of acquiring “industry knowledge.” By referring her to a workshop about “Career and Labour Market Information,” the counsellor associated her employment barriers with a lack of information rather than addressing systemic discriminations and deskilling of foreign trained professional.

Another key domain of services that SPOs offer is job search assistance, which commonly consists of resume, interview, and networking techniques. In the following excerpt, the individual in the story describes her experience with job search trainings:

The job search workshops were a huge eye-opener. We learned how to prepare a professional resume and cover letter, and were provided with the tools to succeed in a job interview with confidence. The hands-on, practical approach was integral in allowing me to effectively search and analyze job-postings, as well as to market my skills as a competent professional. There was no forgetting [SPO staff]’s example of the elevator speech that was always on my lips, “I am [name]. I come with over 5 years of experience in ...” In those workshops you could see that we were all very talented and qualified, we just needed that extra coaching to prepare us for the Canadian work environment. (Story 14)

The “elevator speech,” which is also known as “30-second commercial,” is essentially a short speech prepared by job seekers to “sell” their experience and skills to recruiters and employers. It is one of the techniques that is often taught in the job search trainings for newcomers. The implication is that immigrants lack the knowledge and skills in marketing themselves as desirable job candidates. Setbacks in employment are thus portrayed as an issue of immigrants lacking “appropriate” communication skills and knowledge about “Canadian” workplace culture.
In one story, it is clearly stated that the individual, who has experience in microbiology studies, was beginning to consider other career options after failing to receive responses from employers for microbiology positions:

She decided to attend the Job Search Workshops [JSW] program with a view to exploring career and re-training options, as she was prepared to give up on Microbiology. While attending the JSW program, she revised her existing resume and practiced her 30-second commercial. She also attended several networking events, English Conversation classes, and mock interviews. By June, she felt confident to resume her job search for “Microbiologist” and started to send out resumes again. To her great surprise, she received immediate requests for interviews, and was much more confident in her ability to find work in her field. By the end of June, [she] wrote to say “I am grateful to [SPO] for helping me to prepare for a successful Job search. These programs helped me to reach my goal. I am feeling proud to say I was successful in finding a full-time job as “Analyst” in a Microbiology Department!” (Story 27)

Her employment as a microbiology analyst is presented as the result of her acquiring skills in networking, English conversations, resume writing, and interviewing. The implication is that she was unsuccessful in her initial job search because she lacked such skills. These job search trainings are technical solutions in the sense that these workshops de-politicize structural employment barriers as problems that can be resolved by providing techniques and knowledge about how to network, how to write job search documents, how to communicate in “business English.” In some programs, immigrants can gain work experience through unpaid internships or work placements. By providing tools to “enhance” the skills, knowledge, or experience of immigrant job seekers, the premise of such assistance is that employment barriers encountered by immigrants were the result of inadequate or unfitting individual qualifications. Institutional and systemic discrimination against foreign-acquired credentials thus remain unacknowledged (see Chapter 4).

Furthermore, the story of the microbiologist also associates gaining skills with gaining more confidence in job search. In other words, employment barriers are portrayed as the result of
immigrants lacking skills and confidence. The story indicates that once she gained enough confidence in her abilities, she succeeded in securing the desired employment. This discourse of "gaining more confidence" is consistent with other success stories that also mobilize discourses of personal development as solutions for overcoming settlement barriers.

A Matter of Personal Development

The success stories often describe trainings offered by the SPOs that use a "personal development" discourse, consisting of services and programs intended to help their clients improve their communication styles, self assessment, and mindset. Immigrants are thus "empowered" with enhanced capacities to develop self awareness, communicate with others, and build self confidence.

In one narrative, the story begins by stating that the individual "was depressed because she did not understand English and what people were saying to her. She could not and did not want to go out." Her narrative then indicates that after she completed English classes, she was referred to "Women’s Lifeskills Workshops" within the same SPO by her English teacher. In this story, she provides feedback regarding her experience with the workshops:

Taking the Assertiveness & Self-Esteem Workshop made me more confident and not so nervous or afraid about life anymore. I was surrounded by immigrant women just like me who were fortunate to be mentored by someone like … the Lifeskills and Pre-Employment Consultant for the program. My confidence continued to grow with each workshop I attended. After taking the Business English, Canadian Workplace Culture, Interview Preparation and Résumé Writing Workshops, I finally have the courage to think about a career in customer service. I’m working with [SPO]’s … Employment Services to help me reach this goal… The Women’s Lifeskills Workshops have changed me and given me the confidence and courage to change my future. (Story 5)

The story portrays a growth in confidence that resulted from the “lifeskills” and job search trainings as an essential aspect of her settlement success. By indicating that these workshops gave her “the courage to think about a career in customer service,” this narrative suggests that
her previous lack of *courage* was the main hindrance that prevented her from being employed. This discourse of “empowerment through self confidence” can therefore be seen as a neo-liberal technology that responsibilizes the individuals to acquire self-initiating capacities, which then enables the state to manage the conduct of immigrants at a distance (see Chapter 3).

A few of the success stories discuss the effectiveness of support groups for newcomers. However, the stories tend to emphasize the groups’ capacity to help individual achieve self-actualization rather any mention of collective sense of community or belonging. My critique here is particularly concerned with the emphasis on the personalized account of “empowerment” used within the success stories. In the except below, the individual first describes her initial struggles to settle in Canada before joining a support group:

…I landed in Canada since June 2013. I was glad when I first landed but because of language barrier, I was confused and agonizing. I felt like I was an alien who’s lost on earth. I had problem integrating into society and I dared not to go out by myself riding on the public transit as I couldn’t tell directions. Those are the dark ages of my life then. (Story 21)

Her narrative then discusses how her decision to join a women’s support group helped her to overcome the initial isolation:

I was attracted to [SPO’s] women support group … Since the second half of 2015, I attended many workshops.... All of them are very helpful to me. The most important thing I learned from one of the workshops is to understand my inner values, connect to my emotional needs, discover my full potential, and develop a flexible communication pattern at the workplace. Such messages have stimulated my inner youthful energy, making me love my life and Canada even more. (Story 21).

In her story, her initial emotional distress is *made manageable* as technical issues for the SPOs to intervene and provide assistance in the forms of personal development and language skills. Her settlement barriers became individualized concerns of improving her “inner values,” “emotional needs,” “full potential,” and “flexible communication pattern at the workplace.” As the discourse of her story locates the responsibility of settlement at the individual level, she becomes
responsibilized for overcoming settlement barriers because they are now her “personal” issues rather than problems of a social or political nature. As settlement issues are shifting into private realms, state authorities is also extending its power from political to non-political spheres in guiding the emotions, values, desires, and personal relations of the immigrants.

Another narrative similarly highlights the individual’s integration barrier as a problem in his attitude. This story discusses a man who was having family conflicts after settling in Canada with his wife and children:

My life in Canada hasn’t been a happy one. I felt ignored and disrespected by my wife and children despite my efforts to support them as the breadwinner of the family. They seemed to perceive me as a mere nagger, and my stress level was reaching its limits. I frequently disagreed with my wife regarding children’s education and didn’t have a comfortable relationship with my children. It was at this point I came across the “What Men Think in Private” program. (Story 12)

The family tension described in this story is consistent with studies that have shown the negative impacts of migration on the gender and intergenerational relations within families. For instance, Este and Tachble (2009) has highlighted a range of social, economic, and cultural factors as stressors for immigrant and refugee fathers in Canada, including unemployment or underemployment, social isolation, barriers to accessing supportive services, gender role reversal, and post-war trauma. However, this story fails to acknowledge or associate his family conflicts with other intersecting settlement challenges as indicated in Este and Tachble’s (2009) study and instead, it focuses on personal development as the key issue and solution in his situation:

Unlike other group programs I attended in the past, it provided me with an opportunity to look back on my childhood dreams which led to a realization that I was still holding on to them after all these years. I was able to frankly share my personal struggles and disappointments, and was comforted by the fact that I was not the only one feeling this sense of despair. The group supported me to objectify my current relationship with family, and to reflect on my communication style. Through this process, I became
aware that I was ventilating my stress on them and that I needed to make a conscious effort to change. (Story 12)

The narrative indicates that the men’s support group prompted him to acknowledge his “personal struggles and disappointments” as the main factor contributing to his “unhappy” relationship with his family. The narrative thus provides an individualized solution for him to be more mindful of his own emotions and communication style in his interactions with his family. By placing the emphasis on the personal, the responsibility of overcoming settlement barriers for immigrant families is also relocated to the individual or private spheres. Broader social contexts of the settlement challenges affecting immigrant family dynamics and relations, then, remain invisible and unchallenged. Furthermore, the de-politicization of his settlement challenge allows for the state to shape his conduct without direct intervention; the change is perceived to be initiated and exercised by the immigrant himself.

Lack of Advocacy

The de-politicization of settlement assistance has also manifested as a lack or reluctance of advocacy in the SPO’s support of their clients. The absence of advocacy in the SPO’s response in the narratives, however, may not be the intent or conscious choice of the agencies and settlement workers. Under the new funding structure, state funders are governing the SPOs and immigrant citizens from afar through market-oriented systems of service provisions. Settlement agencies are adhering to guidelines and directives from state funders for fear of losing funding (Sadiq 2004). The lack or reluctance of advocacy support in settlement services thus can be attributed to the marginalization of advocacy projects under the competitive funding regime where they tend to be perceived as too political for public funding (Scott 2003). Canadian Revenue Agency also issued a policy statement in 2003 that restricted registered charities to spending only 10% to 20% of their total resources on political activities, which include advocacy
work (Canadian Revenue Agency 2016). The funding mechanisms act as technologies for the state to “govern at a distance” and thereby effectively depoliticize and responsibilize the relations and groups within the settlement support network.

In one narrative, a woman who migrated as a Live-in Caregiver discusses her experience of working for an employer who was emotionally and financially abusing her. When she quit the job, more problems arose:

I then had problems getting my last pay cheque, T4 and ROE. I was very anxious because I was having thyroid surgery in a few weeks and I did not have money. A friend who knew of my situation told me about [SPO]. I came to see [staff] at the office. She encouraged me to learn more about my rights and responsibilities as a caregiver. I attended the Know Your Rights at Work workshop; I learned a lot from the workshop and gained more information on community services that is available if I need help. I received my last pay cheque, the T4 and ROE with [staff]’s support and I recovered from my surgery. I am now working with a new family that is treating me better than my previous employer. I learned how to assert my rights without being disrespectful to them… Experience is the best teacher and I believed that Knowledge is Power. (Story 24)

The SPO assisted this individual by referring her to a workshop and providing her with information about her rights as a Live-in Caregiver and other community services. Her problem becomes one of a technical nature through the referral to the “Know Your Rights at Work” workshop, suggesting that it was an issue of inadequate knowledge about the rights of employees in Canada. The discourse of lacking certain knowledge responsibilizes her as not knowing better than tolerating the abusive employer. The implication is that if she had been aware of her rights as a caregiver, she would not have to suffer such mistreatment. Within this logic, the exploitative conditions under which many temporary foreign workers work and live, including many in the Live-in Caregiver program, are depoliticized as an isolated incident of employer misconduct. Many studies have shown the vulnerability of workers in the Live-In-Caregiver program due to the live-in restrictions and conditions linked to obtaining permanent residence status in the future.
(Hodge 2006; Pratt, 1997; Stiell & England, 1997). Moreover, caregivers and other temporary workers and residents have limited or no access to settlement services available to immigrants with permanent resident status, which further intensify their settlement barriers (IRCC 2013; Canadian Council for Refugees et al. 2016).

2.4 Chapter Summary

The shift towards neo-liberal governance of welfare, particularly since the 1990s, has reconfigured the relations between the political authorities, settlement agencies and the immigrant population. The SPOs and their immigrant clients are regulated through a market-based funding structure that encourages business-like relations and operations within the settlement sector. Needs assessment, service referral, and workshop trainings have all become techniques within neo-liberal governmentality that have effectively de-politicized settlement and integration barriers as technical issues. In the next chapter, I will further discuss the ways in which the SPOs under neo-liberal governmentality are (re)producing an image of an ideal neo-liberal immigrant who is responsibilized for his/her own settlement and integration in Canada.
Chapter 3

Immigrants as Enterprising Subjects

This chapter entails a discussion on certain characterization of immigrants within the success stories that ultimately has de-politicizing and responsibilizing effects. The success stories suggest that immigrants need to act, think, feel and desire in particular ways – that are measured against an invisible set of characteristics embodied by the ideal “Canadian” – in order to settle and integrate successfully. Immigrants are “conditional Canadians” (Jiwani 2006) whose inclusion in Canada is contingent upon their resemblance to certain “Canadian” values and ways of beings. Furthermore, I use the concept of an “enterprising self” (Rose 1990) to illustrate the ways in which the immigrant subjects are made autonomous and responsible for their own achievements and challenges in Canada. Thoughts and actions of these enterprising selves enact as the sites of choice-making where the immigrant subjects would engage in practices and techniques of self-government. In other words, the stories are not simply suggesting that the preferred type of immigrants possess certain traits or mindset, but rather, as enterprising subjects, ideal immigrants are people who make rational and reasonable choices to think and behave in certain ways. By positioning immigrants as “enterprising selves,” the success narratives illustrate particular neo-liberal techniques used to responsibilize immigrants for making “appropriate” and “good” choices to attain success in their efforts to settle and integrate in Canada.

3.1 The Ideal Immigrant

In the following discussion, I show that the social construction of national and racialized subjects has been crucial in building a White Canada that involved particular political and historical processes. An understanding of the racial dynamics in Canada is useful for my subsequent discussion on the (re)production of an ideal immigrant citizen-worker-subject whose
belonging in Canada is conditioned upon its resemblance and subordination to a set of idealized “Canadian” values and patterns of behaviour.

*Immigrants as Racialized Subjects*

Differential treatments of racial and ethnic groups in contemporary Canada are situated within a settler colonial state invested in the construction and maintenance of a white Canadian nation. Bannerji (2000:64) deconstructs Canadian nationhood by problematizing the presumed unity of “Canada” and argues, instead, that it is “obviously a construction, a set of representations, embodying certain types of political and cultural communities and their operations.” As a white settler state, Canada is a nation built on particular colonial, linguistic and cultural – predominantly English and French – conceptions of national membership that have systemically excluded racialized groups and Aboriginal peoples (Bannerji 2000). European colonization simultaneously established Aboriginal and colonized peoples as “inferior” while “exalting” British and French colonizers as “civilized” and “superior” (Thobani 2007; 2000a).

Razack (2002) contends that it is through mythologies of nation building that citizens imagine themselves as belonging in a community and, thereby, simultaneously defining Others whose belongings are conditional. The national myth of the Canadian state involves a tale of a land developed by European settlers that has been shared equally and peacefully with Aboriginal peoples; it is “a racial story” that “produces European settlers as bearers of civilization while simultaneously trapping Aboriginal people in pre-modern, that is, before civilization has occurred” (Razack 2002:2). A white settler society is thus developed and organized from a racial hierarchy with colonial links. The settler’s claim to rights of citizenship and land is linked to the denial of the “conquest, genocide, slavery, and the exploitation of the labour of peoples of colour” (Razack 2002:2). The national myths of white settler societies are “deeply spatialized stories”
(Razack 2002:3) because they are built upon European desires to claim non-European lands as “unoccupied” through land dispossession and genocide of Indigenous groups. Thobani (2007:43) similarly discusses three main myths of the Canadian nation building:

first, the myth of European “discovery” of the Americas; second, the religio-legalistic concept of terra nullius, which legitimated the fiction that the continent was “empty of people” before the arrival of Europeans; and third of terra incognita, which allowed Europeans sovereigns to “claim underlying title to unknown land”

The narratives of “discovery” and the transposition of European legal system into the North America legitimized the authority of the settlers to exalt European settlers as lawful while marking Indigenous peoples as lawless. She indicates that the creation of a nationalized subject – the “Canadian” – involved a process of exaltation, which elevates Euro-Canadians as superior citizen-subjects who are law-abiding, benevolent, and committed to gender equality and diversity. By contrast, indigenous peoples and immigrants, particularly those from the third world are positioned as lawless, self-serving, patriarchal and intolerant of diversity. She discusses the “triangulated” (Thobani 2007:18) dynamics of national and racial subjects in settler societies which comprise of the national subject committed to national wellness, the immigrant subject who is conditionally included, and the Aboriginal subject who has lost ability for self-government. The social construction of an immigrant subject and the associated racializing mechanisms are thus established within a racial framework that privileges ideals and actions of the national subjects. In other words, not all foreign-born migrants are necessarily racialized as immigrants and not all native-born Canadians are considered as nationals.

Immigrants as Conditional Canadians

Anderson (2014) contends the citizenship within nation-states are not only defined by legal status but also by shared values and patterns of behaviour among the “good citizens” who are law-abiding and hard-working members of “honorable” families and communities. She
argues that the figure of the “good citizen” is constructed against images of the “failed citizen” – denoting newcomers who cannot adhere to normative framework established by the “good citizen” -- and the “alien non-citizen” – referring to migrants with partial or no legal status. Jiwani similarly argues that the inclusion of immigrant is dependent upon the extent that they comply with particular conditions and ideals based on the figure of an ideal Canadian/ the reasonable person who is “law-abiding, rational, White, middle-class person who speaks the dominant language and embodies national mythologies that are then performed accordingly” (2006:xiii). The ideal Canadian believes in equality and that everyone has the right to pursue a life they desire. S/he “makes few demands, pays his/her taxes, and lives out her/his life in a linear trajectory that begins from humble origins and rises to the pinnacle of economic and social success… cares about her/his society, contributes to its well-being, and participates in the active maintenance of the social order through citizenship” (Jiwani 2006:xiii-xiv).

The preferred immigrant or conditional Canadian, then, has a similar value and belief system as the ideal Canadian and is often a person of colour. S/he “leaves her/his culture behind or retains only those aspects of it that are not problematic or that can be periodically celebrated outside the closet of family and community or kept within it” (Jiwani 2006:xiv). This person is polite, loyal to Canada, and grateful for the opportunities that has been provided for him/her, thus does not complain about inequality or discrimination. The preferred immigrant is the model minority who believes that anyone can succeed if they are hard working and success is defined by economic achievements. Jiwani (2006) argues that these ideal types are the implicit standards used in media to assess immigrants’ desirability and belongingness.

Other research on immigration policy discourses has shown a shift towards recruiting immigrants with particular enterprising capacities (Shpaizman 2010; Arat Koc 2012; Barber
Shpaizman (2010) argues that Canada’s immigration policy has become increasingly privatized to denote the reduction of the receiving state’s role in providing support for immigration and integration related matters. With an increased preference for “flexible” economic immigrants (see Section 4.1 in this thesis) and temporary foreign workers (see Conclusion), recent policy changes in im(migration) selection is increasingly favouring highly skilled, self-sufficient, flexible and wealthy immigrants who can ready to participate in the Canadian economy upon arrival in Canada (Arat Koc 2012; Root et al. 2014). Barber’s (2008, 2013) work has also suggested that Filipino (im)migrants are involved in complex contexts and migration processes that mobilize neo-liberal disciplinary mechanisms which shape Filipino workers in Canada into certain types of ideal neo-liberal worker-subjects.

In the following section, I argue that the success stories reproduce a figure of an ideal neo-liberal immigrant. The stories describe immigrants with certain characterizations as deserving of “success” in Canada, which could either refer to successful program outcomes or general settlement achievements. From the perspective of neo-liberal governmentality, the ideal immigrant subject is to be regulated as “enterprising selves” through a discourse of choice making and personal responsibility.

3.2 Enterprising Self

Within neo-liberal governmentality in advanced democracies, individuals are regulated through a discourse of rights and freedoms to make choices for themselves (Rose 1996). The success stories consistently reproduce this neo-liberal common-sense by providing personal narratives to demonstrate one key premise: success is a choice accessible to anyone who wants to pursue it. Successful settlement and integration is thus a matter of making the “right” choices and having the “right” kind of mindset; individuals can control their lives and destiny by regulating
their thoughts, actions, and desires. Within this neoliberal logic, people are responsibilized to manage themselves in line with the image of an “enterprising self.”

The concept of “the enterprising self” (Rose 1990) or “the self as enterprise” (Kelly 2013) is particularly useful here in examining the autonomization and responsibilization of immigrants in the success stories. According to Rose (1990, 1998), in the current neo-liberal period, the ideal neo-liberal subjectivity consists of an enterprising self that is regulated through individualized understanding of autonomy, responsibility, fulfilment, and choice. As discussed in Chapter 2, the shift from the welfare state to neo-liberal rationalities of governance is associated with privatization and deregulation of public goods, including social welfare. Under neo-liberal governmentality, individuals are deemed responsible for their own lives by way of choice making. Thus, a “rational” person refers to someone who can calculate and act accordingly to self interests and needs regulated by market-oriented values that prioritize privatization and competition (Rose 1990; Kelly 2013). The subjectivity of the enterprising self, then, is linked to making reasonable cost-benefit calculations and taking personal responsibility for itself. As Rose notes, “the individual is to become, as it were, an entrepreneur of itself, seeking to maximise its own powers, its own happiness, its own quality of life, though enhancing its autonomy and then instrumentalising its autonomous choices in the service of its lifestyle” (1990:11). The terms of entrepreneurship are extended to all aspects of life in which human conduct are regulated by “energy, initiative, ambition, calculation and personal responsibility” (Rose 1990:6). Neo-liberal subjects are governed through their self-mastery capacities and freedom to make “rational” choices.

The success stories reproduce the image of “good”/ideal immigrants who have demonstrated their worthiness as enterprising subjects and thus they are viewed as deserving of
inclusion in Canada. By highlighting what constitutes qualities of “good” immigrants, these narratives imply that newcomers who do not conform to these characterizations are “bad” immigrants and their struggles to settle and integrate are merely due to bad choices, such as “choosing” not to work hard to overcome challenges or “choosing” not to accept responsibility for self-care. Structural barriers that immigrants encounter are seen as individualized incidents and the responsibility of the individuals to deal with them. Consequently, the discourse of “immigrants as enterprising subjects” renders invisible the systemic inequalities that have racializing effects.

3.3 Immigrants as Enterprising Subjects

Throughout the narratives, newcomers are consistently characterized as loyal to Canada, optimistic, motivated, flexible, and grateful. The accounts reinforce the notion that succeeding in Canada is highlighted as a matter of individualized choice and responsibility. The emphasis on individualistic traits and actions align with the image of an enterprising self that mobilizes responsibilization of the immigrant subjects. Within this framework, settlement and integration barriers, including discriminatory encounters, are transferred from public spheres into private spaces to be managed by individuals.

Loyalty to Canada

We came for better career opportunities and a better lifestyle. (Story 30)

…he decided to move to Canada to give his daughter greater opportunity for a better future. (Story 29)

[She] left China in 2001, intent on creating a new life and secure future for her family in Toronto. (Story 19)

As noted by Jiwani’s ideal types, the preferred immigrant is loyal to Canada. In the success stories, the commitment of newcomers to Canada are depicted through an image of
Canada as a land of opportunities. Many stories describe individuals who came to Canada in search of a “better life” or “good future” for themselves and their families. Even as they encountered difficulties after arriving in Canada, the narratives portrayed them as continuing to believe in the “goodness” of Canada.

This ambiguous yet persistent imagination of “a better life in Canada” serves as a neo-liberal technology of self-regulation in the success stories. Immigrants in particular are perceived as making the choice of settling in Canada to attain better opportunities, as oppose to refugees who left their home countries due to distressful or life-threatening circumstances. Though it is not a new phenomenon that (im)migrants come to Canada seeking for better opportunities, within neo-liberal governance, the perception of Canada as a land of opportunity becomes a governmental technology that responsibilizes immigrants in the self-government of their actions, thoughts, and motivations associated with settling and integrating in Canada. In one of the stories, the immigrant subject’s dedication to settling in Canada is demonstrated through her persistence in seeking opportunities despite hardships:

I first came to Canada in 2011 to escape from an abusive marriage and to look for a better life. I was a paralegal back home in Taiwan. I spent several months looking for employment in the legal field but failed. I returned to Taiwan. But I did not give up. I returned in 2016 but I did not have any Canadian education or experience and couldn’t find any employment. I spent most of my money in rent, transportation and food. I was desperate and about to give up and return to Taiwan again. (Story 1)

Her previous life is negatively associated with an abusive relationship and Canada represents a place where she can build a “better life” but this vision is not further defined in her narrative. The back-and-forth migration between the two countries suggests that the ambiguous notion of “a better life in Canada” (and perhaps a need to evade abusive relationships) served as a technology of self-government and motivation in her attempts to settle in Canada. In fact, the
story ends with her suggestion for other newcomers: “Don’t give up, continue to look for opportunities in Canada.” Her advice portrays her as believing that Canada has opportunities for those who have the will and persistence in their efforts. By sharing her story and advising other newcomers to not give up, her experiences and aspirations are used by the SPO as a technology to “guide” and shape other newcomers.

For many newcomers, Canada is able to offer a good life not just for themselves, but also for their families. There is a consistent portrayal of Canada as a place that is desirable for families throughout the narratives. The majority of the stories consists of individuals who migrated to Canada with family members or who reunited with their families in Canada. This is reflective of the immigration structures that manages family sponsorship as one of the four immigration categories under which individuals with permanent residency status can sponsor family members to immigrate to Canada (IRCC 2017a). One woman states in her story that she initially accepted a job offer from Canada under the Live-In Caregiver program due to the possibility of obtaining permanent residency status for her and her family abroad but her employer turned out to be exploitative:

I was motivated to apply for a Live-in Caregiver position because of the promise of permanent residency for me and my family. I worked for my employer who sponsored me for more than a year; I had working long hours, including public holidays without pay. My employer didn’t give me fixed days off and I would be on call too during those days. January of 2014 I had an argument with my employer about working on my day off. I refused but she would usually threaten me. It was Sunday morning and I didn’t realize that subway opens at 9 in the morning. I was late and she called me; yelling at me over the phone. That was when I decided that I could no longer tolerate the treatment I was receiving from her and decided to quit. (Story 24; see also p. 50 in this thesis).

However, her hope for a better future in Canada for her family, particularly the possibility of attaining formal citizenship in Canada, governed her behaviour and relations with others, including her tolerance of an abusive work environment and her grateful attitude regarding
opportunities in Canada. As discussed in the previous chapter, the issues of foreign worker programs also become depoliticized when SPOs merely offer technical solutions, rather than advocacy support, through provision of services and information that responsibilize the individuals.

In another story, the notion of “a better life” in Canada is linked to the individual’s expectations for his children. His narrative describes that he initially had to work in lower paying jobs while attending nighttime classes for skills upgrading before he could find employment similar to his previous position in his home country. The excerpt below describes his expectation that his children would be exempted from experiencing settlement barriers in the future.

He knows his children will not face the same challenges he has faced, but he is proud that his experiences have made him a strong role model for Canada’s future generation. (Story 6)

His hope for a better life in Canada is transferred onto his children’s future rather than his own, indicating that any difficulties that he encountered would merely be the necessary sacrifice to ensure his family can have a better future in Canada. This individual’s hope of a better life for his family, then, serves as a self-governing technique to regulate his thoughts and motivations, including naturalizing his settlement challenges as necessary for his family’s integration in Canada. Rather than questioning the existing systems of support for newcomers, the enterprising discourse responsibilizes the individual for his employment barriers; his settlement issues become privatized as a generational matter within his family. His aspiration to live in Canada responsibilizes him for the barriers he encountered, since his immigration to Canada is perceived as a choice he made for his family. By claiming that he is “a strong role model for Canada’s future generation,” the narrative transforms his settlement challenges into a discourse of personal loyalty to Canada and its development. The portrayal of his loyalty and gratitude to Canada as
well as his acceptance of inequalities and adverse conditions effectively reproduces the image of an ideal immigrant.

All these narratives illustrate individuals who were not coerced by the Canadian government, employer, or family members to immigrate to Canada. Their hope for a better future implies that these individuals *chose* to be in Canada because they recognize the “goodness” of Canada to provide opportunities for newcomers. More importantly, this narrative of Canada providing a better life for immigrants is most often used to describe experiences of racialized individuals and groups. This can also be linked to the folk and academic discourses of “(im)migrants” that mostly focuses on racialized groups moving from countries with less resources to ones with more wealth and infrastructure (Folson 2004; Li 2003).

*Positive Thinking and Persistence*

Many descriptions emphasize the importance of optimism for newcomers to succeed in Canada. The positive traits in the narratives are generally associated with possessing a positive attitude and mindset. The two examples below illustrate the emphasis on positive thinking.

… I believe that with the right support, positive thoughts and hard work you can achieve your goal, and build a successful career & life in Ottawa. (Story 7)

Whenever someone makes a comment on my relatively fast success in entering the Canadian job market, I assure them that persistence with a positive attitude are key. (Story 14)

The two excerpts directly associate positive thinking, hard work, and persistence with achieving career success. Throughout many of the success stories, positive thinking is consistently associated with achieving goals. However, the terms “positive attitude” and “positive thoughts” are never clearly defined in the stories. As illustrated from the two examples above, positive thinking is often linked to other characteristics, including flexibility and persistence.
Many success stories demonstrate or clearly state the importance of not giving up; they often consist of advice for newcomers to have a positive attitude and not give up in spite of hardships. “Hard working” is often paired with persistence in these narratives. The term generally referred to extensive efforts and time that individuals had spent on achieving certain goals. Positive outcomes, such as securing a job or gaining confidence, are then presented as fruitful rewards of personal persistence and positivity. The example below demonstrates a narrative in which job interviews and employment are highlighted as rewards for persistence:

After completing the [training] program, [her] persistence in her job search paid off as she was rewarded with several face-to-face interviews. Ultimately, she received a contract job offer as a Program Assistant... (Story 10)

The association between accomplishments and persistence reinforces the idea that success is possible for anyone who decides to work hard to achieve his/her goals. In other words, accomplishments are the result of “right” choices made by autonomous individuals to be hard working, persistent, and optimistic workers.

Flexibility

In some narratives, the newcomer’s flexibility and adaptability to change are highlighted as significant factors in his/her settlement experience. For instance, one individual states that she was excited to join her family in Canada but she “quickly learned that one has to be flexible and persistent to get ahead as a newcomer” when she encountered employment barriers (Story 14). By indicating that this woman “learned” that she had to be flexible and persistent, the discourse of her story suggests that she was not coerced by external circumstances or powers to adopt certain traits or practices. Rather, her story highlights her self-knowledge and capacity to regulate and adjust her thoughts and actions as essential qualities that helped her to overcome her initial barriers in settlement. Her story also indicates that it is up to the newcomers to learn and
acquire the skills and traits to achieve self awareness and sufficiency. Individual potential for acquiring self-mastery, then, is essential for settlement “success.”

The significance of being adaptable also manifests in various ways in other narratives. The story below exemplifies an emphasis on the individual’s capacity to embrace new challenges and continuous learning:

Succeeding in a new country with a culture and language very different from his own was a daunting task but [he] wasn’t one to back down from a challenge… Also, [he] really liked the welcoming classroom environment and innovative approach to language learning. Every day, he learned something new and valuable and he challenged the bounds of his own capabilities and often, he surpassed them. (Story 23)

By referring to “succeeding in a new country” as a “task” and associating it with personal learning and abilities, this narrative renders settlement and integration the responsibility and choice of the individual. This person is presented as having made the “right” decision to not “back down from a challenge” and to be open to new learnings.

Similarly, another narrative described a transformative experience of a woman who decided to make a change in her life. Her story begins by describing barriers she encountered when she first immigrated to Canada with her husband and son:

“I’m originally from Hong Kong, and used to live there with my Canadian husband and our young son. Almost a decade ago, my husband took a job in Toronto. We thought we’d stay for three or four years.” …no relatives or friends here to turn to for support made [her] depressed and frustrated. Her son and husband settled in well, and the family eventually decided to stay in Canada. [She] soon lost all her confidence, becoming increasingly shy to the point where she was afraid to speak with people. (Story 18)

Her settlement barriers are individualized as emotional distress and losing self confidence. The narrative then describes the woman being approached with an opportunity that was risky for a timid person:
She started swimming, and taking Arriba and Pilates classes. Before long, a staff member approached [her] and said she should think about becoming a volunteer Arriba dance instructor. “I remember retreating a little bit into my shy mode and thinking, ‘Why are they asking me? I don’t know how to dance!’” But she decided to give it a try. (Story 18)

This story portrays her as making a decision to try something new, leading to her “transformation”:

Today, [she] teaches her own Arriba class once a week, and also subs in for other instructors. Since joining the [SPO], she feels grounded, not just in Toronto but also in who she is as a person. (Story 18)

By indicating that “she feels grounded, not just in Toronto but also in who she is as a person,” this narrative highlights the transformation at the level of personal feelings. The implication is that she was able to successfully settle and transform her life in Canada because she made the “right” decision to be open to new opportunities. This discourse, however, fails to acknowledge that race and gender may have affected the differential process of settlement between her and her Canadian husband. This woman most likely applied for immigration status through spousal sponsorship – a system of regulations with gendered implications for immigrant women. Roxana Ng (1992) notes that the immigration system produces a gendered assignment of immigrants in which men are usually the “independent” immigrants and women are the “dependent” immigrants in the family class through sponsorship from the men. Spousal sponsorship places restrictive conditions on sponsored wives that renders them dependent on their sponsor and vulnerable to domestic abuse (Thobani 2000b). The regulations, for instance, deemed the sponsor to be responsible for the wellbeing of the sponsored spouse or partner for three years, during which the spouse cannot receive social assistance (IRCC 2017a). The story thus depoliticizes her settlement challenges as issues of personal emotions and self development while ignoring structural inequalities that reinforce gendered settlement outcomes.
Motivated and Self-Initiating

Most of the narratives document processes and actions of highly motivated individuals who exert great efforts in achieving their goals in Canada. Many individuals, for instance, are portrayed as contacting the SPOs on their own initiative to seek assistance. The newcomers are often characterized as driven and proactive with great determination and commitment to their goal pursuit. In one success story, the individual discusses the extensive steps and actions she took to pursue a new career in Canada. She volunteered, researched for resources, requested assistance from the SPO, and enrolled in school before she found permanent employment in her desired field. Below is the advice she has for other newcomers in which she highlights the significance of being proactive and motivated. She notes that individuals were responsible for demonstrating their skills and value to Canadian employers; newcomers are advised to actively seek help and participate in opportunities available to them:

My advice to people new to Canada is not to lose hope, especially if you were at the top of your career in your country of origin, you may initially feel a sense of despair. You also may feel vulnerable. Recognise and seek advice on the differences in the work culture and ethics here in Canada as compared to your home country. You need to prove yourself to employers in Canada. They don’t know you, so it is up to you to find a way to stand out in the crowd and to be noticed. (Story 15)

The references to emotions, including “not to lose hope,” “sense of despair,” and “vulnerable,” situates employment challenges encountered by newcomers at the personal level. Her story strongly implies that success is a matter of choice and personal responsibility. The narrative reinforces the image of an enterprising self as being essential for immigrants to succeed in Canada by emphasizing that individuals need to “prove [themselves] to employers in Canada” and “it is up to [them] to find a way to stand out in the crowd and to be noticed.” It indicates that individuals have the capacity to choose to take actions to achieve their goals, thereby
responsibilizing immigrants for their settlement experiences; failure to secure employment is linked to a lack of personal persistence and initiative to adapt to the “Canadian” ways of life. What remains unacknowledged and unchallenged is the racial hierarchy which naturalizes white middle-class values as the ideal “Canadian” standards and ways of being. Racializing mechanisms that privileges whiteness with the power to delineate the belonging and desirability of racialized Others remain “muted” (Davis 2007).

Furthermore, racialization of immigrants and visible minority groups has severe economic consequences. There has been a growing number of literature that analyze the “racialization of poverty” (Galabuzi 2004; Galabuzi 2005; Teelucksingh and Galabuzi 2005; Galabuzi 2006; Block and Galabuzi 2011) and “colour of poverty” (Kazemipur and Halli 2000; Kazemipur and Halli 2001a; Kazemipur and Halli 2001b) which highlights the disproportionate and persistent patterns of low income among racialized groups in Canada. For instance, Pendakur and Pendakur (2002) find that, though the earning rates vary depending on the period and region, Aboriginal populations and visible minority groups earned lower annual wages than white men and women throughout 1970s to 1996. They define visible minorities are people who reported as non-Aboriginals and with at least one non-European ethnic origin in their ancestry; and whites are defined as non-Aboriginals with only European ethnic origins in ancestry. Block and Galabuzi (2011) compare the employment and earnings of racialized and non-racialized Canadians. They observe that between 2000 and 2005, the average earning of racialized groups (those who did not self identify as “white” or “Other” in the census data) declined by 0.2% while non-racialized workers earned 2.7% more (Block and Galabuzi 2011:14). They also note that racialized Canadians are overrepresented in precarious forms of employment that tend to be low waged, such as call centres, security services and janitorial positions. In the next chapter, I
further discuss the economic segregation and income inequalities between immigrant and Canadian-born populations.

3.4 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I have discussed the historical and political contexts within which a racial framework – consisting of a national subject, a racialized/ immigrant subject, and an Aboriginal subject – has been established. The ideal immigrant subject, then, is a conditional Canadian and its desirability and belonging within the national space is linked to standards established by national subjects whose citizenship status was “exalted” by means of settler colonialism. I argued that the success stories illustrate the “good” immigrant as an enterprising subject. In particular, positive thinking, persistence flexibility, personal motivation and self-initiative are highlighted as key traits of success. By emphasizing particular thoughts and actions in these stories, it indicates that successful outcomes of settlement are largely associated with engaging in certain “appropriate” and “rational” ways of thinking and acting. Furthermore, I showed the ways in which the image of an enterprising immigrant responsibilizes the individual for his/her own achievements and failures.
Chapter 4
Problematizing “Canadian Experience”

In this chapter, I problematize the requirement of “Canadian experience” in the hiring practices of immigrant workers and discuss the implications of discrimination against foreign credentials. The first section entails a discussion on changes in national immigration policy and the corresponding shifts in immigrant demographics. Next I examine the deterioration of immigrant labour market performances despite the increase in the percentage of immigrants with post-secondary education. The third section explores the devaluation and non-recognition of foreign education and experience as contributing to the economic disparities between immigrant and Canadian-born populations. A discussion on the prevalence of precarious and unpaid work and retraining is then presented before I provide findings from the success stories that reflect the problematic notion of “Canadian experience” and the non-recognition of foreign credentials.

4.1 Changes in Immigrant Demographics

At the beginning of the 20th century, the majority of immigrants to Canada were Europeans of British or French origin (Li 2000). After 1910, immigrants from other Europeans began to be admitted in greater numbers while migration from Asia was heavily restricted through acts such as the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1923 and Continuous Journey Stipulation of 1908 (to prohibit the East Indian immigration) (Jakubowski 1997). Europeans from non-British and non-French origins increased from 8.5% of total population in 1901 to 17.8% in 1941 (Li 2000). As discussed in Chapter 1, a universal point system was introduced in immigration regulations in the 1960s that removed the national and ethnic preferences in immigration regulations. As a result of changes in immigration selection, the source countries of immigrants began to shift from European countries and the United States to non-European regions (Boyd and
Vickers 2000). After 1967, the number of immigrants from Asia and Africa, where admission to
Canada had previously been restrictive, significantly increased while immigration from Europe
declined (Li 2000). Between the years of 1968 and 1995, approximately 59% of the 4.4 million
immigrants who entered Canada were from non-European countries (Li 2000).

The increase in educational attainment of immigrants over the past forty years is the
direct result of changes in the points system that intensified the significance of human capital
resources. Subsequent modifications of the system have assigned more weight to formal
credentials and education. Prior to 2001, the points system allotted a maximum of 31 points out
of 70 for education and official language skills (Creese, Dyck, and McLaren 2008). The
Immigration and Refugee Protection Act in 2002 increased the maximum points to 49 out of 75
for those two categories. The point system has more recently shifted away from selecting skilled
immigrants based on predicted occupational demands and intended occupations to one that is
based on “flexible” skills. In 2015, an electronic application system known as the Express Entry
was introduced to shorten the time for processing economic immigration programs (IRCC
2017b). In order for skilled workers to apply for permanent residence in Canada, they now have
to be invited to apply. The system includes the Comprehensive Ranking System (CRS) that
assigns points to determine an applicant’s eligibility for an invitation to apply for permanent
residency. The CRS further reflects the emphasis on flexible skills of immigrants. For a skilled
worker applying without a spouse, out of a maximum of 1200 points, s/he can earn up to 500
points for “core/human capital” (age, education, Canadian work experience, official language
skills) and 100 points for “transferability factors” which further awards post-secondary education,
official language proficiency, and Canadian and foreign work experience. The remaining 600
points are additional points for “bonus” factors including sibling living in Canada, French
language skills, Canadian post-secondary education, arranged employment, and provincial nomination. In 2016, the cut off score for entering the Express Entry pool ranged from 453 to 538 points, which eliminated approximately 87% of applicants (IRCC 2017c:11). In other words, the Express Entry system is a more efficient way to streamline the selection process to ensure that only individuals with certain educational levels and transferability capacities can apply for permanent residency.

Seeing that the human capital approach of the points system in the Canadian immigration policy prioritizes education and certain labour skills (depending on labour demand), many studies have documented the increase in immigrant education attainment since the “liberalization” of Canadian immigration policy in the 1960s (Picot, Hou, and Coulombe 2007; Akbari 1999). Picot et al. (2007) indicate that over the period of 1992 to 2004, the educational qualifications of entering immigrants increased drastically from 17% to 45%, with fewer immigrants in “family” class and more in the “skilled” economic category. The number of economic immigrants grew from 29% of all entering immigrants and refugees in 1992 to 56% in 2003. Using census data and landing documents of immigrants, Akbari (1999) finds that between 1956 to 1994, immigrants with only high school degrees declined while those with post-secondary education increased over time. The 2001 Census indicated that 61% of immigrants who landed in Canada during the 1990s had post-secondary qualifications, which was an increase from the 48% of post-secondary degree holders among immigrants during the 1970s and 1980s (Statistics Canada 2003).

As a result of focused recruitment of skilled labour, the percentage of immigrants with higher education attainment is higher than that of the Canadian-born population (Hiebert 2004; Reitz 2001). Using census data from 1991 to 2006, Galarneau and Morissette (2008) show an
increase in the percentage of immigrants with university degrees throughout the period. They find that the cohort of immigrants arriving between 2000 and 2004 had the highest rate of university education, with 58% of men and 49% of women holding a university degree. By contrast, only 19% of Canadian-born men and 23% of women had a university degree. According to the Labour Force Survey (Statistics Canada n.d.), in 2016, approximately 45% of new immigrants who arrived within five years have a university degree. For Canadian-born individuals, around 21% have graduated with a university degree; the figures are much closer though when counting in the percentage of people who have a post-secondary certificate or diploma, with 66% of new immigrants and 54% of Canadian-born persons having either a university or post-secondary degree.

While some studies have argued that foreign work experiences – as opposed to education from abroad – had more significant impacts on labour market outcomes for newcomers (Ferrer, Picot and Riddell 2012; Green and Worswick 2010), others have identified the non-recognition of foreign education as a major settlement and employment barrier for newcomers (Guo 2009; Alboim and the Maytree Foundation 2005; Sweetman 2004; Anisef, Sweet and Frempong 2003; Reitz 2001). Despite the varied perspectives on the effects of foreign education on employment prospects for new immigrants, most research has consistently shown the economic inequalities and disparities experienced by skilled immigrants in comparison to Canadian-born individuals (Picot and Sweetman 2005; Reitz and Bannerjee 2007; Li 2000).

4.2 Deterioration of Immigrant Economic Integration Since 1980

Many studies have shown that the economic disparities between immigrant workers and their Canadian-born counterparts have grown since the 1980s. Comparing to the immigrants prior to the 1980s, immigrants to Canada in the recent decades have reportedly had a wider
income gap and more employment barriers despite their higher educational and skill levels (Picot and Hou 2014; Frenette and Morissette 2003; Pendakur and Pendakur 2002; see Clarke and Skuterud 2012 for similar findings in Australia). Using the 1996 Census, Galabuzi (2006) indicates that between 1986 and 1990, immigrants earned 18% lower than non-immigrants. For immigrants who came after 1990, the employment income for immigrants was 36% lower. Simmons (2010) similarly compares the earnings of recent immigrants with that of Canadian-born counterparts with similar education levels. He finds that, corresponding to their gender and education level, immigrants in 2005 only earned 43 to 61% of the income of Canadian-born workers. This earning gap has increased compared to the earnings from 1980, when immigrants earned 56 to 86 percent of what their Canadian-born counterparts earned.

Picot and Hou (2014) find that between 1980 and 2010, low income rates for immigrants and Canadians-born individuals were as high as 45.7% and 19.6% respectively. While low income rates declined for all populations between 2000 and 2010, when compared to Canadian-born, the relative income outcomes of immigrants did not improve, meaning that immigrants – particularly those who have been in Canada for less than five years – remain significantly disadvantaged in their earnings in comparison to their Canadian-born population. Their study also found that while low income rate for the Canadian-born population has reverted to a figure below the 1980 rate, low income rates among immigrants have remain around 10% higher than their 1980 numbers for immigrants who have been in Canada for one to fifteen years. Picot and Hou (2014) conclude that compositional changes in the immigrant population from changes in immigration selection policies have partly contributed to the recent decline in low income rate among immigrants arriving in the 2000s.
Other studies of immigrant employment rates and earnings have seen findings that suggest parallel immigrant economic difficulties like those discussed in Picot and Hou’s (2014) work. Frenette and Morissette (2003) compare the first four years of earnings of immigrants with that of Canadian-born population for the period of 1980 to 2000. They find that the relative entry earning of immigrant men arriving between 1975 and 1979 was 79.6% of the income of Canadian-born men but declined to 60% by 1996. For immigrant women, the entry earning rate also dropped from 73.1% to 62.4%. By 2001, the relative entry earning rate remained 15% below the 1970 figure, indicating that recent immigrants have a wider gap in entry level earnings to Canadian-born workers than older immigrants who arrived in the late 1970s. Another significant finding of this study concerns the rate of economic “catching up” for immigrants for the first 15 years after arrival. They find that only the cohort who arrived between 1975 and 1979 was able to reach similar income levels as their Canadian counterparts after first 15 years. For the cohorts that arrived between 1980 and 1989, their income level remained at least 12% below that of Canadian-born workers for the first 15 years. Picot et al. (2007) also observe that once immigrants are in low income levels, the likelihood of their exit from low income is roughly the same among immigrants with secondary and post-secondary degrees.

Scholars have considered the broader contexts in which the economic disparities between immigrant and Canadian-born populations have occurred since the 1970s. Two significant factors identified are the shift from labour-based work to knowledge-based economy in Canada, and the rise in educational level of Canadians (Shields et al. 2011; Hiebert 2004). Knowledge occupations are defined by Statistics Canada as those that consist of a high proportion of workers with post-secondary degrees; knowledge industries refer to those with a large number of knowledge workers and extensive investment in research and development (Baldwin and
Beckstead 2003; see also Reitz 2005). To some extent, general changes in the economic and labour market have resulted in the decline in employment success of immigrants as well as non-immigrant populations; Canadians entering the workforce were found to have experienced a similar decline in employment rate when compared to the 1970s (Green and Worswick 2009). However, as discussed earlier, the gap between economic performances of immigrants and Canadian-born individuals has widened after the 1980s, indicating that immigrants are disproportionately affected by economic and political changes.

Hiebert (2004) notes that during the 1960s and 1970s, which was when the number of immigrants from non-traditional regions began to dramatically rise, there was much demand for labour in three types of labour: professional and managerial positions of an emerging service industry; blue-collar jobs in construction, manufacturing and resource extraction; and low-paid service work. Thus skilled workers entering at the time were able to be matched to professional and management roles, including those in medicine, engineering, architecture, and others. Immigrant men with non-professional and non-technical skills at the time could find employment in unionized blue-collar trades that had decent wages. The emergence of ethnic enclaves also produced jobs and labour for immigrants that did not require high level of English or French proficiency. However, since the 1970s, the growth of a knowledge-based economy coupled with a rise in overall educational attainment of Canadians have resulted in the deterioration of labour market outcomes for immigrants. With more competition from the increasingly skilled and educated Canadian workers and less labour demand in professional and managerial occupations, many skilled immigrants have been “de-skilled” and underemployed as their qualifications are mismatched to lower-skilled employment, particularly in the growing service industries that are insecure and low-paid. In the next section, I provide more context to the economic difficulties of
immigrants by drawing on literature that discusses the devaluation of foreign credentials and prevalence of unpaid and precarious labour among immigrants.

4.3 Devaluation of Foreign Credentials

Many studies have examined barriers that skilled immigrants in Canada are encountering. In a recent Statistics Canada report, Zietsma (2010) examines the match rate of field of study and its corresponding regulated occupation in Canada. She finds that though a higher percentage of immigrants are trained for regulated industries than Canadian-born workers, the skills-to-employment match rate was much lower among foreign-trained immigrants (24%) in comparison to Canadian-educated immigrants (53%) and the Canadian-born population (62%). Furthermore, the impacts of devaluation and underutilization of skills are experienced differently based on variation in source countries. Girard and Smith (2008), for instance, find that immigrants educated in Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean are much less likely to work in regulated professions than Canadian-born individuals and other immigrants.

Reitz (2001) calls the underutilizing of immigrant skills and credentials as “brain waste” which involves the non-recognition of foreign credentials, foreign-acquired skills and education by Canadian licensing bodies and employers. He considers the underutilization of foreign credentials and experience to be a form of “employment discrimination” in which the hiring decision is negatively affected by factors such as cultural and racial biases about certain ethnicities or regions. Reitz, Curtis, and Elrick (2013) report that lack of access to skilled occupations for immigrants with university degrees has resulted in a loss of $6.02 billion in 2001 and $11.37 billion in 2006.

Many studies have identified discriminatory practices, such as devaluation of foreign training and credentials, as major employment barriers for newcomers, particularly for highly
skilled immigrants (Chatterjee 2015; Reitz et al 2014; Sakamoto et al. 2010; Li 2001; Mojab 1999; Basran and Zong 1998). For instance, Kustec, Thompson, and Xue (2007:29) used data from Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants for 2001 and 2003 in their study and they find that among skilled immigrants, 27% claimed of “not enough job experience” and 24% stated that their “qualifications or work experience [from] outside Canada [were] not accepted” as the most serious employment barrier. As a result, many highly skilled workers find the credentials recognized by the federal government during their immigration process are under-valued once they arrived in Canada (Khan 2007; see also Omidvar and Richmond 2003).

Hiebert (2004) and Hawthorne (2007) have both pointed that there is a disconnection between federal and provincial regulations concerning skilled workers. While the federal government is responsible for immigration selection, the provincial and territorial governments are in charge of occupational regulations, which are often delegated to regulatory agencies for different occupations (Employment and Social Development Canada 2016). Thus if a doctor who was granted permanent residency based on her medical credentials, the recognition from the federal government does not guarantee potential for her to use her professional skills in Canada. Hiebert (2004) argues that “the credentialisation process serves to convert immigrants into complementary labour, which is channelled into jobs that the Canadian-born shun” (2004:44). The accreditation agencies thus act as “gatekeepers” (Brouwer 1999) controlling those who can enter the professions that are heavily regulated and often higher-paid than non-regulated occupations (Girard and Smith 2012).

Girard and Bauder (2007) use the engineering licensing system to illustrate the ways in which licensing and regulatory agencies require professionals to internalize certain cultural norms in order to participate in such occupations. They argue that the minimum requirement of
one year of Canadian engineering experience within the licensing procedures is a way of
“Canadianizing” foreign credentials that assures employers the training and skills of the licensed
immigrants are “up to Canadian standards.” Their study analyzes the processes and practices
enacted by the engineering regulatory organization of Ontario in issuing licenses to foreign-
trained and Canadian-trained engineers. They argue that the requirement of Canadian experience
to obtain the engineering license ensures that the immigrant (read non-Canadian) applicants
would be exposed to and trained in the professional code of conduct and manners of Canadian
engineers. The professional licensure, thus, not only represents knowledge of technical skills
within the engineering industry in Canada; the incorporation of Canadian experience signifies
non-technical information regarding “appropriate” social and cultural characteristics that is
embodied and internalized by Canadian engineers.

The federal government has attempted to address the devaluation of foreign credentials
and experiences through revising the immigration streams for skilled workers and launching
programs such as the Foreign Credential Recognition Program (FCRP). Changes in the points
systems have allotted more weight to the applicant’s flexible and transferable labour. Hiebert
suggests that these revisions are “an admission of defeat: the State cannot control the
credentialisation process so has decided to select Skilled Workers on their adaptability in general”
(2004:43, original emphasis). Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) launched
the FCRP in 2003 to “facilitate national coordination among key players” (ESDC 2016:7). In
2009, the Pan-Canadian Framework for the Assessment and Recognition of Foreign
Qualifications was established as a partnership between federal, provincial and territorial
governments to “ensure that regulatory authorities have FCR processes in place that adhere to the
Framework’s principles of fairness, consistency, transparency and timeliness” (ESDC 2016:14).
However, Reitz and Bannerjee (2007) argue that the various levels of government and other stakeholders are not coordinated in efforts to integrate foreign credentials. Hawthorne (2007) also notes that some of the key issues with the FCRP include the lack of a centralized system to provide settlement information regarding credential assessments or bridging programs for newcomers and the lack of funding for long-term FCRP initiatives. She points out even after an individual’s foreign credential is formally recognized by regulatory bodies, employers and academic institutions may bear biases against foreign experience and training. Other factors involved in assessing foreign credentials in regulated professions, such as structural differences in health care or legal systems, are important to consider and will require further analysis of specific licensing procedures for different occupations, which is beyond of the scope of this thesis.

Systemic barriers to regulated professions experienced by immigrants is largely de-politicized and unacknowledged in the success stories. One story discusses the settlement and integration of an experienced engineer who has a Bachelor’s degree, a post-graduate diploma in engineering and with fourteen years of work experience, including being a department director, from abroad. The narrative de-politicizes the devaluation of foreign engineering credentials by emphasizing individual traits and actions to suggest his “success” in accessing the engineering field in Canada is mainly attributed to his personal ambition and hard work:

[He] was determined to continue in his profession in civil engineering so he committed to fulfilling the licensing process promptly. He set a personal goal to be licensed and employed in his field within one year. His ambitious plan worked and [he] earned his first employment opportunity within that first year as a Structural Inspector with a leading consulting engineering company in Canada. In the following year, [he] fulfilled all of Ontario’s regulatory requirements and earned his full registration with Professional Engineers Ontario… (Story 16)
The story reinforces the notion that achievement and failure are both within individual control and choice, mobilizing the image of the enterprising immigrant who has proven his worthiness to settle in Canada. The implication is that other foreign-trained engineers and professionals who failed to access their desired occupations are merely not motivated or hard working enough. The story also portrays the “success” of this individual as having gained seven years of Canadian experience and securing employment as a Structural Engineer. The discourse of his story does not acknowledge that he has not been able to attain a managerial role similar to his experiences from abroad. Instead, the focus on his “success” in gaining Canadian experience and license renders the under-utilization of foreign-acquired skills and credentials as a normative part of the integration processes newcomers experience.

Another narrative concerning an internationally trained doctor further illustrates how the devaluation of foreign credentials is normalized and de-politicized. This story profiles a physician from Colombia who had spent a lot of time and money on trying to continue her medical career in Canada. She is portrayed as embodying the characteristics of an enterprising subject as discussed in Chapter 3: she was goal-oriented and proactive; she volunteered at labs, hospital; and she was networking in order to achieve that goal. She spent a lot of time and money on studying for the medical exams and she passed. When she applied to residency program, which she needed in order to practice medicine in Canada, she was not accepted even after trying for four years. At this point of the narrative, it seems that the myth of the enterprising self has failed this individual – after all, she has made all the “right” choices and acted in “right” ways but she was not rewarded with success:

I had passed my medical exams and applied multiple times to Canadian Resident Match Service process (CaRMS), but was not accepted in any of the programs for residency to obtain my licen[s]e as a doctor. After the fourth unsuccessful attempt at the CaRMS process, I decided I could no longer only focus on becoming a doctor in
Canada. It was a very challenging process – long and costly; studying was taking a toll on my being, I had no interactions with family and friends and I was putting my life on hold for a dream that might never come true. In 2012, I decided to pursue a career in public health, transferring my love for health to community based projects. (Story 17)

While the narrative describes her personal struggles in accessing the medical residency program in Canada, it does not address the institutional challenges for immigrants with international medical credentials in the Canadian Resident Match Service process. For instance, the selection of IMG applicants in many medical programs across Ontario are increasingly favouring Canadian IMGs who studied medicine abroad over immigrant IMGs through filtering criteria such as date of graduation and North American clinical experience (Thomson and Cohl 2011). Instead, the story jumps from describing her personal struggles to her decision to change her career goal from medicine to public health, which de-politicizes her career change as a personal issue rather than linking it to structural inequalities. She eventually finds employment in a community health centre as a program manager, which is presented as a favourable outcome.

This is her advice for other newcomers:

My advice for individuals going through a similar situation is to stay positive, but be realistic. My experience has taught me the importance of being active in your goal pursuit, the need to network, make connections, and be supported by experts in the field. Making the decision to pursue other career options was very difficult, but I am so happy that I did because I have so much to offer and I have gained so much in return.

Her story entails the compromises she had to make in rebuilding her career and life in Canada and her “success,” from the perspective of the settlement SPO, can be partially attributed to her giving up her goal of practicing as a doctor in Canada. The devaluation of her medical skills and experience and institutional inequalities are, thus, portrayed as the certain “realities” that newcomers to Canada must learn to accept.
4.4 Using Unpaid Labour to Acquire Canadian Work Experience

Outside regulated occupations, Canadian employers are in control of the ways that foreign credentials are assessed; the lack of “Canadian experience” has been one of the most cited barriers to employment for newcomers. Scholars have found discriminatory hiring practices towards resumes that lack of Canadian employment (Kukushkin and Watt 2009) or have foreign names, foreign education, and foreign work experiences, particularly from China, India, Pakistan, and Greece (Oreopoulos 2011). The Ontario Human Rights Commission (2013) has also recognized the Canadian experience requirement for recruitment and accreditation purposes as a violation of human rights. However, the discourse of Canadian experience continues to persist in media, policy, and everyday talk (Bhyuan et al. 2015).

To further deconstruct the discourse of Canadian experience used by SPOs in the success stories, it is useful to return to Razack’s (1998) concept of “culturalized racism” as discussed in Chapter 1, which refers to practices and discourses that assume poverty and other social issues are caused by “cultural” inferiorities of certain groups. Instead of explicitly racist language or actions, culturalized racism is a more covert form of discrimination against racialized Others. Instead of explicitly racist language or actions, culturalized racism consists of covert forms of discrimination against racialized Others based on assumption of cultural deficiency, social inadequacy, and technological underdevelopment. I suggest that the requirement of “Canadian experience” and devaluation of foreign credentials are forms of culturalized racism in that foreign training and experience – particularly those from regions outside of Western Europe and the U.S. – are perceived as inferior to Canadian standards.

Within the success stories, immigrants are consistently portrayed as lacking “Canadian-ness,” and a need for them to learn about “Canadian” culture and gain “Canadian” experience.
What is implicit in this claim is that there is a set of idealized Canadian standards to which immigrants have to conform. As discussed in Chapter 3, the default “Canadian” standards are based on White middle-class values that have been naturalized as apolitical and normative values that a typical “Canadian” embodies. In order to gain “Canadian” experience, many immigrants had to volunteer or do unpaid internship despite their skills level. The discourse of immigrants lacking “Canadian experience” constitutes culturalized racism in that it disguises racial prejudice as cultural differences that immigrant workers are required to “make up” for, regardless of their previous skills and experiences. In this manifestation of cultural racism, racial biases become “muted” (Davis 2007) within the discourse of “Canadian experience,” and the dominance and prejudice of White cultural values remains invisible and unchallenged. The racializing effects and damaging consequences of such discourse, including overrepresentation of immigrants in precarious and unpaid work, are de-politicized as deficiencies in “Canadian” skills or knowledge.

The following example illustrates a common narrative of needing “Canadian experience”: in which “Canadian experience” generally refers to paid or unpaid employment in Canada:

Back home, I have a rich experience in the non-profit sector, managing projects in developing countries, mostly in Asia. My line of expertise is in value chain promotion, local economic development, and small and medium enterprise development. This line of work is very specialized and with my “No Canadian Experience” situation and knowledge gap, my chances of landing a job aligned with my professional work were very slim (Story 4)

This narrative illustrates the individual immigrants’ concern with lacking Canadian experience. The individual enrolled in a mentorship program and even though her mentor provided emotional support during her initial settlement periods, she struggled to secure permanent employment in Canada. She first worked in an entry-level to gain Canadian experience but had to go back to her home country for work before she could find a permanent job in Canada.
It can also be argued that the requirement of Canadian experience for immigrants is intended to shape immigrant workers to behave properly accordingly the normative “Canadian” values and ways of being. In one story, the person is portrayed as eager to adopt interpersonal and technical skills in “the Canadian context,” indicating she was aware of the significance of obtaining Canadian experience:

I started working as volunteer computer instructor with [SPO] to understand the Canadian workplace culture, communication, networking, Canadian experience and to get a Canadian reference. Being a computer instructor I established good working relationship with [SPO] employees. On the other hand I showcased my areas of expertise as community development professional. Later on I started working as a Research and Community Development Intern with [SPO]. During my internship I gained Canadian workplace experience, culture, community development, community engagement, outreach activities, project management and project coordination within the Canadian context. (Story 22).

Her narrative portrays volunteering and unpaid internships as beneficial and perhaps necessary opportunities to enhance her employment prospects. Prior to coming to Canada, this woman had over twelve years of experience with international organizations, including the United Nations and the World Bank in regards to policy analysis. She took two unpaid positions to gain Canadian experience and network in order to find employment in her desired field of work. Using a rhetoric of Canadian experience as part of the settlement process, her narrative legitimizes her provision of free labour. Her narrative ended by stating that she found a job as a project coordinator within the SPO that was assisting her, which appears to be a fairly common outcome as the discussion below will demonstrate.

In order to fulfill the requirement of “Canadian experience” in their job search, new immigrants often deploy a variety of strategies to overcome their employment barriers, including volunteering, retraining through Canadian education, and working in precarious employment. Statistics Canada (2011) published a report that found an increase in the number of people who
use volunteering for employment related purposes. Thirty percent of immigrant volunteers stated that they used volunteering to improve their employment prospects. Slade, Luo, and Schugurensky (2005) conduct a study on volunteer participation of immigrants and refugees in which 96% of the participants had a university degree and an average of ten years of professional work experience abroad. They interviewed skilled immigrants and refugees who participated in volunteer work placements to improve their job search outcomes. Some of the participants’ reasons for volunteering include wanting to gain Canadian work experience (47%), to improve English language skills related to workplace (36%), and to learn about “Canadian culture” (22%) (Slade et al. 2005:3). In regards to the skills they learned from volunteering, most of them mentioned soft skills, such as communication, rather than industry specific knowledge.

Due to restricted access to professional and other higher paying occupations, immigrant workers also have to resort to precarious forms of employment for survival. Compared to older cohorts of immigrants, many of the deskilled immigrants are taking up lower paying jobs. Despite the rising educational and skills levels of incoming immigrants, one third of all immigrant workers are in low-wage sales and services industries (Shields 2003). Teelucksingh and Galabuzi (2005) argue that the current labour market is “segmented along racial lines” as racialized groups and new immigrants are overrepresented in low-paid and precarious forms of occupations and underrepresented in higher paying jobs with more security. They find that racialized groups are overrepresented in textile, light manufacturing, and service sectors and underrepresented as senior managers, professionals, supervisors, fire-fighters, legislators, farmers and farm managers, and in oil and gas drilling. Among the higher paying occupations, one industry where racialized workers are better represented is information technology as software engineers, computer engineers, and computer programmers.
Premji and colleagues (2014) also discuss the overrepresentation of racialized immigrant women in low-paid and low-skilled jobs, despite the fact that immigrant women are more likely to have university degrees than Canadian-born women. Their findings reveal substantially mismatched job skills and underemployment among the racialized women she interviewed (71% have university degrees), such as an accountant working as an accounting clerk and a doctor working in a fast food chain. Many of her research participants have precarious employment histories consisting of many short term jobs and length periods of unemployment; they often had to juggle between job search and educational or skills upgrading. Allan (2016) has termed this constant efforts and strategies exercised by immigrant job seekers as “active un(der)employment,” where immigrants participate in value-producing activities, such as volunteering and retraining, to improve their human capital potential.

Many SPOs provide the first volunteer experiences for their immigrant clients who are encouraged to volunteer or participate in unpaid internship as a means to secure paid employment. In one of the stories I examined, the individual was initially portrayed as optimistic and excited about her new life in Canada. However, after one year of unemployment, she became very discouraged:

Unsuccessfully applying for jobs, I was slowly losing my self-confidence. I just thought: “I am not capable to do anything”, “I am not prepared to face the Canadian workplace”, “What am I going to do?” “My English is too bad, no employer is going to hire me.” One lucky day, I applied for an internship position at [SPO] as a receptionist in the Employment Resource Centre. That was the beginning of the change for good. Not only did it give me the opportunity to gain my first Canadian work experience, but I also got to meet amazing people. At [SPO], they genuinely want to help immigrants succeed and reach their employment goals in Canada. (Story 13)

She is shown as being very grateful for the SPO that offered the opportunity for her “first Canadian work experience.” Her story continued to describe two more internships she worked
for until she secured paid employment at the organization that offered her third internship. The narrative does not acknowledge the unpaid nature of internships and the length of time she had spent in providing free labour until she secured paid work. Instead, her internship positions are presented as a positive shift from the her earlier distressful situation of failed job search.

In the success stories, immigrants appear to be encouraged to volunteer as a job search strategy even when they are in dire financial situations. In one example, the individual had traveled back and forth between her home country and Canada due to failed attempts to secure a job as a paralegal, which was her previous occupation:

I returned [to Canada] in 2016 but I did not have any Canadian education or experience and couldn’t find any employment. I spent most of my money in rent, transportation and food. I was desperate and about to give up and return to Taiwan again. One of the volunteers from [religious group referred me to [SPO]. [SPO] connected me to Ontario Works for Social Assistance so I could pay my rent and encouraged me to volunteer with the [SPO.] I now have a part-time paid job there. (Story 1).

Even though this woman was in urgent need of money as she was out of work and receiving social assistance, she was nonetheless suggested by the SPO to volunteer to gain Canadian experience. A part-time position at the SPO is subsequently presented as a positive outcome despite the fact that the job is precarious and part-time, and is unrelated to her desired field.

Since the 2000s, the unemployment and underemployment of skilled immigrants have been problematized in popular and policy discourses as underutilizing or waste of skilled labour (Reitz et al. 2014; Reitz 2001). Policy changes, such as the Canadian Experience Class of immigration stream (Bhyuan et al. 2007), and other settlement programs were introduced as formalized attempts to address this particular integration issue. One story posted by an SPO discusses the Enhanced Language Training (ELT) program which has been introduced by CIC
since 2003 to better connect professional immigrants to their trained occupation in Canada (IRCC 2008):

[She] emigrated from Vietnam with two Bachelor degrees and an MBA from an American University. [She] had worked in human resources for over 10 years in the financial industry. She took the ELT [Enhanced Language Training] program in order to learn about Canadian culture, improve her language skills, expand her network and gain confidence, all with the goal of continuing her career in the Canadian workplace… Ultimately, she received a contract job offer as a Program Assistant with [community employment resource center]. (Story 10)

The contract position is portrayed as “success” for this individual even though the entry-level role is mismatched with her MBA degree and her extensive work experience. Similarly, another story discusses the journey of a lawyer from Venezuela. She joined an ELT program but her co-op placement was with the SPO’s ESL department. Her “successful” outcome is being hired by the SPO as a facilitator for a pre-employment program. As with the previous example, the ELT program did not lead her to secure employment in a law-related capacity, which suggests the ELT programs, which only offer generic job-search training, are not fitting the needs of immigrants looking to enter regulated occupations. Programming that provides information and training regarding licensing requirements and pathways to enter regulated professions would be more beneficial for immigrant professionals.

In the success stories, I find that the “successful” outcomes portrayed in the narratives often do not reflect suitable or desired employment of the individuals who sought out help from settlement SPOs. The services provided by SPOs offer only general information for immigrants and do not provide industry-specific resources that can benefit newcomers in their job search. The following story exemplifies a “success” narrative of a newcomer who completed language classes and an ELT program:
He has a degree in Graphic Design, a diploma in Fine Arts and extensive experience working with multi-national companies... He joined the LINC [Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada] program and began to attend classes regularly. He soon began to volunteer actively in local art fairs and fundraising activities. In September 2013, [he] was promoted to CLB 6/7 and joined the English for Education and Employment course at [SPO]. It marked the beginning of an exciting new phase in his journey. His classmates were internationally-trained professionals from around the world, each with a unique set of skills and experiences. But, they all shared the same goal, to improve their English in order to achieve professional success in their new home, Canada... [He] also attended job search workshops, information sessions and networking events at the [SPO] Employment Centre as part of his LINC curriculum. In January 2014, [he] graduated from his LINC class. Today, he is employed in one of Canada’s largest cosmetic companies in a permanent, full-time position. Today, [he] is well on his way to attaining his Canadian dream. “Attending LINC was the single most important step I took on my path to success,” he says with a broad smile. (Story 23)

The success of this individual is portrayed ambiguously by stating “he is employed in one of Canada’s largest cosmetic companies in a permanent, full-time position.” The implication is that permanent and full-time work at a national company should be considered a positive outcome for a newcomer. The story does not indicate whether or not this individual is employed in a position that matches with his skills and experience. Furthermore, being employed full-time at a large corporation may imply job security but it does not reflect this person’s income level. By noting that the person is “well on his way to attaining his Canadian dream,” the story also implies that his success can be expected eventually. The future-oriented discourse effectively de-politicizes the absence of his employment success by focusing on his optimistic vision for his future in Canada.

Allan (2016) similarly observes from her ethnographic study of ELT programs that very few program participants actually end up in their desired position. She contends that, by instructing immigrants to volunteer and labour freely to gain Canadian experience, the program (re)produces active and eventful un(der)employment of immigrants who are trained to increase
their employability through self discipline and management. Most of her participants who volunteered would end up being hired by the social service sector, particularly immigrant settlement services, which is consisted largely of precarious types of work. The curriculum of ELT programs is mainly focused on cultivating “soft” skills – personal identity, emotional management, and intelligence – rather than localized and targeted labour market information that might help with career planning. Instead of providing employment or networking opportunities, ELT programs connect participants to more transition service providers – that is, an industry established to prepare the un(der)employed for employment– and privatized employment services (Allan 2016). In other words, immigrants are given information about how to job search and network but not resources or connections that would materialize in paid employment that matches their education and professional skills. When the ELT program failed to result in employment, the individual immigrants would enter college or other retraining in hopes of filling their gap of Canadian experience (Allan 2016). Many of the success stories in my study reveal a similar pattern. Retraining may involve the newcomers paying for further schooling or, as discussed in this chapter, having to participate unpaid internship in order to improve their employment prospects. Settlement programs such as the ELT program have thus been ineffective in addressing the devaluation and underutilization of foreign-acquired skills that have resulted in the poor labour market and economic outcomes among skilled immigrants as discussed in this chapter.

4.5 Chapter Summary

The Canadian immigration selection process is heavily based on education, skills, and work experience to recruit highly educated and skilled immigrants. However once immigrants arrive in Canada, they often find the credentials (education and work experience) that allowed
them to enter the country are de-valued by employers and licensing bodies. Many scholars have noted the pattern of de-valueation of foreign education and trainings that has resulted in the de-skilling of highly skilled immigrants, especially from developing countries. For non-regulated occupations, the requirement of “Canadian experience” often forces immigrant workers into unpaid and precarious forms of employment. Skilled workers in licensed and regulated professions, such as engineering and medicine, often have to devote substantial amount of efforts to obtaining additional training or qualification in their field, despite their previous experiences, with no guarantee of entry into the desired profession. Furthermore, the discrimination of foreign experience and credentials are often institutionalized through regulatory authorities that access international credentials. In this chapter, I have suggested that the SPOs use a discourse of “Canadian experience” to rationalize the devaluation of foreign experience and credentials of their clients. The racializing effects of such discourse on immigrant labour market outcomes remain unacknowledged. Consequently, the unpaid or precarious forms of labour performed by skilled workers are portrayed as a requirement to improve their employment prospects.
Conclusion

With this thesis, I was interested in deconstructing particular discourses and practices within the immigrant settlement sector through an analysis of success stories published by immigrant service provider organizations (SPOs). By using Foucault’s work and other studies on neo-liberal governmentality, this study is intended to contribute to the emerging research conducted by academic, community and state agencies on the effects of a destabilized and competitive funding regime on non-profit service providers (Curtis 2016; Baines et al. 2014; Shields 2014; Phillips and Smith 2011; Evans and Shields 2010; Evans et al. 2005; Scott 2003; Wolch 1990), particularly immigrant settlement and integration agencies (Shields et al. 2016; Evans and Shields 2014; Yee, Marshall and Vo 2014; Flynn and Bauder 2014; McGrath and McGrath 2013; Zhu 2013; Garcea 2011; Richmond and Shields 2005; Richmond and Shields 2004; Sadiq 2004; Omidvar and Richmond 2003; Geronimo 2000; Creese 1998). I also draw on Foucault’s concepts of power/knowledge, discourse, and subject formation to examine how broader political, social, and economic contexts are linked to particular practices, techniques, and discourses used by immigrant settlement agencies. In this concluding chapter, I return to the three questions I posed in Introduction and provide an overview of the discussions that I have presented that suggest the immigrant success stories operate as a neo-liberal technology in reproducing certain immigrant subjects and realities.

My first question was concerned with the effects of funding restructuring on the practices and discourses of settlement support. I drew on governmentality as a framework to examine the shift from welfare state to the deregulation and privatization of welfare provision, which has resulted in the devolution of immigrant settlement services to quasi-autonomous non-governmental organizations. The restructuring of funding regimes for non-profit organizations
including immigrant and settlement service provider organizations (SPOs) since the 1990s has 
marketized settlement support for newcomers as funding became more competitive and less 
stable. My discussion highlighted the use of inscription devises as neo-liberal techniques that 
governs settlement (SPOs) and their clients at a distance. More stringent and rigorous 
accountability measures from state funders, which serve to render settlement services recordable 
and calculable, have further reinforced the marketization of settlement services for immigrants. 
Due to the increasingly destabilized and competitive funding regime, settlement SPOs are less 
likely to participate in advocacy types of roles for their clients. I suggest that the discourses and 
practices exercised within the settlement sector has de-politicizing effects in providing programs 
and services as technical fixes that do not address structural and political forces contributing to 
settlement barriers.

The second question I posed entailed an investigation of how immigrants are 
characterized as “successful” in the success narratives. I discussed the “triangulated” racial 
framework and various citizen and non-citizen subjects to consider the racializing effects of 
constructing a figure of an ideal immigrant. Drawing on Rose’s work on neo-liberal 
governmentality and the enterprising selves, I showed the ways in which immigrants are 
portrayed as enterprising subjects in the success stories. Particular techniques and discourses are 
mobilized to responsibilize immigrants for their own settlement and integration in Canada. I 
argued that the characterization of immigrants as optimistic, persistent, flexible, motivated, and 
self-initiating signifies an image of “good” immigrants who make rational and reasonable 
choices in regulating their own thoughts and actions. Failure to settle and integrate in Canada, 
then, becomes the private and individual problems of “bad” immigrants who have not made 
“appropriate” choices in their attitudes, desires, thoughts, and actions.
My final question was concerning the extent to which the success stories reflect the economic and employment realities of newcomers in Canada. This discussion focused on the discursive use of “Canadian experience” in the success stories that depoliticizes systemic discriminations against foreign credentials. I provided the political and economic contexts in which the immigrant demographics have shifted towards non-European groups who are entering Canada with high educational and professional attainments. In particular, I suggested that the requiring skilled immigrants to be “Canadianized” through accreditation procedures and unpaid and precarious forms of labour racializes foreign credentials and experiences as less valuable and credible than Canadian standards. The success stories ultimately reproduce racialized discourses and practices by promoting unpaid labour in the form of internship and volunteer opportunities for newcomers. The SPOs, then, have failed to address the political and structural issues of foreign credential recognition.

My analysis is limited to a general consideration of immigrant populations. Since my data is collected from a secondary source with limited availability of detailed information, I was unable to further discuss differential impacts on immigrant experiences in relation to gender, ethnicity, immigration status, age, source country, and location of residence among other factors. My discussions are also confined to settlement and integration experiences in Ontario. Some parallels are expected, but due to the varied adaptations of immigration and integration policies and immigrant demographics across provinces, the findings and analysis cannot be generalized for other regions. I also excluded refugees from this study because the immigration paths and regulations are quite different for groups who are entering Canada with refugee status. Therefore, further investigation is needed to examine how gender, ethnicity, immigration status, source country, and location of residence intersect in the settlement experiences of newcomers.
New tools, techniques and practices are being introduced by funders to better govern the effectiveness of settlement services and usage. More critical analysis is needed in examining the implications of adopting such governing technologies for SPOs and the clients they serve. For instance, will reports of ineffective deliveries of certain services be viewed as reasons to reduce settlement support? Furthermore, as these new practices require extensive personal information from the clients, what are the consequences for newcomers from the perspective of surveillance?

The shifting nature of Canadian immigration policy also warrants more research to be conducted in the settlement and integration of newcomers in two key areas: 1) the growing number of migrants with temporary residency status in Canada, who are exceeding the number of people being admitted as permanent residents; and 2) the changes in immigration policy that are increasingly focused on Canadian experience and education. First, between 1990 and 1994, around 267,000 individuals arrived with temporary worker status; the figure increased, particularly during the late 2000s, and doubled between 2010 and 2014 to 578,000 temporary residents excluding international students and workers for humanitarian and compassionate purposes (Lu and Hou 2017). These numbers correspond with data released by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), reporting that in 2016, a total of 564,115 temporary residents (including work permit holders for all purposes and international students) were admitted in comparison to 296,340 permanent residents (including individuals in all immigrant classes and refugees) (IRCC 2017). As IRCC and other government agencies do not generally fund settlement services for temporary residents, more research is required to better the settlement needs and strategies of temporary workers and international students.

Second, the growth in temporary residents also parallels the government’s emerging preference for applicants who are already residing in Canada rather than overseas applications. In
2008, the Canadian Experience Class was introduced as a new immigration stream for individuals who have at least one year of work experience in a skilled industry or have completed academic studies in Canada (IRCC 2008). In 2012, the Federal Skilled Worker program, which is the main immigration class for economic immigrants, was revised to incorporate Canadian experience as a key assessment factor while the value of foreign experiences and education was reduced (Bhyuan et al. 2017). As noted in Chapter 4, the current procedures under the Express Entry system reward Canadian experience and education in overlapping sections of the eligibility assessment. In other words, the current immigration policy is focused on recruiting individuals who have already settled in Canada as temporary residents. More research is needed to evaluate changes and effects in settlement support as immigration selection is increasingly favouring applicants who have partially settled in Canada. For instance, with more temporary residents transitioning into permanent residents, some of the settlement costs are privatized through resources and payments from employers and families of temporary residents. What are the implications in terms of state responsibility as settlement support becomes increasingly privatized through this new selection system?

With the recent rise of far-right groups and protests and attacks against minority groups in Canada, there appears to be a critical need for the Canadian state to shift beyond the symbolic recognition of diversity and seek more effective strategies in resisting racist ideologies and assaults. In terms of settlement and integration of newcomers, structural inequalities and anti-immigrant discourses cannot be effectively eliminated without further institutional changes to facilitate and promote cultural and racial equality and collaboration across different communities in Canada.
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