

Issues Related to the Integration of Skilled Immigrants

**Issues Related to the Integration of Skilled Immigrants in Quebec: A Latin American
Perspective**

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to Gerardo and Isabella. Thank you for letting me embark on the most precious journey of my life, the journey of motherhood. I love you immensely.

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Abstract

This study explores the integration experiences of skilled Latin American immigrants related to their education and employment in Quebec (Canada) to understand how perceived systemic discrimination could influence their decisions towards remaining in the province. Scholarly sources indicate that immigrants from minority groups experience systemic barriers to their economic integration despite being more highly educated and qualified than native-born Canadians. Using Critical Race Theory, Postcolonialism and Global Neoliberal Capitalism as a framework, the study focuses on participants' perception of situations of marginalization and exclusion in the labour market, their integration experiences as well as their suggestions towards the provision of fair opportunities to newcomers. Data were collected from face-to-face interviews with 10 participants living in Quebec, four participants living out of the province, and two leaders of the Latin American community in Montreal as well as from the photovoice method. Findings indicate that experiences of systemic marginalization faced when trying to access the labour market has led this group to rely on their own motivation and, to a lesser degree, on the networking of their own community members, rather than on government funded settlement services and programs offered to them, to get professionally integrated. Outmigration is likewise an alternative used to achieve their objectives. In addition, the study highlights the value interviewees give to their own cultural community while starting to question the provincial immigrant-friendly rhetoric of authorities. The study concludes with policy recommendations and suggestions for further research on the context unique to the skilled Latin American immigrant experience in Quebec.

Keywords : Latin American immigrants, skilled immigrants, minority groups, integration, education, allophones, Quebec

Résumé

Cette étude vise à étudier les expériences d'intégration d'immigrants latino-américains qualifiés liées à leur éducation et à leur emploi au Québec (Canada) pour comprendre comment la discrimination systémique perçue pourrait influencer leurs décisions de rester dans la province. Des sources savantes indiquent que les immigrants issus de groupes minoritaires rencontrent des obstacles systémiques qui entravent leur intégration économique, même si ces derniers sont plus instruits et qualifiés que les Canadiens de souche. En employant la théorie critique de la race, le postcolonialisme et le capitalisme néolibéral comme cadre, l'étude se concentre sur la perception des participants des situations de marginalisation et d'exclusion sur le marché du travail, leurs expériences d'intégration, ainsi que leurs suggestions pour offrir des opportunités équitables aux nouveaux arrivants. Les données ont été recueillies à partir d'entretiens individuels avec dix participants vivant au Québec, quatre participants vivant hors de la province et deux leaders de la communauté latino-américaine à Montréal, ainsi que de la méthode photovoice. Les résultats indiquent que les expériences de marginalisation systémique rencontrées lorsque les nouveaux arrivants tentent d'accéder au marché du travail ont amené ce groupe à compter sur sa propre motivation et, dans une moindre mesure, sur le réseau interpersonnel des membres de sa propre communauté, plutôt que sur les services d'établissements financés par le gouvernement et programmes qui leur sont proposés, afin de s'insérer dans la vie professionnelle. L'émigration est également une alternative utilisée pour atteindre leurs objectifs. De plus, l'étude révèle la valeur que les personnes interrogées accordent à leur propre communauté culturelle, tout en commençant à remettre en question la rhétorique des autorités provinciales favorable aux immigrants. L'étude se termine par des recommandations politiques et des suggestions pour des recherches plus approfondies sur le contexte unique de l'expérience des immigrants latino-américains qualifiés au Québec.

Mots clés : immigrants latino-américains, immigrants qualifiés, groupes minoritaires, intégration, éducation, allophones, Québec

Resumen

Este estudio explora las experiencias de integración de inmigrantes latinoamericanos calificados en relación con su educación y empleo en Quebec (Canadá) para comprender cómo la discriminación sistémica percibida podría influir en sus decisiones de permanecer en la provincia. Fuentes académicas indican que los inmigrantes de grupos minoritarios experimentan barreras sistémicas para su integración económica a pesar de tener un mayor nivel de educación y calificación que los canadienses nativos. Utilizando la Teoría Crítica de la Raza, el Postcolonialismo y el Capitalismo Neoliberal Global como marco, el estudio se centra en la percepción de los participantes sobre las situaciones de marginación y exclusión en el mercado laboral, sus experiencias de integración, así como sus sugerencias hacia la provisión de oportunidades justas para los recién llegados. Los datos se recopilieron a partir de entrevistas personales con 10 participantes que viven en Quebec, cuatro participantes que viven fuera de la provincia y dos líderes de la comunidad latinoamericana en Montreal, así como del método de Photovoice. Los hallazgos indican que las experiencias de marginación sistémica enfrentadas al tratar de acceder al mercado laboral han llevado a este grupo a confiar en su propia motivación y, en menor grado, en la red interpersonal de los miembros de su propia comunidad, en lugar de en los servicios y programas de asentamiento financiados por el gobierno, para poder integrarse profesionalmente. La emigración es también una alternativa utilizada para lograr sus objetivos. Además, el estudio destaca el valor que los entrevistados dan a su propia comunidad cultural mientras comienzan a cuestionar la retórica de las autoridades provinciales favorables a los inmigrantes. El estudio concluye con recomendaciones de políticas y sugerencias para futuras investigaciones sobre el contexto único de la experiencia de los inmigrantes latinoamericanos calificados en Quebec.

Palabras claves: inmigrantes latinoamericanos, inmigrantes calificados, grupos minoritarios, integración, educación, alófonos, Quebec

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Chapter One: Introduction

In this chapter, I present the objectives as well as the outline of my study. Then, the context and significance of my doctoral research are discussed. In addition, I attempt to position myself within the research, which is closely linked to my own integration experiences in Quebec. My aim is to understand how the fourteen Latin American skilled immigrants in this qualitative study perceived their integration experiences in Quebec in order to grasp how perceived systemic discrimination had influenced their attitudes towards out-migration. The following research questions are formulated to guide this study: 1.- (a) In what ways and to what extent do skilled Latin American immigrants to Quebec perceive that they confront situations of marginalization and exclusion in the labour market? and (b) how have these influenced their decisions towards remaining in the province of Quebec? 2.- Are the integration experiences of skilled Latin American immigrants who have left Quebec for another Canadian province different from those immigrants who have not left the province? 3.- (a) What are their suggestions for Quebec policymakers to provide fair opportunities to newcomers that could prevent the economic and social consequences of interprovincial migration and (b) what are their suggestions for immigrants still to come to Quebec that could help them accelerate their process of integration? Lastly, I conclude the chapter with an overview of the thesis.

Focus of the Study

This research links Quebec's labour shortage with the dilemma of Latin American skilled immigrants who face barriers in finding access to the labour force and levels of promotion in their professions, implying a lack of integration in this society. The gap in immigration literature between the employment opportunities of "minority group immigrants and majority group Quebecers cannot be explained simply by analyzing the rationale of racially motivated individual

decision makers as involved stakeholders” (Calderon Moya, 2021, p. 40). However, I will argue that discrimination and racism are clear indicators in Quebec as a white settler society that prevents immigrants with high levels of education and professional credentials from minority ethnic groups to get equal levels of income. Indeed, “such discrepancies are grounded in Quebec’s definition of ethno-nationalism that shaped controversial ideas of citizenship indicating the reasons why government authorities are often inattentive to the structural causes of inequality in Quebec” (Calderon Moya, 2021, p. 40). I began my attempt to close the gap in literature in a small way by publishing a paper called “Links between White Settler Colony in Quebec and the Barriers to the Economic Integration of Skilled Latin American Immigrants” which was published in the Journal of Contemporary Issues in Education in 2021. This dissertation builds on the literature review of that article with empirical research data obtained to hear from highly educated immigrants about their experiences. Being a relatively young and fast-growing community (Armony, 2014), Latin American economic immigrants have received limited attention from academics and policy makers in Canada.

Importantly, “I am not arguing that all French Quebecers are consciously aware, agree, or are oblivious of the white-settler racial order of Quebec. Nevertheless, as ethical members of this society who are aware of systemic discrimination and its consequences, I believe it is our responsibility to question the ongoing and unaddressed marginalization and exclusion that other members of our society face. Only then will we be able to begin to understand how patriarchal and capitalist values have favoured the divided and inegalitarian characteristics of our society” (Calderon Moya, 2021, p. 41).

Context of the Study

Traditionally, most immigrants to Canada tend to settle in large metropolitan areas. In the case of Quebec, Canada’s only French-speaking province, Montreal offers an affordable cost of

living compared to other important metropolitan cities in the country which have attracted immigrants for decades. Data from the 2001 census indicates that 70% of people of foreign origin living in Quebec settled in the Montreal region, which represents 28% of people residing in the cosmopolitan area (Immigration Quebec, 2019). A report from the *Institut du Québec* indicated that in 2017 Quebec welcomed 52,388 permanent immigrants, 75% of whom lived in Montreal. In effect, there are about 120 minority, or cultural, groups identified in Montreal, among which, permanent residents of Asian (31.1%), African (28.7%), European (22.5%) and American (17.4%) origin are the most important groups (Immigration Quebec, 2019). Not coincidentally, the significant increasing rate of trilingualism among its allophone population makes of Montreal a distinctive migration spot in Canada (Bayley & Schecter, 2003).

Nonetheless, the integration of newcomers into the labour market has been problematic. This is demonstrated in a study by the *Institut du Québec* which shows that Quebec's "native" population is less educated than most immigrants to the province who are university-degree holders, (Journet, 2016). Moreover, despite the rapidly aging population and the growing need for human capital, the obstacles for the integration of minority group immigrants, that is immigrants from less economically developed countries, continues to persist. Similarly, Paul Eid, the lead author of a study for the Quebec Human Rights Commission (2010-2011) cast a critical eye on the constant gap in employment between non-white and individuals from majority white population in Montreal and claims there are systemic barriers to equal opportunities in the province (Gyulai, 2019). Since 2020 when the Coalition Avenir came to power in Quebec, the government has applied its controversial strategy to better integrate immigrants and stop outmigration to other provinces. By reducing and screening out prospective immigrants through the release of its "values test" in 2020, the Quebec government continues to distance itself from

engaging in an exercise that could correct the issues related to the long-standing systemic discrimination, or at least discuss the possibility that there are some problems in the system that require their attention. In this sense, with this study, it is my intention that the findings help authorities start a direct and pertinent discussion of the several indicators of systemic discrimination in the Francophone province, such as prejudice, stereotypical attitudes, and policies. By exposing the failures in our society that continue to result in the disproportionate exclusion of university-educated recent immigrants from Latin America, I aim to raise sentiments of advocacy on the part of the government authorities and political actors that could lead to their acknowledgement and stipulation that Quebec is a pluricultural, multiethnic province where structural factors, namely marginalization of racialized immigrants, have favoured the growth of systemic discrimination. Such categorical actions, I believe, would greatly advance their effective intervention in the unequal participation of immigrants from other racialized countries in Quebec.

Significance of the Study

Given the remarkable slowdown in Quebec's population growth in 2020, the sharp drop of immigrants admitted to the province in 2020 (*Institut de la statistique du Québec*, 2021) as well as holding the second-lowest unemployment rates in Canada (El-Assal & Miekus, 2020), I would say that my study, funded by the *Fonds de recherche du Québec en société et culture* (FRQSC) significantly provides policy-makers with information regarding the utilization or underutilization of the human capital of skilled Latin American immigrants to tackle the challenges related to their access to employment. Concretely, this study highlights the critical need for policy makers to acknowledge the roots of systemic discrimination in Quebec workforce and turn their focus on a review of strategies that can establish provincial policies to

fight marginalization of immigrants from racialized countries to Quebec. This will help in preventing the costs of discriminatory policies that caused outmigration of immigrants on whom the province spends a considerable amount of funds through programs, such as francization. Such acknowledgement will also enable immigrants to contribute to the much-needed skilled labour.

In addition to the significance of the study in human capital terms, it will bring attention to the ethical and moral aspects of immigrants leaving Quebec due to lack of integration into society. My study will focus on this second aspect which has been a neglected matter in the academic literature. This analysis will be significant for policy makers. Lastly, the study will provide up-to-date information that might be applicable to different minority groups in Quebec.

Situating the Researcher

In this section, I would like to note my own inherent subjectivities that I accept are greatly involved in my research (Hewitt, 2007). I immigrated to Canada as a Quebec-selected skilled immigrant a decade ago. As many other immigrants, I came to the country with a bag full of professional, social, and cultural expectations which certainly make my personal experiences highly resonate with participants in my study. More importantly, those initial expectations together with my personal values and beliefs are part of the lens through which I constructed the research questions and interpreted the data of my study. Moreover, as a Latin American woman and an educator, I have always been interested in learning about the integration experiences of school students and parents of the growing cultural community in which I pleasantly found myself. At first, I thought that my own lived experience and reflexive thoughts on language and immigration could play an essential role in reaching a quicker understanding of the Latin American immigrant context in Quebec. Yet, I came to realize that my prior professional

experiences and ethnicity may not have been sufficient to grasp a deep understanding of the issues related to the integration of immigrants from this minority group in the French province.

With this in mind, I decided to obtain a Canadian educational degree to deeply grasp the integration issues within the Latin American minority group. As part of the master's program, I chose the Latin American immigrant group as a topic for my MA thesis. Specifically, I investigated the manner in which public school teachers in Montreal facilitated the linguistic, cultural and social integration of immigrant students, while respecting the heritage struggles of adolescent and young adults. Among the findings of the master's research, I highlighted the need for policy makers to redefine curriculum content and the cultural competencies of current and future schoolteachers so these could facilitate the successful integration of immigrant school students into Quebec.

I continued with the general theme but in this research, I focus on issues related to the economic integration of Latin American immigrants. I was curious about how their credentials, language skills, years of professional experience would facilitate their integration to the Quebec society. Going through the literature and getting information from the media reports I found that there was a gap in literature between the integration experiences of the different categories of immigrants and refugees within this ethnic group living in Quebec and Canada. I found as well that there was a misrepresentation of this ethnic group mainly because many of the reports on this minority are based on statistical data which cannot explain matters that need qualitative interpretation such as the analysis of people's thoughts and feelings in order interpret their experiences (Austin & Sutton, 2014). I therefore chose to follow a qualitative research design to capture the experiences and feelings of participants so that I could reach an understanding of the possible specific issues they encounter when trying to integrate in Quebec.

For several years, I have simultaneously interacted with families, teachers, and administrators, at an informal capacity, at social and community events where topics related to insertion in the labour market, misrecognition of foreign acquired experience, and having an accent when using the official language of Quebec have often been the subjects for discussion. Also, I have developed different perspectives of being a Latin American throughout different contexts and/or stages of my life in the province: as a newly arrived immigrant working in an Anglophone language centre, as a graduate student in an Anglophone setting, as a research assistant working on a large project targeting another minority group in Quebec and, recently, as a parent in a Francophone school setting. Even though I speak the language of most of my participants (14 of 16), share their ethnic and cultural group and I continually socialize with other skilled Latin American immigrants who work or do not work in their professional fields in Montreal, I believe that those several stages of my life and my diverse experiences as an immigrant have disconnected me from some of the experiences of my participants. An example of this is that I have a different work and linguistic journey from that of them. I have worked in a Francophone setting only for a short time and I did not need to take the francization course because my level of French was assessed as advanced. Therefore, my life experiences differ from that of most of the participants in my research. Given this breadth of effect, I discovered that I have been both an outsider within the Latin American immigrant group in Quebec and an insider.

I acknowledge that I, as many other immigrant researchers, study my own immigrant community thus holding the position of an insider, that is membership in the group of participants on the bases of immigrant status, ethnicity, language, and experience. Holding this perspective has provided the advantage to better grasp the subtle and or cultural meanings of being Latin American and the opportunity to play a more direct and intimate role in the

collection and analysis of data (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). Nevertheless, reviewing the literature on this topic, I found that being an insider researcher does also imply addressing the inevitable contradiction between the high expectations of participants and demonstrating a high credibility of my study, as identified by Kusow (2003). In addition, Fay (1996) offers an accurate argument for this point: “[k]nowing an experience requires more than simply having it; knowing implies being able to identify, describe, and explain” (as cited in Dwyer & Buckle, 2009, p. 59). I, therefore, believe that being a member of the group of skilled Latin American immigrants in Quebec is not a requirement enough for the author to fully know the experience of her participants.

Moreover, I acknowledge that I hold an outsider position, to some extent, in my research due to my limited experience in Francophone workspaces and learning settings, and the varied perspectives on our experiences. On Dwyer and Buckle’s account, playing the role of the outsider in research provides positive elements to the research objectives such as having an adequate distance to be able to observe clearer and wider perspectives of participants’ experiences so that the researcher can understand, know and conceptualize the issues being studied (2009). In this sense, Kusow (2003) points out that “this [insider/outsider] status emerges from the interaction between the researcher and the participants as well as the social and the political situation within which the interaction occurs” (p. 597). Such shifting insider/outsider statuses therefore suggests that I am an insider in specific situations and yet an outsider in other ones.

Lastly, as a researcher who is investigating her ethnic community, I acknowledge that I come into my study with an inherent history, ethnicity, language, and culture that influence the way I achieve my research objectives. Consequently, my stance cannot be objective because I am

not able to put my own perspectives aside (Way, 2005). While I understand that I cannot expect to capture all the issues in my participants' shared experiences, I think that having the insider and outsider perspectives has given me the opportunity to have a much broader perspective to the collection and interpretation of data.

Guiding Research Questions

Based on the literature on ethnic minority groups and immigrant integration as well as my personal integration experiences in Quebec, the research questions for this qualitative study were constructed to allow me to explore the integration experiences of skilled Latin American immigrants. Such experiences were related to their education and employment in Quebec to understand how perceived systemic discrimination could influence their attitudes towards remaining in the province. Specifically, my objectives are to look at:

- a) factors that affect immigrant integration in Quebec in terms of employment
- b) policies and strategies that could improve the economic and social relations between new immigrants and the Quebec society at large.

The three research questions arising from these objectives are:

- 1.- (a) In what ways and to what extent do skilled Latin American immigrants to Quebec perceive that they confront situations of marginalization and exclusion in the labour market? and (b) how have these influenced their decisions towards remaining in the province of Quebec?
- 2.- Are the integration experiences of skilled Latin American immigrants who have left Quebec for another Canadian province different from those immigrants who have not left the province?
- 3.- (a) What are their suggestions for Quebec policymakers to provide fair opportunities to newcomers that could prevent the demographic and economic consequences of interprovincial

migration? and (b) what are their suggestions for immigrants still to come to Quebec that could help them accelerate their process of integration?

Overview of the Thesis

The dissertation is organized in eight chapters. In Chapter 1, I describe the objectives and outline, as well as the significance of this study. I also examine my situation as a researcher. Sharing the cultural aspects of my positionality is important as they may influence the way I investigate the subject of the study (Holmes, 2020). Lastly, I present the guiding research questions of the study.

In Chapter Two, I present a literature review focused on Migration in Quebec and the Quebec Variable in order to explore the building of the nation idea in Quebec. I continue with an analysis of the context of the Latin American presence in Canada and in Quebec. This literature helps to suggest some reasons Latin American immigrants under the economic stream may be struggling to integrate into Quebec. In Chapter Three, I will elaborate on the theoretical framework to my inquiry. I provide an analysis of White Privilege, Systemic Discrimination, Critical Race Theory. I continue with an analysis of Post/Colonial Theory and the Global Neoliberal Capitalism to seek an empirical and normative understanding of the immigration issues Latin Americans in Quebec face. Chapter Four presents the methodology and tools of inquiry used in this research. In this section I provide a detailed description of the research design of the study. In Chapter Five, Chapter Six and Chapter Seven, I describe the themes that emerged from interviews with participants as well as from the photovoice method. Lastly, Chapter Eight I discuss the findings vis-s-vis the research questions and theoretical framework. This leads to the major conclusions of the research, a discussion of the implications and recommendations of the study. I conclude the study with directions for future research.

Chapter Summary

The present chapter provided the introduction, context, and significance of my doctoral research. Also, I situated myself as a researcher and presented the objectives and guiding research questions. Lastly, I concluded with the overview of the thesis. In the following chapter, I will present the literature review and the Quebec situation.

Chapter Two: Context and Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter will provide the context of the research through a review of literature. It will indicate the broader background of immigration, Quebec's own precarious position as a Francophone province in Canada (and in the larger North American continent where French is not spoken), and how the need for a viable labour force has prompted its policies towards immigration and immigrants. It will briefly discuss the overall situation of the more recent immigrants from various Latin American countries.

A Brief Review of Migration in Quebec

The term quality of life is an indicator to measure the well being of the population in a country, region or even province. In this context, a survey by U.S. News & World Report has placed Canada, a member of the Group of Seven (G7)¹ and of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), as the highest ranked country in the world, after Japan and Germany (Singer, 2021). This is not an isolated ranking for Canada as it is globally famous for being a very welcoming and inclusive society for immigrants and investors targeting a permanent residence (Hiebert, 2016; Thevenot, 2020). Canada's response to conflicts, natural disasters and crises worldwide has made it renowned for supporting human dignity. This can be seen in the examples of the admission of over 74,070 Syrian refugees between 2015 and 2020 as a response to the Syrian war (Alhmidi, 2020) as well as in the recent plan to resettle 20,000 vulnerable Afghans to protect them from the increasing threat of the Taliban (Draaisma, 2021).

¹ The Group of Seven (G7) is an inter-governmental political bloc consisting of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States. Its members are the made up of the world's largest developed economies and liberal democracies.

Regarding integration, Canada was ranked “fourth in the world for its comprehensive, immigrant-friendly policies that emphasize equal rights, opportunities and security for newcomers”, most of whom are visible minorities, by Migration Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) International in 2020 (Singer, 2021, para. 14). Interestingly, MIPEX points to Canada’s anti-discrimination policies (including the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and policies on multiculturalism) as its greatest asset towards integration (Singer, 2021). In this context, it can be deduced that Canada’s immigrants, especially skilled immigrants, are able to adjust and integrate in a smooth and fast way to the new cordial society. Nevertheless, the country has shown quite negative results in economic and social integration of their highly educated and qualified immigrants (Kaushik & Drolet, 2018) who struggle to find employment in their professional fields but often take lower skilled jobs compared to Canadian-born peers with equivalent credentials. This issue is of particular importance in the province of Quebec which has a tumultuous record in terms of immigration. Congruent to this are critiques from immigration specialists such as Paquet (2012) and DesRoches (2014) who point to Quebec’s immigration policies that have clearly not resulted in the improved performance of its immigrants.

Quebec is the only province in Canada where French is the official language, with 79% francophones (Statistics Canada, 2016). Quebec has unprecedented authority in selecting its own immigrants, as per the 1991 Gagnon Tremblay/McDougall Accord² that is separate from the federal office of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), to fulfill its

² The Gagnon-Tremblay|McDougall Accord, also the Canada–Quebec Accord Relating to Immigration and Temporary Admission of Aliens refers to Quebec’s exclusive jurisdiction in selecting immigrants with a point system on the basis of age, education, work experience, adaptability, knowledge of the official language, and other forms of human capital.

immigration goals while protecting its *distinct* society where French is the common language. In effect, applicants to immigration programs selected by Quebec are given a Quebec Selection Certificate, or *Certificat de sélection du Québec* (CSQ). Immigrant applicants apply for this document issued by Quebec's Immigration Ministry mainly through the Quebec Skilled Worker Program but also through the Quebec Experience Program as well as business immigration programs, such as Quebec Entrepreneur Program and the Self-Employed Program.

Regarding the main sources of immigration, the origins of Quebec's immigrants differ from those in the rest of Canada (Cousineau & Boudarbat, 2009). While China, Philippines, and India were the main sending countries for Canada in 2012, in Quebec the top source countries were France, Haiti, and Algeria (Statistics Canada, 2016). Accordingly, South Asian and Chinese represent the largest "visible minorities" in English Canada are while French, Black, Arab and Latin Americans are the largest minority groups in Quebec. The term "visible minority" is used by Statistics Canada as a demographic term defined by Canada's Employment Equity Act as "persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour" (Canada & Canada, 1995). It is important to highlight that not all members of ethnic groups are labelled as visible minorities as some of them are phenotypically white. (Calderon Moya, 2021, p. 41). Quebec uses the term 'cultural communities' which homogenizes all immigrants although *de facto* there is a clear distinction between immigrants from European countries and others.

Due to Quebec's aging population and a declining birthrate, immigrant labour is critical for stimulating economic growth (Serebrin, 2018). In effect, Quebec's current economy has been struggling with a labour shortage in all regions of the province caused by the shrinking labour force (Roy, 2020; Shingler & Rocha, 2017) which, according to Brendon Bernard, senior economist at Indeed Canada, may take a decade to recover (Bruemmer, 2021). According to the

Fédération canadienne de l'entreprise indépendante, the average labour force growth has declined from 1.8 % in the 2000s to 0.7 % for the 2012-2017 period, and thus the growth of the labour force is expected to go down and reach a zero rate by 2030 (Fillion, 2019). Importantly, post-pandemic, the vacancy rate in Quebec has risen 30% and became the highest in Canada (Bruemmer, 2021) accelerating the critical need not only for specialized trades such as accounting, information technology, health care and social assistance domains, but throughout the workforce spectrum such as in retail, short-order cooking and secretarial sector (Bruemmer, 2021).

However, the government of Premier François Legault, the political leader of *Coalition Avenir Québec* (CAQ), a right-of-centre party that identifies itself as nationalist, yet it arguably holds a position against Quebec sovereignty (Boily, 2018), sticks to their decision made in 2019 to accept fewer skilled immigrants in the coming years (Schué, 2021). “One clear explanation of these lower targets, which are strikingly different from other Canadian provinces, is the fulfillment of the promise CAQ made to its voters against immigration during the 2018 provincial election campaign” (Calderon Moya, 2021, p. 41) to indicate that the party is attempting to preserve the francophone character of Quebec. By reducing the number of immigrants to Quebec from 50,000 in recent years to approximately 40,000 (between 38,000 and 42,000) annually, Legault’s administration used immigration policy as a failed strategy to better respond to the preferences of Quebec’s majority francophone society and its labour market “in the name of” ensuring an adequate integration of new immigrants (El-Assal & Miekus, 2020). It is worth noting, though, that business groups such as the *Federation des chambres de commerce du Québec* and the *Conseil du Patronat du Québec* claimed the need to increase the economic

immigration to 60,000 people a year in order to reduce the province's labour shortage and stimulate its economy ("Business groups", 2019; Calderon Moya, 2021, p 42).

As indicated by Premier Legault, who leads a majority government, despite their foreign educational credentials, an important number of newcomers are unable to find work in their profession within the first five years of arriving (Calderon Moya, 2021; Valiante, 2019a). In effect, a report made by the *Institut du Québec* indicated that the unemployment rate in 2017 for newly arrived immigrants -aged 25 to 54 years old and with less than five years post arrival- was 14.1% in Quebec while in Ontario and in British Columbia it reached 9.3% and 7.3% respectively (2018). A case in point would be the disproportionately lower unemployment rate among university degree holders from visible minorities (10.2%) and that among non-visible minorities (4.3%) in Montreal, the most populous city of Quebec (Gyulai, 2019). Yet, the sweeping immigration reform agenda of the party in power disregards entrenched issues of marginalization and discrimination that foreign-educated immigrants face when entering the labour market and integrating into the workforce (Djuikom, 2019) by alienating non-francophones. The educated unemployed are mainly newcomers from racialized or visible minority groups: immigrants from African, Asian, and Latin American countries (Haider, 2013). For Lacroix et al., (2017), such unequal treatment is the result of discrimination on the basis of nation and ethnic origin (Calderon Moya, 2021, p. 43), as will be explored in more detail later in Chapter Three.

Interprovincial Migration in Quebec

The rate of interprovincial migration is obtained by subtracting the number of people leaving the province from the number of people entering it. In the case of Quebec, the out-migration is much higher than the in-migration. Indeed, Quebec has shown persistent annual

losses in population through interprovincial migration over the past 45 years” (Clemens et al., 2016). From 2007 to 2012, around 40,000 residents left through out-migration (Mehler, 2012), most of whom (15,440) were allophones (speakers of languages other than French and English) (Shingler, 2017, as cited in Calderon Moya, 2021, p. 44). Moreover, according to Statistics Canada data compiled by the Montreal-based Association for Canadian Studies, 7,000 people a year left Quebec to migrate to other provinces between 2012 and 2016 (Shingler, 2017). A 2018 study by the *Institut du Québec* reported that the immigration retention rate - which measures the number of immigrants still in Quebec several years after their arrival- was 84.3% five years after their arrival and 81.8% ten years after being here. Such high departure rates place Quebec behind Ontario, British Columbia and Alberta which are Canada’s top immigration destinations (*Institut du Québec*, 2018). Interestingly, “according to the Quebec-based research group *Institut de recherche et d’informations socio-économiques* IRIS (2016), most immigrants to Quebec have higher levels of education than their Canadian-born counterparts. Specifically, IRIS reported that 43% of Quebec’s immigrants are overqualified for their jobs” (Calderon Moya, 2021, p. 44; Valiante, 2017). Considering that higher education is supposed to result in better jobs with higher salaries, it is reasonable to believe that skilled immigrants’ earnings should at least equal those of their counterparts with similar schooling (Hira-Friesen, 2018). In reality, many immigrants to Quebec end up under- employed and are poorly paid (Lacroix, 2013). This is associated with negative health effects not only for immigrants but also their families (Goldring & Landolt, 2012 as cited in Calderon Moya, 2021, p. 44). Some others decide to leave for provinces offering greater opportunities, such as Ontario, Alberta, British Columbia, and New Brunswick which are, in order of importance, the top targets for their relocation (Shingler, 2017). In addition,

Quebec's out-migration exposes the discrepancy between Quebec's successful strategies in attracting highly educated immigrants and its failure in retaining them.

Regarding interprovincial migration, Quebec also recorded the lowest level of in-migration from other provinces in Canada between 1971 and 2015 as the province attracts only minimal migration from other provinces (Clemens et al., 2016). To exemplify this, the Atlantic provinces, which have a population that is less than a third than that of Quebec, received "almost twice as much in-migration (1,868,104) as Quebec (1,069,306)" in the 44-year period (para. 10). Therefore, the net level of interprovincial migration in Quebec is negative and thus it results in loss of population. According to Jack Jedwab, president of the Association for Canadian Studies, such immigration loss contributes substantially to the older age structure of Quebec's population as most people who opt to leave Quebec for provinces offering greater job opportunities are young (between 25 and 34 years old) and in the early stages of their careers (Clemens et al., 2016; Shingler, 2017). Indeed, interprovincial migration has resulted in high economic and social expenditures for Quebec's government program for integrating immigrants (such as francization).

As described before, like many Western societies, Quebec is facing a demographic problem that has restricted economic growth for which the continuous demographic decline of the French population is among the main factors. In effect, *l'Institut de la statistique du Québec* says that Quebec's fertility is 1.59 per woman in 2016, which is lower than the peak of 1.73 in 2008 and it is certainly not enough to address immigration loss ("Fewer babies born", 2017). Compounding this is the fact that Quebec's population is aging rapidly. According to the province's statistics bureau, it is estimated that 1.1 million people will retire between 2013 and 2022 in Quebec ("Low Quebec birth", 2016). Along with this, Quebec currently struggles with

the growing shortage of skilled workers. Even worse, according to the report *Productivité et prospérité au Québec – Bilan 2017* published by HEC Montréal, the standard of living in Quebec remains one of the lowest among OECD20 member countries due to the absence of real growth in labour productivity since 1981 (Marchal, 2017). The decline in the manufacturing sector as well as in exports are the reasons behind the anemic growth for over 35 years. What is more, considering the Quebec demographic issues, the labour market will soon have to be disregarded as a central tool to stimulate the growth of Quebec's economy (Marchal, 2017).

For Jean-Guy Côté, associate director of the *Institut du Québec*, such remarkable shortage is caused by the combination of economic growth, an aging population leaving the labour market and insufficient net immigration. In a study from this institution called "Population aging and the Quebec economy" published in 2017, Côté, Savard and Scarfone made important recommendations to address Quebec's demographic issues. They mainly urged Quebec to raise the limits on immigration (Côté et al, 2017; Shingler & Rocha, 2017) as well as through the improvement of immigrant integration. This certainly points to the polarized debate between the previous governing Liberal party and the opposition parties during the 2017 election. While the Couillard's Liberal administration (from 2014 to 2018) wanted to increase immigration from 50,000 to 60,000 people a year and, more importantly, welcome immigrants based on their economic potential, the CAQ argued that decreasing the number of immigrants would ensure a more effective economic integration (Shingler & Rocha, 2017; "Low Quebec birth", 2016). Unfortunately, today we see the effects of the CAQ's own success that have failed to counter labour shortages and reduce the systemic barriers for the integration of newcomers.

Thus far, research on immigration issues in Canada (e.g., Kaushik & Drolet, 2018), which will be discussed later in this chapter, has revealed that there are significant links between race,

culture, and education affecting immigrants' integration (Nangia, 2013). Critical issues of labour market integration are important factors for Quebec residents who opt to leave for other Canadian provinces every year. Notwithstanding the significance this body of research offers, we have little understanding about the economic integration experiences of racialized minority group immigrants that result in interprovincial migration from Quebec. In this sense, before fostering campaigns that attract more skilled immigrants to a misleading welcome to the labour market, it is important to understand the distinctiveness of the minority groups' integration experiences to help policymakers develop broader and more inclusive understanding of the specific issues in target populations.

The Special Case of Quebec

Although early colonizers were mostly French European descendants and France was also establishing political control in Africa and America, the way in which they were racialized by the colonial and neocolonial Anglo-Saxons deserves particular attention. Despite similarity in skin colour and the presence of the French language in Canada, the colonial history in Quebec resulted in racial discrimination against French colonizers who were considered non-white by the Anglo-Saxon group (Scott, 2016). Examples of this marginalization are the racial discourses found in the Report on the Affairs of British North America published in 1839 where race was used as an argumentative tool to justify the need for the assimilation of French Canadians "in the name of civilization and evolutionary progress" (Scott, 2016, p. 1290). Moreover, the Catholic religion of French Canadians was also used as a marker of difference to legitimize Anglo-Canadian projects. Scott's (2016) study of the representation of race and its effect in the formation of identity in Quebec reported that the satirical magazine called "Punch in Canada"

employed a racial rhetoric to sell tales about European racial superiority and depict French colonizers as being of an inferior race and capacity (Calderon Moya, 2021, p. 42).

As such, the continued social, political, and economic marginalization and exploitation suffered by *Québécois* was equated to that of Black Americans by the journalist Vallières in his manifesto *Nègres blancs d'Amérique* (White Niggers of North America). The effect of this controversial expression not only resulted in the acknowledgement of an “experience of marginality [and] a sense of collective revolt and injustice” (Scott, 2016, p. 1292) but also reinforced accounts of race and their need for recognition as French Canadians (Calderon Moya, 2021, pp. 42-43).

However, the transition between being “non-white” and becoming “white *Québécois*” was initiated during the awakening of the powerful ethnic and national consciousness, popularly known as the “Quiet Revolution,” in the early 1960s (Scott, 2016). The Quebec government challenged English language supremacy by rejecting federal bilingualism (1969) and multiculturalism (1971) policies, and later the Multiculturalism Act (1988) that guaranteed the legal preservation of cultures, languages, and religions of its minorities (Talbani, 1993). For French Quebecers, such forthright objection reinforced their political autonomy from Canada and impeded the cultural extinction of their language and culture. Accordingly, the Quebec government enacted a number of legislative measures to ensure its cultural identity: French became the province’s sole official language with Bill 22 in 1974, and the sovereigntist *Parti Québécois* government adopted the Charter of the French Language, also known as Bill 101, in 1977. Bill 101 requires immigrant children to attend French-language schools to assimilate newcomers, defending and promoting the role of the French language and the cultural identity of the province. In 1983, as a dissent to the federal policy of multiculturalism, which “supports

cultural survivalism,” the policy of interculturalism was introduced in Quebec to promote the “perspective of assimilation of minority groups” into the Quebec society (Talbani, 1993, p. 412 as cited in Calderon Moya, p. 43) although it has not been enacted.

Interestingly, the pursuit to build a strong Quebec national identity has resulted in contradictions. The development of the national character of *Québécois* that placed Quebecers as the dominant ethnic group with access to white privilege (Scott, 2016, p. 1293) occurred while non-French speakers and racialized visible minorities such as Vietnamese, Haitian, and Latin Americans immigrated to the province (Ghosh & Abdi, 2013). Paradoxically, the critical need to increase the Quebec population through immigration resulted in the perception of these cultural groups as a psychological threat to the survival of the French language (Ghosh & Abdi, 2013) and thus created economic barriers for their integration (Vaillancourt et al., 2007). Indeed, the racial undertone given to the terms “ethnic” and “immigrant” in Quebec has been reflected in those obstacles. A case in point is explained by Ghosh and Abdi (2013) who underline the discriminatory connotations behind the erroneous assumption that all immigrants are non-white and that all non-white individuals are immigrants. This is observed in the fact that white immigrants integrate more easily to the dominant group in Quebec, while those considered non-white are still labeled as immigrants regardless of the length of time they live in the province (Calderon Moya, 2021, p. 43).

The distinctions of Quebec are rooted in having French as the only official language although Canada has both English and French as official languages. Moreover, there is a constant concern to set immigration law reforms that protect the linguistic and cultural identity of the province. This is most clearly demonstrated in the “democratic values and Quebec values test”, another fulfilled election promise made by the CAQ, which immigrants to Canada who

wish to become permanent residents in Quebec are required to pass since January 2020 (Shingler, 2019). Yet, for immigration lawyers and representatives from ethnic group associations in Quebec, the implications of such tests expose the idea of immigrants as lacking the desired “values” to integrate well into the Quebec society (Elghawaby, 2019; Lapierre, 2019), thus contributing to the *othering* of newcomers (Calderon Moya, 2021, p. 43).

As the section on Out-Migration above has shown, although immigrants have higher levels of education, they are often under-employed and many leave Quebec for better employment opportunities in other provinces. One major area of concern for skilled immigrants, mainly in Quebec, is the non-recognition or devaluation of their foreign educational credentials and experience, which is shown to be a contributing factor to their lower economic prospects in Canada (Armony, 2015b, as cited in Calderon Moya, 2021, p. 44). “In consequence, some immigrants from ethnic groups, contrary to those from traditional sources of immigration such as Europe (Djuikom, 2019), attempt to obtain a university or college degree in the host country in order to ensure their employability and professional development in the long term” (Calderon Moya, 2021, p. 44).

However, employers demonstrate bias towards immigrant workers: they tend to prioritize Canadian experience over foreign experience (Dunn, 2016), perceive immigrant professionals as possessing insufficient French language proficiency, and may consider having a “strong accent” to be related to someone of lesser skill and competence (Lapointe, 2018). This implies that the French language plays a key role in Quebec “settler society’s ideological project of separating” whites from non-whites, the “members” of the nation from ethnic groups, in order to maintain its superiority (Iyengar, 2014, p. 41, as cited in Calderon Moya, 2021, p. 44).

Intercultural education

Quebec's interculturalism model has been the subject of social and scholarly critique as its main aim has been the linguistic and cultural adaptation of minority groups into the francophone society (Ghosh & Abdi, 2013) rather than the preservation of diversity (Waddington, et al., 2012). In effect, Quebec's government has paid little attention to issues of racism and systemic discrimination which result in the unequal participation of minority groups in educational and economic spheres. Similarly, critical pedagogy researchers indicate the need for Canada's multicultural education to be redefined so that it challenges "inequities of wealth and power" which currently reflect the majority group dominance (Ghosh & Abdi, 2013, p. 138).

With the passing of the Charter of the French Language in 1977, French was mandated as the official language in work and in education. Although the intercultural policy "is not formalized in the same way as language legislation", Quebec's intercultural education became the main agent in educational politics (Ghosh & Abdi, 2013). It was through the immigrants' adoption of French as the first language, also known as francization, that Quebec francophone society would promote its interests. However, the characteristics of the interculturalism model, a contrasting approach to the Canada's Multiculturalism policy (1971), created various debatable discussions about the potential success of immigrant integration and language learning. While multiculturalism celebrates cultural and racial diversity (DesRoches, 2014), the aim of interculturalism is integrating cultural communities within the framework of linguistic and cultural assimilation of minority groups into the francophone society (Talbani, 1993).

Indeed, Quebec public schools did not provide learners with the tools to challenge oppression through curriculum or the school environment (Arshad-Ayaz, 2011; Ghosh & Abdi, 2013) until the design and delivery of the Ethics and Religious Culture (ERC) compulsory course

for primary and secondary public and private schools across the province by the Jean Charest's Liberal government in 2008. The purpose behind the ERC program was to address the changing religious/non-religious diversity of minority groups in Quebec by providing students with tools to achieve an understanding of how individuals with different religious values co-exist in equality. However, after the passing of Bill 21 in 2019, several leading intellectuals from the Quebec's nationalist movement pushed an agenda that includes the elimination of "all instruction on comparative religions from the school curriculum" as they feel strongly concerned ERC program encourages and/or indoctrinates students into official multiculturalism (Nakonechny, 2019, para. 10). The Education Minister Jean-François Roberge announced replacement of the ERC program with a Quebec Citizenship and Culture course by 2023 ("Quebec to replace", 2021), representing a major transformation in the primary and secondary school curriculum. While ERC focused on diversity, the new course will focus on Quebec culture, citizenship and dialogue, and the development of critical thinking to be offered in 2023. The minister has said that the current program puts too much emphasis on religion and "religion is no longer the lens through which [they] understand Quebec culture" (Schwartz, 2021, para. 5).

Therefore, as McDonough and Feinberg (2003) emphasize in their work, public education in liberal multicultural societies is in a critical position today due to the failure of the education systems to build nations based on democratic values that unite their diverse ethnic, cultural, and religious members. As such, the fact of not adequately addressing and/or overseeing inequalities fails to address concerns advanced by neo-Marxist scholars that the liberal-democratic state, and its educational institutions, are agents of "colonization and oppression" (p. 2). In addition, critical pedagogical theories state that the structures and markers of difference, such as language and ethnicity, that perpetuate inadequate concepts and practices of equity result

in the impediment of learners to be able to become analytical and critical enough to evaluate situations that go against the rights typical of a democracy (Giroux, 1992). Consequently, learners develop a partial and harmful understanding of complex societal issues such as segregation, marginalization, and xenophobia thus compromising the development of positive contributions for their lives and society at large. Clearly, Eurocentric values in education perpetuate the idea that the Western culture is superior to all other cultures and reduce race and ethnicity “to a discourse of the *Other*” (Giroux, 1991, p. 220). The philosophy of education certainly misrepresents and marginalizes the presence of minority cultures other than those that are dominant in Quebec. Thus, the homogenizing influence of the Quebec government in public schools, because of Bill 101, which relegated Anglophone and allophone languages to secondary status, highlights its responsibility in the spread of a message of francophone dominance.

Considering those pervasive issues, if the aim of Quebec’s interculturalism model is to promote liberal democratic values (as I believe they are) in the public education system, then these values need to be shaped within the various associations of minority groups that secures the positive development of vulnerable groups within a congruent cultural context. As such, educators not only need to raise their awareness of the cultural, linguistic, and ethnic differences between students but also empower students to challenge the practices and institutions of the dominant society which will help them develop a sense of self-confidence necessary to preserve their culture (Ghosh & Abdi, 2013; McDonough & Feinberg, 2003).

The Role of Language in Quebec: Classe d’accueil and Francization

Having rejected both the bilingualism and multiculturalism federal policies, the province of Quebec placed itself in a unique position in Canada. Through its own intercultural education approach “that focuses on integrating immigrant students into the francophone and pluralist

province” (Calderon & Butler-Kisber, 2019, p. 95), Quebec uses *classe d'accueil* model (welcome class) for primary and secondary students to learn French as well as the culture and values of the province before gradually entering regular classes. Interestingly, the rest of Canada applies a second-language learning model in which students are placed directly into mainstream classes (while receiving English as a Second Language support). Nevertheless, questions have been raised about the academic and social isolation of *classe d'accueil* system from the mainstream (Allen, 2006) which segregate newcomers from native French speakers and allophone students (Allen, 2006) not to mention the psychological stress which may be reflected in low motivation and loss of interest in their education (Baffoe, 2006).

In the case of immigrant students who arrive in Quebec after the age of 16, they are given the choice to complete their high school diploma in adult education centres, which are divided in linguistic lines (French and English school boards). Adult education institutions offer the *francisation* (Frenchification) program, which together with *accueil* represent the foundation of immigration policy in Quebec. Nevertheless, recent literature on Syrian refugees in Quebec highlights a disjuncture between the skills acquired in integration language courses, which are basic and conversational ones, and the standard skills required in academic settings such as adult education centres (Ghosh et al. 2021) and higher education institutions.

Additionally, despite the growth of knowledge of French among residents of Quebec, (Statistics Canada, 2016), the use of English continues to be attractive for immigrants whose objectives are to meet work force demands as well as achieving a quick adaptation to life in Montreal, the only *de facto* bilingual city in the continent. More importantly, parents in Quebec - anglophone, francophone and allophone - give high importance to raising bilingual children (Fletcher, 2021) and thus complain about the the low quality (frequency and intensity) of English

as a second language (ESL) courses in French schools which fail to address the future academic demands their children would need if choosing to pursue higher education in English-speaking institutions (Fletcher, 2021). Indeed, Statistics Canada found that most young Canadians (from 15 to 27 years) tend to be bilingual, mainly in Quebec and New Brunswick provinces (“Bilingualism on the rise”, 2019). An example of this is the significant growth of allophone and francophone speakers in English-language *CÉGEP*³s since early 2000s (Rowe, 2021). Although Quebec Premier François Legault well recognized the need to improve the quality of English teaching in primary and secondary school (Fletcher, 2021), the controversial proposed language legislation (Bill 96) which reinforces and protects the French language completely overlooks the necessity to improve the ESL curriculum and aims “to keep the proportion of [francophone] students in English language *CÉGEP*s at [only] 17.5 per cent of the total population” (Henriquez, 2021, para. 2) as a response to the decline of enrolment in French *CÉGEP*s. As critics have noted, the educational prospects of francophones [and allophones] are cut in aims to win a long-lasting linguistic political battle against multilingualism (Drimonis, 2021). Interestingly, in the case of Montreal, it should be noted that this disputed language politics have resulted in immigrants wavering between the two official languages while remaining more attached to their first language (Aubin, 2007). Given the circumstances of changing demographics and the reality of bilingualism, if not, multilingualism in Quebec, the issue of the role of the language in the province still requires profound adjustments.

Montreal’s Distinctiveness

Most Latin American immigrants to Canada decide to settle in “the predominantly English-speaking and fully immersed Anglo-American cultural framework [city of] Toronto”

³ A *CÉGEP* is a publicly funded college unique to the province of Quebec.

while those who opt for settling in Quebec prefer “the other French-speaking, culturally and politically removed from the rest of the continent [city of] Montreal” (Armony, 2014, p. 8). Although Quebec City is the capital and the second-largest city in the province, Quebec’s economic future is directly linked to Montreal where 86.8% of Quebec immigrants lived (Montreal Census Metropolitan Area) in 2011 as compared to Toronto where 70.3% of Ontario’s population (Boudarbat & Grenier, 2017). According to data from Statistics Canada (2016), visible minority groups will represent 31% of Montreal’s population by 2031 yet in the province of Quebec this estimation would not be higher than five per cent (“Low Quebec birth”, 2016). In effect, Quebec holds the lowest number of visible minority members in the country given that from the number of immigrants admitted between 2001 and 2011, only two-thirds were considered visible minorities versus more than 80% in Ontario as well as British Columbia (Boudarbat & Grenier, 2017). Further, there is a high proportion of Blacks and Arabs (from French-speaking countries) within visible minorities in Montreal, which makes it different from that of Toronto or Vancouver (Statistics Canada, 2005) where there are large numbers of immigrants from Asia.

In the same vein, Marc Termote, a *Université de Montréal* demographer, expressed his concern over this geographic concentration and the growing cultural and linguistic divisions between Montreal and other cities that have resulted from it (“Low Quebec birth”, 2016). Similarly, Daniel Weinstock, director of the McGill Institute for Health and Social Policy, pointed out, for instance, that Brossard (one of Montreal’s suburbs) holds a much higher proportion of immigrants than all of Quebec City. He casts a critical eye on how the challenges of having a more and more culturally distinct Quebec face will be addressed by political authorities (“Low Quebec birth”, 2016).

To summarize, the geographical concentration of immigrants in the city of Montreal, the underlying importance given to the French language, and the higher barriers to employment access than elsewhere in Canada are among the specific challenges of Quebec in terms of maximizing the benefits of its immigrants' economic integration (Boudarbat & Grenier, 2017). Yet, this important *Quebec variable* has, unfortunately, been ignored not only by successive governments of Quebec but also in Canadian scholarship studies (Armony, 2014).

Latin American Immigrants in Canada

Many scholars of immigration, such as Johnston (2016), Knowles (2016) and Abella and Troper (2012), point out that early Canadian immigration policies were undoubtedly discriminatory. Indeed, “[t]he institutionalized hierarchy of ethnic preferences” (Potvin, 2010, p. 269) plainly excluded non-White/non-European applicants. An indisputable example of discrimination is the great commotion that the entrance of a group of Black Bermudians, as British colonial subjects, caused in the Nova Scotia Assembly in 1815. The Assembly not only complained to the English Crown for sending this ethnic group to Canada but also requested their repatriation and the further prohibition of such migration (Gutiérrez Rodríguez, 2018). Such Eurocentric bias was related to “Canada’s original imaginary as a White settler colony” thus undermining the presence and participation of Aboriginal Nations and immigrants in the nation’s history (Calderon Moya, 2021, p. 46; Galabuzi, 2006, p. 1; Ghosh & Abdi, 2013).

In like manner, immigration restrictions were based on race, language, and national origin until 1960s. These laws and policies mainly sought individuals from Britain, the United States, and Northern European nations, tolerated those from Southern European nations, but excluded those from other nationalities (Potvin, 2010), such as Middle-Easterners and Latin Americans. However, in 1967, Canada removed national origin as a factor in selecting

immigrants and welcomed those from non-European nations “on the basis of educational or occupational qualifications, and of family ties with Canadians and permanent residents in Canada” (Galabuzi, 2006, p. 2). This important reversal in immigration pattern, mainly due to the need for a professional population and global immigration trends, has resulted in Canada’s demographic growth dependence on immigration from racialized countries as they represent the main source of the country’s labour market (Calderon Moya, 2021, p. 46; Galabuzi, 2006).

Nevertheless, visible minority individuals have often experienced overt displays of racial discrimination and/or racial microaggressions (Pierce, as cited in Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). According to a recent study from the Environics Institute for Survey Research, work is the most common place where people of colour face discrimination. Based on this research on people’s experiences with racial discrimination at work, Arjumand Siddiqi, the Canada Research Chair in Population Health Equity, casts a critical eye on structural racism and indicates how workplace policies or management systematically oppress some groups compared to others (Bowden, 2019). Concretely, there is a bias at the higher level of organizations to associate certain racial and ethnic groups with certain professions and/or occupations. A specific example would be the fact that for decades, Haitian immigrants have been relegated to do menial labour such as drive taxis in Montreal (Calderon Moya, 2021, p. 46; Pégram, 2005).

Most Latin American immigrants and their children differ from non-immigrants in ethnic fabric, culture, and language. Moreover, “Latin American immigration encompasses 20 countries (19 Spanish and a Portuguese speaking one) from North, Central, and South America, including both low-and middle-income countries” (Calderon Moya, 2021, p. 46). In this sense, it is important to explore the socio-economic background that immigrants from Latin American countries bring to Quebec and which, consequently, influences the way they perceive the new

society and the way they think they are perceived. Firstly, Latin America is one of the most ethnically diverse regions in the world, which is shown in its *mestizaje*, a term describing the unity of the mixing of races such as Native Americans, Europeans, Africans, Asians for more than 500 years. More importantly, most Latin American societies are colonialized neoliberal nations where racism, classism and postcolonial practices have been normalized on every social sphere. Further, the "superiority" of urban non-racialized wealthy groups, which represent the minority group in most nations, is shown in the socioeconomic and political power they hold over poor racialized groups, which are often the larger groups. To exemplify this, the highly competitive second round Peruvian general elections, which took place last June, greatly undercovered the postcolonial reality of the oppressed and underrepresented individuals from the high lands, the Amazon regions - the poorest and furthest regions from the capital city (Lima) - and that of Afro-Peruvians. Against all odds, the leftist Pedro Castillo, a *mestizo* rural schoolteacher and union leader was elected over Keiko Fujimori, a former congresswoman and a three-time presidential candidate from the right-wing populist party who was openly supported by urban privileged elites from Lima and some in the cities of the north coast. Interestingly, this democratic event raised the discussion, as it does every five years, about the absolute non-recognition, or denial, of structural racism and marginalization against non-white Peruvians. Perhaps more importantly, it has also exacerbated political and business elites' absolute condemnation of everything and everyone that tries to break the status quo.

Historically, immigration from Latin America to Canada began only six decades ago and has been determined by changes in immigration policy. Indeed, Latin American immigration to Canada has been shaped by distinct migratory waves. The first migration, called the lead wave, refers to professionals or skilled workers, mainly from Argentina and Brazil and with an ethno-

linguistic link to Europe, who arrived in Canada during the 1956-65 period (Mata, 1985). Next was the wave associated with political instability and armed conflicts, also named coup wave (Schugurensky & Ginieniewicz, 2007), which occurred in the 1970s with the federal's open-door immigration policy. To illustrate, many Chilean and Argentinians refugees arrived in Quebec escaping from dictatorships. Equally important is the Andean wave, mainly composed by Ecuadorians and Colombians, who primarily arrived in Montreal and Toronto during 1973 and 1975 to improve their standard of living (Mata, 1985). Next is the Central American wave of armed conflict in the 1980s, which brought an important number of Salvadorian refugees, who migrated due to political persecution and social losses (Calderon Moya, 2021, p. 47; Mata, 1985).

In contrast to those migratory groups is the wave of Latin Americans consisting of migrant farm workers who work in peripheral markets that struggle to attract local workers. This wave has gained great importance in the last two decades. Whether hired under the federal Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP), which was firstly introduced in 1966 with Caribbean countries (and Mexico and Guatemala years after), or under the agricultural stream of a federal immigration pilot project for low-skilled occupations requiring lower education levels (introduced in 2002), Latin American temporary farm workers are mainly of Mexican and Guatemalan origin. Importantly, the continuous calls and efforts from various advocacy groups for policy change so that migrant farm workers could unionize and improve their precarious status has not received the required attention from authorities (Paz, 2008). This demand-driven immigration is characterized by lower wages, long shifts of physically demanding labour in the heat, and being bound to a single employer for periods of up to eight months (Hanley et al., 2015). Clearly, agricultural workers have received such different treatment from other workers

that they are often discouraged to voice their unfair “working conditions or health concerns as this may result in early termination of a contract or eliminate the possibility of returning the following year” (Van Haren & Masferrer, 2019, para.13). By all indications, the origins of such migrant labour recruitment schemes depict a racist ideology that greatly limits legal frameworks from protecting the rights of temporary workers. These schemes therefore result in boundaries between Canadians, in this case Quebecers, and the immigrants who have significantly contributed to maintenance of the agricultural industry (Hanley et al., 2015). Indeed, while agricultural workers play an essential role in the province’s food production during the eight months of harvest season, the interest in them as individuals is far from fundamental to authorities and thus to the Quebec society. As Lowe (2007) well recognized: “[w]hen migrant workers are constantly positioned as the *Other*, outside of the Canadian identity and imagined community, the Canadian state justifies its policies affecting migrant workers, and the public complies” (Lowe, 2007, p. 18-19). Following this, on Sharma’s (2020) account, the state and private capitalist development projects concern for immigrants is “simply to ensure an adequate supply of exploitable labor” (Sharma, 2020, p. 166) rather than an equal interest in individuals as contributors to the economic growth (Calderon Moya, 2021, p. 48).

Lastly, the professional wave of Latin American migration, which began in the mid-1990s and continues, includes individuals as independent-class immigrants on the basis of their skills and professional experience (Schugurensky & Ginieniewicz, 2007, as cited in Calderon Moya, 2021, p. 48). Therefore, given the different socioeconomic backgrounds, language knowledge, professional and occupational skills strongly indicate heterogeneity within the Latin American population in Quebec.

The Latin American Community in Quebec

Research indicates that Quebec attracts more Latin American immigrants under the skilled-worker status than the rest of Canada as a whole (Armony, 2014). While language proximity and Catholic background are factors that may play an important role for this demographic pull, it does not necessarily translate into positive intergroup relations. “In his study of Quebecers of Latin American origin in relation to their contradictory welcome and segregation, Armony (2017) demonstrates that Latin Americans in Quebec are not only distinguished by their trilingualism but by their more frequent use of French at work (69%) compared to an average of 56% of all immigrants” (Calderon Moya, 2021, p. 48). Yet, large numbers of Latin American immigrants face discriminatory practices in the job market and education; such practices have resulted in their social, economic, and political marginalization in Quebec (Armony, 2015a.). While these facts are certainly not exclusive to Quebec, the continuing low socio-economic status of many professional Latin American immigrants indicates an undeniable contradiction between the Quebec government’s rhetoric on improving strategies to integrate foreign-educated immigrants into the professional labour market and its disregard for the systemic discrimination minority group immigrants face (Calderon Moya, 2021, p. 48).

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the context and literature review used to provide background for this study. As outlined in this chapter, I presented a broad description of migration in Quebec, the special case of Quebec and Latin American immigrants in Canada. Specifically, I emphasized that the unique position of Quebec in Canada and its focus on maintaining the use of the French language through immigration policies has a negative impact on the effective

economic integration of racialized skilled immigrants. In the following chapter, I review the existing theories and concepts that guide my study.

Chapter Three: Theoretical Framework

Introduction

This chapter discusses how the theoretical lenses of Critical Race Theory, Post-Colonial theory and Global Neoliberal Capitalism help to analyze the voices of educated Latin American immigrants on issues related to their integration in Quebec. In the following section, I briefly describe these theoretical perspectives, including relevant concepts of Whiteness and systemic discrimination to demonstrate their applicability to my study.

Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory (hereafter CRT) originally started as jurisprudence in the legal academy to critically study and transform the intersection of race, racism and power in American society (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Laurence & Marvin, 2002). CRT builds on earlier legal movements such as critical legal studies and radical feminism's insights.

The foundations of CRT began with the notion that racism was normal and natural to members of the American society and/or culture. In effect, race determines economic prospects due to the race-conscious market, influences politics and shapes the conduct of law enforcement (Delgado, & Stefancic, 2013). In addition, CRT questions the limitations of liberalism in law (Laurence & Marvin, 2002) and claims that the substantial changes that are required by racism cannot be made by the limited mechanism of the liberal order, which supports the rather slow process of gaining citizen rights for people of colour (Taylor et al., 2009). Furthermore, CRT scholars insist on the need to challenge civil rights legislation that continues to benefit the interests of the majority group (whites) and thus develops a lack of interest in the majority group to eradicate it (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Taylor et al., 2009).

CRT has rapidly spread beyond the jurisprudence discipline in various academic disciplines such as politics, ethnic studies, sociology, philosophy, theology, and education. For

instance, education specialists have adopted CRT's ideas to insure equal opportunity and treatment in educational theory and practice in specific areas such as curriculum, instruction, and assessment (Taylor et al., 2009). Regarding curriculum, critical race theorists question the American Anglocentric school curriculum (Delgado et al., 2017) in which a colour-blind perspective maintains "a white supremacist master script" that mutes marginalized groups (Taylor et al., 2009, p. 29).

The increasing growth of the Latin American population in the United States, more specifically their high enrollment in American public schools, has resulted in the rapid emergence of Latino/Latina education. Such educational accounts give further quantitative indicators of failure rather than focus on in-depth accounts that reveal the narratives of Latino/a students (also known as Chicana/Chicano students). To that end, critical Latino thinkers opted to put forward their own perspectives on issues such as immigration and language rights to challenge "proxy discrimination", in which Latinos are targeted "on the basis of foreign accent, name or ancestry" (Delgado et al., 2017, p. 93).

Further, CRT and Latino critical theory (LatCri), which was initiated by a group of Latino/a law professors in 1995 (Valdes & Bender, 2021), are intellectual and social movements imbedded in recognizing race, gender, class, and sexuality not only as social constructions but also as markers that have solid effects on individuals (Fernández, 2016). While LatCri could be seen to be particularly useful for this study, the special interest of this critical tool could not be helpful in facilitating the understanding of skilled Latin American immigrants in Quebec since the marginalization that this group encounters in the labour market in Quebec differs from the contexts LatCri's observe in the U.S. To exemplify this, most Latin Americans in Canada are educated and skilled in the official languages living in the main metropolitan areas of the

country. The feeling of belonging to Canada is shared among most of this allophone group (Loya, 2017). Also, the Latin American group is diverse in terms of national origin, relatively newly settled, smaller and, certainly, a much less salient community than the U.S. counterpart, which represents 18.4% of its total population (Office of Minority Health, 2021). With respect to national origins, the three main Latin American nationalities in Canada are Mexican, Colombian, and Salvadorian (while they only represent, 17.8, 14.2, and 11.9% of the total Latin American population, respectively in the U.S. where 63% of Hispanics are Mexican, 9.3% Puerto Rican and 3.5% Cuban (Armony, 2015a). Lastly, because minorities are, admittedly, shaped differently by their societal context, the reality of Latin Americans in the Quebec context is especially particular due to its dominant French-speaking majority and English-speaking minority group. Therefore, while the use of LatCri was not useful for the purposes of this study, it may still be useful as a way of exploring other aspects of this significant ethnic group in the U.S.

That being said, I will use the analytical lens of Critical Race Theory perspectives in examining existing power structures which perpetuate the marginalization of skilled Latin American immigrants in Quebec. To do so, I will analyze the extent to which ethnic discrimination has permeated in Quebec's job market. CRT's tenets certainly provide the necessary tools to help acknowledge the perpetration of racism in the Quebec economy and its effects on the Latin American immigrant minority. What is more, such tools could hopefully help marginalized groups escape alienation by raising their voice to assert their membership rather than accepting the position of the *Other* (Galabuzi, 2006).

Whiteness

Although race is a social construct that lacks biological foundation (Yudell et al., 2016), it remains a problematic and an inextinguishable concept that is present in today's race-conscious world (Mo & Jandt, 2004). In effect, race is a belief that is shaped by the preferences, social conventions, history and politics of every society and thus such belief influences the thinking and behaviour of its members as well as the operations of some social institutions (Rex as cited in Satzewich, 2011). Paradoxically, although knowledge of other peoples and cultures is increasing, as a social phenomenon racism persists in modern societies in various categories and manifestations (Ching et al., 2007; Delgado et al., 2017; Satzewich, 2011). Specifically, immigrants, particularly those of colour, are often faced with racial/ethnic discrimination, or at least are often victims of microaggressions (Casas, 2016). While the latter take the form of micro-aggressions such as "subtle insults" often offered unconsciously, "layered insults" (based on race, language, immigration status, phenotype, accent, etc.), and "cumulative insults" that privilege the white majority (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 160), their implications are as negative as the various forms of racism (Casas, 2016).

It is important to note though that political correctness has led to the decline of the legitimacy of racism and influenced the use of supposedly more neutral terms to grouping individuals based on phenotypical characteristics. For instance, the term ethnicity, widely accepted by academic scholars, refers specifically to individuals' cultural identity or place of origin which includes, for instance, language, religion, and customs (Ghosh & Abdi, 2013), rather than only differences in physical characteristics. Yet, for Peter Wade, a social anthropology professor at the University of Manchester who is specialized in the Latin American context, racism and cultural identity "have constantly intermingled and mutually reinforced one

another” in Latin American history (Ching et al., 2007, p. 93). In effect, the term ethnicity is used to refer to “non-Western groups” thus relegating them “to a lesser status” (Ghosh & Abdi, 2013, p. 55). In other words, the shift from racism to ethnicity not only indicates a shift from overt forms of oppression to covert ones since both terms produce similar effects in Western societies (Ghosh & Abdi, 2013).

No doubt skin colour is the arbitrary “index-finger length” category of race that determines physical and cultural capacities (Satzewich, 2011, p. 3) and whiteness, whether acknowledged or not, is “intrinsically linked to unfolding relations of domination” (Frankenberg, 1993, p. 6). Beyond this, since notions of whiteness are based on Eurocentric discourses resulting from colonialism and neocolonialism, they go beyond discriminatory practices based on skin complexion and have expanded to normative prejudice against other ethnocultural group members (Shome, 1999) who are usually seen as inferior (Tator & Henry, 2006). Indeed, in Canada, visible minorities and cultural communities are groupings that anglophones as well as francophones distance themselves from, which certainly enables them to preserve their white privilege while creating “unequal power relations” (Ghosh & Abdi, 2013, p. 59).

While studies on whiteness have emerged in historical research on racial discrimination and racialized/colonized subjects such as African Americans and Native Americans, its impact has also been recognized by sociology and cultural studies scholars, such as Giroux (1997) and Sleeter (1993). These scholars focus on the critical relations of whiteness with the political formation of American and European institutions where schools have substantial cultural gaps between immigrant children and teachers (Sleeter, 2016). With this in mind, the lack of awareness on this matter in public school philosophies can certainly impede future adequate

responses from new generations towards the issues of equity, power relations, and social justice that minority groups often have to confront (Casas, 2016).

Anti-racist education in Canada applies an approach that places racism as the source of conflict and hostility (Satzewich, 2011). An important approach within this educational perspective is that it focuses on “white privilege” in order to achieve the conscious recognition of whiteness as “privilege, power, authority, normalcy, legitimacy, beauty, purity, and refinement” (Mo & Jandt, 2004, p. 59) that contributes to institutional problems. Nevertheless, some anti-racist programs have resulted in the defense stance of those in power who do not accept, and/or acknowledge, their position of power and privilege (Satzewich, 2011). In Satzewich’s view, racism is not the “exclusive domain of white people” (p. 9); however, education is undoubtedly significant in raising awareness of the problem and increasing knowledge about diverse communities. Currently, multicultural pedagogy and programs are not adequately designed to equip white teachers to reflexively analyze the power of their roles as educators and representatives of a predominantly white host society (Sleeter, 2016). In addition, educational institutions need to question the adequacy of their treatment of cultural diversity in their programs as well as acknowledge their privilege from an unspoken position of power. Beyond this, other critical aspects in education that need to be analytically reviewed are the limited representation of minority groups in the teaching profession, the growing diversity of the student population, as well as teachers’ assumptions about non-white students’ learning difficulties (Mo & Jandt, 2004).

White Privilege in Quebec

History in Quebec has tended to hide the imperialistic pre-colonial cruelty of the violent European conquest. By telling myths and colonial adventures about British and French

voyageurs and colonizers in an empty land, First Nations' identities and rights have been ignored (Scott, 2016). As described in chapter one, although French Canadians were mostly French European descendants, that is similarity in skin colour, and France was also establishing political control in Africa and America, they were subjected to racial marginalization by the colonial and neocolonial influences which had a deep impact on Quebec. Indeed, the colonial history in Quebec points out the effects of racial discrimination against French colonizers who were considered non-white (Scott, 2016) on the way immigration policies in Quebec have *othered* immigrants from racialized countries.

In 2007, the Quebec premier Jean Charest mandated the Quebec Consultation Commission on Accommodation Practices Related to Cultural Differences, subsequently known as the Bouchard-Taylor commission (named for its two co-chairmen) in response to the public discontent related to the “reasonable accommodation” of cultural and religious minority groups. In addition to Bill 101 discussed in the previous chapter, the practices related to cultural differences in Quebec created several discussions around the given recommendations that aimed to preserve secularism while fostering interculturalism. One of the central conclusions of the landmark report suggested that most public servants should be able to wear religious symbols except for those who exercise the coercive authority of the state. For Satzewich (2011), the proposals from the academics Gérard Bouchard and Charles Taylor mainly addressed the claimed to be unreasonable demands of Muslims to Quebec society and fell far from a critical examination of Quebec society. More importantly, the idea of “accommodating the other” implied the assumption of integrating new Canadians into the dominant Quebec society and disregarded an integration process that would include members of majority as well as minority groups (Ghosh & Abdi, 2013). Interestingly, in an open letter published in a Montreal newspaper

McGill philosophy professor Charles Taylor backed away from the secularism recommendation of the report in 2017, mainly due to the several incidents of aggression against Muslim women wearing the veil, (Montpetit, 2017). Commissioner Taylor confessed he was never convinced of the restrictions of wearing of religious symbols by those who exercise the so-called “coercive” functions of the State (Montpetit, 2017).

Further discussions surrounding the “common Quebec values” introduced by the *Parti Québécois* government in 2013 such as equality and secularism denoted intolerance and discrimination against Muslims thus stimulating sentiments of xenophobia and islamophobia (Scott, 2016). Islamophobia represents a new form of racism that quickly expanded after the attacks of September 11, 2001 (Satzewich, 2011). In Quebec, the foundation of two far-right groups, “Storm Alliance” and “*La Meute*” indicate how marginalization, and more importantly, white nationalism has gained ground. “*La Meute*”, French for “The Wolf Pack”, was founded in 2015 when Syrian refugees started arriving in Canada. While this movement, which holds a membership of 40,000 individuals, aims to mobilize people against Muslim domination and sharia law, it embodies the fear and misunderstanding of Muslim culture combined with the distrust in government political parties to administer the flow of migration quotas (Thevenot, 2017).

Another key point surrounds “the shifting sands of majority and minority positionalities” in the province (Scott, 2016, p. 1294). Since the 1960s, because of the post-war economic boom, the *Québécois* middle class, Anglophone Quebecers included, greatly improved their socio-economic status (Clark as cited in Scott, 2016). Yet, such socio-economic dominance of the white majority in Quebec (yet a minority in relation to Canada) shaped its relationship with its racialized minorities by reinforcing accounts of race and thus allegiances to whiteness (Scott,

2016; Waddell, 2008). In other words, the link of racism with power and the politics of class is openly exposed in “the connection between majority privilege and minority oppression” (Galabuzi, 2006, p. 236).

Additionally, in June 2019 the governing party *Coalition Avenir Québec* (CAQ) passed Bill 21 which impedes public servants in positions of authority, such as schoolteachers, police officers, peace officers and government lawyers, from wearing religious symbols (such as the Muslim hijab or chador or Jewish kippah) in the workplace. While for decision-makers, however, Bill 21 defends liberal cornerstones such as freedom of religion, the separation of state and religion, it causes harm and oppression to religious minorities (Saad, 2019) who wear such markers as an act of expression and faith and thus feel frustrated between the conflict of preserving their religious practices while pursuing their profession in the public service. Interestingly, this legislation immediately created criticism in legal experts who questioned the constitutionality of this controversial secularism or *laïcité* (laicity) as it challenged personal and religious rights, which are guaranteed by the Canadian and Quebec Charters of Rights (Montpetit & Shingler, 2021).

Certainly, by protecting secularism through the creation of a space for “freedom from religion in the workplace”, this *laïcité* law creates barriers for integration of people who would wear religious symbols, particularly, the already marginalised Muslim women. In April 2021, a Quebec Superior Court judge (“Quebec’s Bill 21”, 2021) said Bill 21 violates minority educational rights, as well as the right to serve in the provincial legislature stipulated in Canada’s constitution. Indeed, the Superior Court Justice Marc-André Blanchard highlighted the way religious minority education students are denied the liberty of occupying places in public education which “excludes some [of them] from full participation in society” (“Quebec’s Bill

21”, 2021, para. 5). Predictably, Quebec Justice Minister Simon Jolin-Barrette, immediately expressed the government plans to appeal (Montpetit & Shingler, 2021).

In sum, although French Quebecers today no longer consider themselves a marginalized and racialized group, they still feel marginalized and under pressure to assimilate to the Anglocentric American and Canadian language (Scott, 2016). Ironically, French Quebec’s racialized past and the insistence that *Québécois* are in fact white have played an important role in the economic boundaries between Quebec immigrants and their counterparts. The anxieties felt by Quebecers of French-Canadian descent about the apparent threat of a “diverse” identity has resulted in their active role as the white and dominant group in the province.

Citizenship in Quebec

Quebec’s Quiet Revolution also led to an active and progressive involvement in the federal approach to immigration law and policy. Indeed, Quebec successfully “pioneer[ed] its way to more provincial power” for decades (Nijboer, 2010, p. 14) and, as mentioned before, was granted autonomy in the selection of its economic immigrants in 1991 primarily due to its preference for French-speaking immigrants. Such successful involvement preceded the signature of similar autonomy in immigration with other provincial authorities to achieve specific community interests (Calderon Moya, 2021, p. 44).

Clearly, the various changes in the political, institutional, and social sectors in Quebec that resulted from the legislative measures taken to protect the uniqueness of its language and cultural identity made a remarkable break with the second-class status *Québécois* had received for two centuries. With the adoption of French as the language of government and law in 1974, language policy in Quebec built on the existing pillars for structural and institutional racism (Haque & Patrick, 2015; Scott, 2016) as the new rise of Quebec nationalist sentiment primarily

included a notion of race that identified only French Quebecers, who shared a common language, religion, and a set of common ancestors from whom *Québécois* descended (Makropoulos, 2004). In effect, the new racialized condition of “*Québécois*” neglected the record of non-French speakers and racialized visible minorities in the French province: it relegated the language of Quebec anglophones and ignored the legitimacy of French-speaking citizens of immigrant origin as equal members of society (Walcott, 2014), such as Chinese individuals who migrated to the province in the late 19th century; it diminished the role of Indigenous peoples as co-founders of Quebec, not to mention their claim as the one and only original founding nation; it ignored the historical struggles of Black people, despite the African presence from the inception of Quebec as a French colony between 1603 and 1608; and it disregarded the historical struggles of other ethnic communities, who provided many essential services (Calderon Moya, 2021, p. 44; Makropoulos, 2004).

Immigration policy in Quebec clearly favours French-speaking people. Yet, while it has been the main tool through which French has been protected and vitalized since the Quiet Revolution, anti-racist critics agree that Quebec’s language politics, which has used the lens of cultural and linguistic differences as the main factor for the province’s relations with its internal others, only responded to the province’s unavoidable economic need for non-White immigration. Juteau (2002) maintains that language was mainly an instrumental issue for the construction of “the ethnocentric connotations associated with the term *Québécois*” (p. 448), and, more importantly, was the means through which the Quebec nation built its homogenized notion of citizenship. As such, Quebec institutionalized its strong national identity through the homogenization of the national subject and therefore the assimilation of newcomers since early

school age, along with the misrecognition of diverse identities and multiple forms of belongings (Calderon Moya, 2021, p. 45).

In effect, as the number of non-white immigrant groups in the province greatly increased, Quebec's demographic "characterization of itself" was transformed (Thobani, 2007, p. 144). For Quebecers of French-Canadian descent, the "cultural" differences of immigrants from non-European countries have greatly threatened the nation as a homogenous entity (Thobani, 2007), which certainly reveals the Quebec settler colonial society practices (Day, 2016; Haque & Patrick, 2015). Moreover, in her study of historical formation and political separation of natives and migrants, Nandita Sharma (2020) argues that citizenship and immigration controls against immigrants are instruments used to secure the Postcolonial New World Order of nation-states which defend their "own racialized, autochthonized ideas of who constitutes the proper 'national subject' and, relatedly, each with its own limits to national membership" (pp. 201- 202). Within the terms of this understanding of citizenship, the liberalization of citizenship reinforces the authority of those in positions of power and contains threats against the nation as a homogenous entity through the articulation of relations between citizens and minorities as noncitizens (Thobani, 2007). To put it differently, the treatment of minority groups as the ethnic, the perpetual immigrants, or the exogenic of society is a reflection of the racialization and control strategies used over the years "to exclude [people of colour] from Quebec's national story and diminish or negate their social standing" (Austin, 2013, p. 54; Calderon Moya, 2021, p. 45; Glenn, 2015).

Systemic Discrimination

Immigration policy is the most common form of regulating populational growth. Immigration policies and laws have reflected attitudes of racism, as well as concerns on national

security of the time was due to fear about the negative consequences of immigration which have certainly been behind migration policies in many Western countries. As discussed before, Canadian immigration policies were discriminatory on some immigrant groups for many decades as “[t]he institutionalized hierarchy of ethnic preferences” plainly excluded non-white applicants (Potvin, 2010, p. 269) until 1967 when Canada welcomed immigrants from non-traditional countries. Nevertheless, during the 1980 and 90s, black immigrants, particularly from Jamaica, were demonized in Canada since the media tended to over-represent Jamaicans in criminal ranks (Satzewich, 2011). Indeed, the classic 19th century conception in the United States that races are distinguished by “qualities of mind, character, personality, and temperament” (Ching et al., 2007, p. 93) had an arguably similar impact in Canada where society has been defined along racial lines (Galabuzi 2006; Henry et al., 2010).

For researchers, the unequal distribution of scarce resources such as jobs and education as well as the concentration of some groups in disadvantaged positions in Canadian society are strong evidence of discrimination and unequal treatment which stem from racism (Satzewich, 2011). Certainly, an important body of scholarship has documented the historical deterioration in the economic performance of immigrants in Canada (Galabuzzi, 2006). In Quebec, systemic discrimination and racism have been severe issues in different areas such as work and employment, health, social services, and education despite the province’s greater success than the rest of the country at attracting immigrants holding university degrees (Boudarbat & Grenier, 2017). The 2006 census revealed that 27% of immigrants studied in university compared with 14.7% Quebecers born in Canada. In this respect, the particular discriminatory context of Quebec is seen as “one of the worst in North America” (Bouchard et al., 2008, p. 81). Research by IRIS contends that discrimination in the labour market has resulted in the unsatisfactory employment

situation of immigrants in Quebec. Immigrants between 25 to 54 years of age who had lived for less than five years in the province face a three times higher unemployment rate than that of native-born Quebecers (Bouchard et al., 2008). These rates, mainly measured by unemployment, over-qualification and under-representation in public sector agencies, are particularly high in the case of immigrants from Latin America, Africa, and Asia. Indeed, the *Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse*'s (CDPDJ) (Quebec's Human Rights Commission), reports that minority group immigrants have been "under-represented, subject[ed] to inequalities in remuneration, and professionally segregated" (as cited in Labelle, 2004, p. 11). To illustrate, a Radio Canada compilation of data from 500 organizations employing more than 600,000 workers during 2010 and 2013 revealed the critical under-representation of visible minorities among Quebec public sector institutions such as "*La Société des alcools du Québec*", "*Hydro Québec*" and "*la Sûreté du Québec*" (Radio Canada, January 21, 2016). Specifically, Latin Americans in Quebec struggle more than their own group's national average as their income is 18.8% lower in Quebec (Armony, 2014).

What is more, critical gaps between the government's normative discourse and inter-group relations have persisted in Quebec society and have considerably affected the social and economic integration of visible minority groups (Potvin, 2010). This inequality points out that "racialization [social process by which people come to be defined as being of a particular 'race' and thus subjected to negative treatment] of immigrants to Canada has intensified discrimination on the part of employers" ("Quebec immigrants more likely", 2016, para. 12; Galabuzzi, 2006).

Yet, Quebec, like its federal counterpart, has aimed to remedy discriminatory practices over the past decades. For instance, Quebec's adoption of The Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms in 1976, which was enacted in 1982, prohibits discriminatory acts in employment and

housing in the province (Sheppard, 2010). In addition, the Quebec Declaration on Intercultural and Interracial Relations in 1985 as well as the implementation of programs that offer equal employment opportunities (Labelle, 2006). Nevertheless, significant problems of cultural communities (the term used for non-white groups in Quebec instead of the federal term of ‘visible minority’) such as xenophobia, racism, and exclusion have not been adequately addressed by the provincial government (“Quebec must do more”, 2017), as solemnly declared by Premier Philippe Couillard (McKenna, 2017).

Numerous studies have pointed out that the historical and political context of host societies as well as the socio-demographic characteristics of immigrants are all factors active in systemic discrimination (Feagin, 2013; Pager & Shepherd, 2008; Portes & Rumbaut, 2006). In this sense, Quebec’s primordial focus on language training and cultural issues has limited its capacity to seek concrete and permanent solutions (Ghosh & Abdi, 2013). In fact, responsibility for adaptation, learning of French, and familiarization with Quebec’s cultural codes are mainly placed on immigrants who are also needed to “redefine [their] identity to reconcile these values with those of [their] original culture” (Quebec 1990 as cited in Talbani 1993, p. 412). Another explanation for this concern was given by McAndrew (as cited in Ghosh, 2004) who claims that the tendency of French Canadians to see themselves as victims of linguistic threat, as discussed above, impedes their adequate responses towards the issues of equity, power relations, and social justice that newcomers have to confront.

Hence, although Quebec has created strategies that promote several job creation and ethnic community funding programs in an effort to eradicate racism, these measures cannot regulate social biases in decision makers nor can they regulate the attitudes of citizens at large. In effect, the main contributing factors to this inequality are the reluctance to recognize training

and experience acquired abroad (“New Quebec immigration policy”, 2016), “perceived” insufficient knowledge of the French language, rigorous conditions for accessing occupations and professions as well as the marginalization experienced by racialized groups (Bouchard et al., 2008). As a result, many highly qualified immigrants such as doctors and engineers see themselves forced to take jobs irrespective of their professional background or, if unable to find one, ask for social aid (Bouchard et al., 2008). Hence, organized labour systems are not benefiting from all of its immigrants’ skills rather they are shunning them (Galabuzzi, 2006). Also, minority group under-representation in the workforce provides fewer opportunities for the Quebec society to acknowledge diversity.

In addition, neo-liberal forms in the global economy and labour market deregulation, such as privatization and reductions in government spending in order to increase the role of the private sector, facilitated by the state have critically impacted these groups and thus intensified “the persistent historical structures of systemic discrimination” (Galabuzzi, 2006, p. 7). This is of special concern because institutions take a passive role by overseeing how racial minority groups are affected by the under-utilisation of skills as well as the tensions between ethnic groups that may result from this prejudice (Reitz, 2005). Many immigrants and minority group communities criticize the gap between the government’s rhetoric and the constant discrimination that many of them have been forced to face (Labelle, 2004). In this respect, in 2015, Jacques Frémont, the president of Quebec’s Human Rights Commission severely criticized the government’s political correctness for not acknowledging that racism and systemic discrimination are present in the province’s workplaces (Authier, 2015). Frémont specifically pointed out how such issues have not been adequately addressed thus fracturing the confidence between the dominant society and the immigrant population (Authier, 2015) as well as their sense of belonging and well-being.

Further, research on discrimination and racism demonstrates its relationship with mental health problems such as psychological distress, depression, and anxiety (Casas, 2016).

Following Frémont's assertion, Daniel Boyer, the president of Quebec's Federation of Labour (FTQ), which holds 600,000 members, told a legislature committee at the hearings into Bill 77 (an act to modernize Quebec's immigration system) that Canada and Quebec promote an international false representation of an open society ("Quebec must do more", 2016). In his view, racism and discrimination against immigrants in the workplace were not adequately addressed by the Quebec Premier, Philippe Couillard. Months after, Couillard announced Quebec's public consultation on systemic discrimination and racism to take place in the fall of the past year (Bellemare, 2017). However, the Quebec government ultimately decided to cancel the hearing process and opted for a one-day forum on the fight against immigrant unemployment last December (Authier, 2017; Fletcher, 2017).

It is important to note, though, that Quebec's "nationalist position on immigration and diversity that has characterized politics in the province since the 1960s" is experiencing some important changes ("Low Quebec birth", 2016). According to Daniel Weinstock, an important group of Quebec citizens believe in the idea that not only the French language needs to be protected as cultural heritage but also "all other aspects of Quebec culture which certain immigrants, even when they do speak French, may not share" ("Low Quebec birth", 2016). A case in point would be the "initial" rejection of the Charter of Values or Secularism Charter introduced by the governing *Parti Québécois* (PQ) in 2013 and based on broad interpretations of the Bouchard-Taylor report. Trying to end the controversy on "reasonable accommodation", the bill proposed to ban public sector employees, including doctors and teachers, from wearing or displaying "conspicuous" religious symbols at work. Among the

various reactions against this charter, the Quebec's Human Rights Commission labeled the proposed bill as a "radical" infringement on fundamental rights. While the Quebec Charter of Values died with the political defeat of the *Parti Québécois* in the 2014 election, which was won by Philippe Couillard the party leader of the Quebec Liberal Party, the declined bill was repeatedly used by the PQ and members of CAQ to criticize the Liberal government for not veering into Quebec's identity politics and defend its values of secularism and religion neutrality (Fletcher, 2017). As described before, Bill 21 was passed by the Legault administration in June 2019.

In the following section, I explain the relevance of Postcolonial theory and Global Neoliberal Capitalism perspectives for the integration experiences of skilled Latin American immigrants in Quebec.

Post/Colonial Theory

Postcolonial theory largely emerged in the second half of the 20th century, as the structures that ruled colonies such as India (the British) and Algeria (the French) were dismantled. Not surprisingly, its use has extended to explore issues related to "migration, ... difference, [and] race" to understand the consequences of prolonged colonial oppression (Ashcroft et al., 1994, p. 2) in places where there is still a colonial dynamic being played out. Yet, the concept of Postcolonialism has been defined in different ways from different perspectives which may not always agree. What is more, the "post" in the term "postcolonial" was strongly criticized in countries such as Australia and Canada for suggesting that postcolonialism followed decolonization. An example of this is the intergenerational impoverishment and suffering of colonized Indigenous peoples (Calderon Moya, 2021, p. 48).

Homi Bhabha is one of the most notable postcolonial theorists. Under the context of immigration, Bhabha's idea of mimicry is applied to colonial and postcolonial contexts where dominant societies and/or cultures aim to assimilate minority groups, immigrants included. For Bhabha (1994), colonial discourses require subordinates to reproduce a dominant culture (values and behaviours), yet those subordinates cannot reach a high similarity that might threaten the colonizer's sense of superiority (Andreotti, 2011). In his reflection on nation, he demonstrates how a postcolonial understanding of difference and otherness is essential to maintain the relations between nationhood and states (Butt, 2012). He claims that the repetitious conventional narrative of a nation, which includes the signification of the peoples, nation, and national identity, is not only reproduced by the state but also by its members. In other words, Bhabha's analysis points out that postcolonial perspectives facilitate the understanding of the forces behind immigration regimes in settler societies as well as of the role that ethnic minority groups subjected to racism, marginalization, oppression, and exploitation play (Calderon Moya, 2021, pp. 48-49).

More relevant to my analysis is Sharma's (2020) conceptualization of the "Postcolonial New World Order". The author describes how receiving societies (or nation states) apply the Foucauldian concept of governmentality, which refers to the organized rationalities and practices applied to govern and privilege nationals or natives over migrants (2020). Such new postcolonial global hierarchies are clearly observed when receiving higher salaries and having more workplace rights which are inherently reserved for the "nationals or natives" rather than to minority individuals who are not seen as members (Sharma, 2020). It must be noted that in Sharma's conceptualization of membership in a nation, acquiring formal citizenship does not

naturally open the gates to a nation as “nationalism is not perfectly expressed through state citizenship laws” (Calderon Moya, 2021, p. 49; Sharma, 2020, p. 164-165).

In essence, postcolonialism underlines that marginalization is not only an inherent part of the history of Canada and Quebec but also of the large social order that has relegated and relegates its ethnic members, immigrants or Canadian-born visible minorities. Congruent to this, the links between the normalization of the legally elevated status of *Québécois* and the legally lower status of minority immigrants, seen through the social inequality that they experience, are certainly implied by Western discourses of othering (Calderon Moya, 2021, p. 49; Verkuyten & Martinovic, 2006).

The Global Neoliberal Capitalism

In the 1990s, the emphasis on global competitiveness created changes in immigration policies in Canada and therefore Quebec. A restructuring of the state economy increased the requirements on the type of independent class immigrants who, by then, not only needed to be highly “skilled and educated and/or wealthy but also ‘up and running’ on arrival” (Arat-Koc, 1999, p. 31). Neoliberalist structures were adopted to rebuild the economy and, perhaps more importantly, they shaped and changed the state’s notions of what citizens could reasonably expect from it (Calderon Moya, 2021, p. 49; Arat-Koc, 1999).

In more recent times, much of the critical scholarship on settler colonialism indicate it as a contemporary phenomenon in which practices and processes operate within a neoliberal framework (Preston, 2013). To illustrate, the Quebec settler colonialism disguises natural resources extraction projects as ethical economic opportunities for all Canadians and thus “normalise ongoing processes of ... racism, Indigenous oppression and violence” (Preston, 2013, p. 43). In this context, Goldberg (2002) points to the racist expression of contemporary states and

how they have homogenized racial exclusions to dissipate the normative critique by building an image of racial dispersal. His analysis exposes how racial states have opted to publicly adopt the colour-blind condition as well as the celebration of multiculturalism (interculturalism in the case of Quebec) to legitimate their denial of racially ordered conditions of their “members.” This can be seen in the case of the exploitation and abuse temporary agricultural workers suffer in Quebec regions (Calderon Moya, 2021, pp. 49-50).

In this regard, aiming to achieve equality and merit, critical race theory substantially critiques liberalism, which constructs a wrongful image of a society as fair, egalitarian, and merit based. More simply, within the neoliberal framework, a society is built on meritocracy so that all its individual members are seen to have the necessary tools to “compete on a level playing field” (Zamudio et al., 2011, p. 16). Seen from this light, legal protections for minority or vulnerable groups are not a responsibility of society, as it centres the causes of socioeconomic inequality on natural and/or individual causes rather than structural ones. An example of this was the promising and controversial call for Quebec’s public consultation on systemic discrimination and racism mandated by former Premier Philippe Couillard, which was announced to take place in the fall of 2017. After strong criticism from his political opponents, the consultations were renamed and changed to a closed-door, one-day forum on immigrant unemployment (Fletcher, 2017). The political argument used for this adjustment was to protect against racial tensions that had increased since the official announcement of the hearing. Yet, opting to invisibilize, and thus normalize, the effects of systemic racism on vulnerable populations are consistent with neoliberal approaches that allege to build a fair, rather than an unequal, society (Calderon Moya, 2021, p. 50).

Likewise, Premier Legault with the CAQ has constantly sustained his position of the nonexistence of systemic or structural discrimination in Quebec (Banerjee, 2020; Loewen, 2020; Valiante, 2019b). Yet, not surprisingly, more than 22,000 Montrealers signed a petition requesting a public consultation on racism and systemic discrimination under the Montreal Charter of Rights and Responsibilities. The consultation was held throughout the city and obtained an excellent response from participants, even since its announcement (Gyulai, 2019). In June 2020, Anik Pouliot, the spokesperson from the city's *Office de la consultation publique*, presented the full report to help the municipal administration effectively define clear objectives that could lead to the expected adjustments. To illustrate, a substantial recommendation from the commission is the acknowledgement of the existence of systemic discrimination in order to design and implement the operational changes that specifically address the diagnosis (Calderon Moya, 2021, p. 50).

Certainly, the unwillingness to prioritize adjustments to unequal economic relations expresses an actual protection of the relationships of power over the rights of citizenship of those discriminated. In Thobani's (2007) conceptualization, the intentions behind citizenship are in fact to produce significant racial divisions among the populations within the nation-state and achieve national/racial homogeneity regardless of its actual heterogeneity. The Quebec government decides to ignore the continued effects of the racial economic subordination of minority group immigrants, as well as those of temporary workers, by highlighting its theoretical commitment to a neoliberal economic development (Zamudio et al., 2011). For Kuokkanen (2008), not taking immediate political and legal action against structural forms of oppression indicates the patriarchal political values of the national culture that are superimposed over the

economic inequality, limited political power, or political exclusion of vulnerable populations as a means of superiority (Calderon Moya, 2021, p. 51).

Another possible reason for the underutilization of skilled immigrants' human capital is grounded on the logics of white supremacy and neoliberal conditions as the anchor of capitalism (Smith, 2010). Preston (2013) maintains that settler colonialism not only continues to structure the Quebec nation-state but also structures the neoliberal partnerships of private companies and public government to maintain control. In this sense, neoliberal forms in the global economy and labour market deregulation, such as privatization and reductions in government spending to

increase the role of the private sector, have greatly impacted minority groups, and thus intensified "the persistent historical structures of systemic discrimination" (Galabuzi, 2006, p. 7).

This is of special concern because institutions take a passive role by overseeing the obstacles hindering professional integration of minority group immigrants, such as the misrecognition of immigrants' foreign education, as well as the tensions between ethnic groups that may result from this prejudice (Calderon Moya, 2021, p. 51; Reitz, 2005). Additionally, during the legislature committee hearings into Quebec's immigration plan for the next three years, the immigrant and refugee group called *Table de concertation des*

organismes au service des personnes réfugiées et immigrantes (TCRI) heavily criticized the CAQ government's immigration plan, which matches immigrants with open jobs before they arrive in Quebec. For TCRI's representatives, the project opts for the privatization of immigration access and empowers employers to select their own workers which could result in the homogenization of immigrant profiles that would mainly favour European white francophones (Authier, 2019; Calderon Moya, 2021, p. 50).

Lastly, in the context of the past federal election, Premier François Legault made an open request to federal party leaders to grant Quebec immigration powers over immigrants who come to the province under the category of “family reunification” which currently represents 24% of newcomers to the province (Carpenter, 2021, para. 1). In Legault’s mind, immigration “endangers the status of the French language” therefore only the Quebec government, rather than the federal one, should take control over who to accept based on the ability to speak French. Nevertheless, this potential attribution would cement inequalities rather than a positive integration outcome for allophones (and Anglophones) permanent residents and citizens. Indeed, not welcoming the parents and grandparents of minority groups goes against Canadian values (which prioritize the value of family). According to researchers, learning new things, such as a new language, becomes more and more challenging as a person grows older hence changes in this category of immigration would disproportionately impact racialized immigrants and will as well cancel the social, cultural, and economic contributions parents and grandparents make to ethno-cultural communities (VanderPlaat et al., 2013). Specifically, they contribute to the well-being and personal success of newcomers as they represent a solid emotional support that is substantial for a positive integration to a new society. Indeed, having access to family dynamics facilitates the strengthening of linguistic and cultural links to the country of origin and, perhaps more importantly, intergenerational bonding. In economic terms, family reunification provides free childcare and domestic labour which allows permanent residents and citizens to look for educational pursuits and work opportunities outside the home (VanderPlaat et al., 2013).

Chapter Summary

In this chapter I reviewed Critical Race and Post/Colonial theories, and Global Neoliberal Capitalism perspectives to examine existing power structures which perpetuate the

marginalization of minority groups. To that end, I reviewed some of the key factors of white Privilege and systemic discrimination that contribute to building barriers to integration. In the following chapter, I explore methodologies and approaches I used in this study to address my research questions and obtain data.

Chapter four Methodology

“Although the notion of story is common to every society, the stories themselves differ widely—one of the defining features of a culture is the story structures through which it makes sense of the world. The shape of our stories, the range of roles available, the chains of causation, and the sense of what constitutes a climax or an ending are all shaped by the stories with which we were raised”.

(Duff & Bell, 2002, p. 207)

Introduction

In this chapter, I attempt to map out and explore the research methods and approaches that contributed to addressing my research questions. My aim was to interview skilled Latin American immigrants on their immigrant integration experiences to understand how perceived systemic discrimination could influence their attitudes towards out-migration. In addition, giving a voice to this ethnic group is essential to critically analyse the values of Quebec’s integration approaches and determine the roots of systemic discrimination that are currently affecting the province’s economic development. More precisely, in this study, my aim was to explore with my participants a) the factors affecting immigrant integration in Quebec in terms of employment; b) inform policies and strategies that could improve the relations between new immigrants and the Quebec society at large. Therefore, the purpose of this section is to answer the following question: How can Narrative Inquiry be used to interpret, communicate, and expose the insights of Latin American immigrants on the issues related to their economic integration in Quebec? In addition, I present the rationale for the research design, methodology and ethical considerations of the study.

It is important to note that much of the literature on Canadian immigration has focussed on the Asian and African ethnic communities (Armony, 2014). In addition, while the literature on economic discrimination points to the aversive consequences of unemployment and

underemployment for individuals and communities, the vast majority of these studies are quantitative, which do not provide the level of depth and nuance available in qualitative studies. With these in mind, I embrace the particular role qualitative researchers play in furthering social justice and human rights (Denzin & Giardina as cited in Kohn-Wood et al., 2016). Qualitative methods have always focused on understanding the lives of *others* in a natural setting. Moreover, there is growing support for qualitative methodologies to conduct studies with ethnocultural populations (Nagata et al., 2012). In Ponterotto's (2010) words, "[q]ualitative approaches anchored in constructivism and critical theory are advocated in the study of multicultural issues" (p. 588). In this sense, my aim in the present chapter is to explore the foundations of Narrative Inquiry as a mode of understanding and as a tool for data analysis. More importantly, I will identify the affordances of this approach that render it particularly suitable for addressing my research questions.

Hence, this chapter is based on a literature review that illustrates the process of the Narrative Inquiry approach through elaboration on the inquirer-participant relationship, storying of experience, and circles of analysis. The chapter proceeds by undertaking a discussion of the history and development of the methodology of narrative inquiry. I conclude the chapter by discussing some of the limitations within Narrative Inquiry studies analyzed through the literature reviewed.

Research Questions:

In attempting to give voice to the participants to explain how their perceived systemic discrimination could influence their attitudes towards remaining in Quebec, I formulated the following research questions:

1.- (a) In what ways and to what extent do skilled Latin American immigrants to Quebec perceive that they confront situations of marginalization and exclusion in the labour market? and (b) how have these influenced their decisions towards remaining in the province of Quebec?

2.- Are the integration experiences of skilled Latin American immigrants who have left Quebec for another Canadian province different from those immigrants who have not left the province?

3.- (a) What are their suggestions for Quebec policymakers to provide fair opportunities to newcomers that could prevent the demographic and economic consequences of interprovincial migration? and (b) what are their suggestions for immigrants still to come to Quebec that could help them accelerate their process of integration?

Narrative Inquiry

History and Development of Narrative Inquiry

The idea of narrative began in the late 1960s and rapidly penetrated various disciplines and schools (Riessman & Speedy, 2007). In effect, narrative used to mean, for anthropologists and linguistic anthropologists in particular, a form of oral literature (Klein, 1999), although, for some other specialists, narrative inquiry used to be an extension of doing ethnography (Slembrouck, 2015). Regardless of shared notions of its origin, narrative moved beyond its origins in literary criticism (Mitchel as cited in Duff & Bell, 2002) to disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, psychology, psychoanalysis, history, literary criticism, economics, medicine, sociolinguistics ethnography, and cinema studies over the course of recent decades (Bhatia, 2012; Clandinin, 2016; Riessman & Speedy, 2007).

It is important to note that narrative inquiry should not be labeled as just another structure of qualitative research strategies (Riessman & Speedy, 2007). Today, many scholars with diverse

disciplinary backgrounds (e.g., in psychiatry, criminology, knowledge and organization management, etc.) agree that narrative inquiry “unlike other qualitative methods, reflects a perspective about the way that people make sense of their experiences” in all its complexity, richness and depth, throughout life and in different socio-cultural contexts (Blustein et al., 2013, p. 257; Duff & Bell, 2002; Gómez-Estern & de la Mata Benitez, 2013). What is more, far from providing a specific set of research methods and procedures, narrative inquiry offers a wide array of methods, all of which aim to map the contexts of people’s life stories (Blustein et al., 2013). To illustrate, field notes of shared experiences, journal records of participants, interviews (usually unstructured), storytelling, letter writing, autobiographical and biographical writing are considered the main sources of data in narrative inquiry (Savin-Baden & Niekerk, 2007).

Given that the movement from positivist ways of knowing shaped the emergence of narrative inquiry on the research landscape, the narrative *turn* in the human sciences is clear evidence of the preference for language (or *turn* to language) which reflects an indistinctiveness of genres between the humanities and physical sciences (Riessman & Speedy, 2007). Riessman and Speedy (2007) claim that this philosophical embracement of narrative inquiry lies underneath Jerome Bruner’s (1990) “Acts of Meaning”. Bruner painted a broad picture against the cognitive revolution of Piaget’s rationalist framework and claimed that narrative knowledge or narrative psychology needed to be used as paradigmatic knowledge (Bhatia, 2012). Specifically, Bruner’s work claimed the need to shift the focus of psychology from behaviour to the analysis of “how [people] make [narrative] meaning of their actions as intentional agents located in cultural[ly]... and socially situated settings” (Bhatia, 2012, p. 346). In Bruner’s view, narrative works as a powerful “instrument of mind on the construction of reality” (Bruner as cited in Bhatia, 2012). Riessman and Speedy (2007) summarized the narrative *turn* in four

specific changes: 1) The relationship of researcher and researched, 2) From numbers to words as data, 3) From the general to the particular and 4) Blurring knowing. Along with Bruner, Polkinghorne and Sarbin, and several psychologists nested the narrative movement in the intellectual spheres of the humanities in the early 1980s. To illustrate, “MacIntyre’s (1981) notion of narrative unity, Mitchell’s (1981) comprehensive presentation of the field of narratology, Polkinghorne’s (1988) understanding of narrative analysis, and Coles’s (1989) literary ideas of narrative” resulted in developing a major interest in narrative theory in the various disciplines (Clandinin et al., 2016, p. 22). Specifically, in the discussion of narrative configuration, Polkinghorne draws on Bruner’s (1996) designation of narrative inquiry into the paradigmatic and the narrative-type and made a straightforward distinction between them in this form of inquiry. For Polkinghorne (1995), narrative inquiry is classified in the *analysis of narratives*, which refers to data sources that consist of narratives to be analysed with paradigmatic processes, whereas in *narrative analysis* descriptions are collected to be synthesized into a story or stories.

In terms of locating narrative inquiry in the broad qualitative research domain, Savin-Baden & Niekerk (2007) draw on Lincoln (1995) who positions narrative within the ontological stance of constructivism (where realities are constructed entities) with “reflexivity, interpretivism and representation” as the main characteristics of the method (Lincoln as cited Savin-Baden & Niekerk, 2007, p. 460). In this sense, the issue of representation has created several debates among qualitative researchers who would often question the subjective nature of this epistemology, that is the processes used for capturing and representing the voices of the *unknown world* by a *knowing* researcher through careful analysis (Savin-Baden & Niekerk, 2007). Denzin (1997) holds a critical poststructuralist position and challenges those assumptions

by stating that language and speech “create experience and in the process of [this] creation [,] [they] constantly transform and defer that which is being described” (Denzin as cited in Savin-Baden & Niekerk, 2007, p. 461). As Loh (2013) succinctly puts across, qualitative researchers choosing to embark on narrative study “are regularly queried for its rigour and its quality” (p. 2). Hence, it should be acknowledged that the meanings of subjects are always in motion rather than fixed as subjects who are living the stories while sharing them in words. Similarly, Polkinghorne (1995) argues that narrative is nothing but *a* powerful operation within the dominion of meaning and it creates its own meaning based on noting the contributions to a particular outcome so that these are then configured into a whole unit (Savin-Baden & Niekerk, 2007).

In addition, drawing on Clandinin (2016), Clandinin et al., (2016) point out an important distinction of narrative inquiry among other methodologies. *Temporality*, *sociality*, and *place* are considered the common places of this methodology and thus serve as a conceptual framework. In this sense, researchers are required to explore those dimensions simultaneously in undertaking a narrative inquiry (Clandinin et al., 2016). *Temporality* is the first common place and refers to the importance of understanding that people, places, and events are always in temporal transition. *Sociality*, the second common place, refers to the personal (feelings, desires, etc.) and social conditions surrounding everyone’s context. This second aspect also includes the continued relationship between participant and inquirer. Lastly, *place* refers to recognizing the specificity of location of every event and its impact on experience (Clandinin et al., 2016). In other words, all the three dimensions serve as conceptual framework in narrative inquiry.

To that effect, storytelling is considered to be central to fully grasp the complexities of those contexts (Slembrouck, 2015). Certainly, the view of stories is a fundamental if not the only unit for the study of human experience and notions of stories, yet the kinds of stories as well as

the approaches, strategies, and methods to relate them vary within the framework of narrative research (Lieblich, Mashiach-Tuval, & Zilber as cited in Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007). In other words, the way narrative is defined has been shaped by “the disciplinary framework, theoretical orientation, topic of study, and methodological approach [where it is] employed” (Wells, 2011, p. 3). The most significant developments of this variety are perhaps found in the field of medicine. For instance, Launer’s (1999) narrative of healing, a method based on stories constructed between a patient and a clinician as well as Greenhalgh and Hurwitz’s (1998) narratives of illness create “a framework for approaching a patient’s problems holistically” (Slembrouck, 2015, p. 240).

In effect, the scholarly work from various researchers has provided a significant wealth of theoretical and methodological arguments to support the use of narrative inquiry in social science research. Another specific example would be Connelly and Clandinin (e.g., 1987, 1988) who framed their idea and thinking of this approach from theorists like John Dewey and Jerome Bruner (Preissle, 2001). More explicitly, Bruner’s (1986) differentiation between narrative and paradigmatic knowing, and Dewey’s (1938) formulation of human experience greatly influenced Clandinin and Connelly’s (2000) use of narrative as the best way for understanding experience “as they occur in time and space and ... are simultaneously social and personal” (Preissle, 2001, p. 412). In effect, Clandinin and Connelly’s adaptation of narrative for educational research purposes through its conceptualization as phenomenon and methodology greatly influenced its use to investigate the ways people experience education (Duff & Bell, 2002; Lindsay & Schwind, 2016). To illustrate, many teachers and teacher educators have opted for this type of inquiry to shape and inform their own practices. Nonetheless, many of them tend to associate narrative inquiry with merely *thinking* about the listening to and telling of stories thus missing

the complexities behind all of its phases (Clandinin et al., 2016). In addition, because the way narrative as a phenomenon is interwoven with the narrative as research method (Clandinin, 2016), and the ways “narrative” and “narrative inquiry” are used deserves a careful delineation of terms. In this venue, Connelly and Clandinin (1990) claim:

“... that people by nature lead storied lives and tell stories of those lives, whereas narrative researchers describe such lives, collect and tell stories of them, and write narratives of experience.” (p. 2)

Hence, when observing the various meanings researcher and practitioners transmit when using the term narrative inquiry, it is important to understand that this type of research is still a developing field (Clandinin et al., 2016), or in Pinnegar and Daynes’s words, it is “in its infancy” (2007, p. 28). Congruent upon this, it is important to emphasize the main characteristics of philosophy, method, or argument among narrative practitioners as well as its distinctiveness from other methodologies (Riessman & Speedy, 2007). Also, emphasis on the features in common with other forms of qualitative inquiry, “such as the emphasis on the social in ethnography and the use of story in phenomenology” (Connelly & Clandinin as cited in Clandinin et al., 2016).

Storytelling and Narrative Analysis in Critical Race Theory

While stories might carry a connotation of falsehood or misrepresentation (Polkinghorne, 1995), their power and persuasion, including that of parables, autobiographies, counterstories, have been an important tool for critical race theory which started in the U.S., to reach a deeper understanding of the way race is conceived in the United States (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Specifically, legal storytelling has opened a window onto the ignored realities of racialized groups and, more importantly, it has challenged the “double consciousness” of the American dominant racial group, which “cannot easily grasp what it is to be non-white” (Delgado &

Stefancic, 2017, p. 46). Nevertheless, talented storytellers have found it challenging to engage broad audiences. The reason for this struggle is related to concepts of Literary and Narrative Theory which explain that everyone occupies one or several, “normative universe or nomos” from which they are “not easily dislodged” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, p. 49). To illustrate, history books, and more importantly, the government rhetoric have contributed to a hegemony that disregards the negative impact of discrimination on the economic, social and psychological well-being of an individual (Casas. 2016) by not adopting the fight against racism and discrimination as a common responsibility. A specific example is found in Quebec’s new history program, namely a textbook for Secondary IV History of Quebec and Canada course called “Reflections”, where the portraits of Muslims reinforce sentiments of intolerance and xenophobia (Green, 2018). To exemplify this, under the section of “The threat of terrorism” on page 301 of the textbook, only an Islamist terrorist organization and a Muslim country are indicated thus building the link between Muslims and terrorism, as pointed out by Green (2018). However, the massacre of 14 women at École Polytechnique de Montréal was mentioned many pages after. More importantly, the shooter’s motives were interpreted only as anti-feminist:

The threat of terrorism

... on September 11, 2001, the American government declared war on terror. Because its government was suspected of supporting the terrorist network al-Qaeda, Afghanistan was invaded shortly thereafter by a coalition of countries led by the United States. At the end of 2001, Canada joined in this war (p. 301).

Tragedy at École Polytechnique

... The letter he (Marc Lépine) left behind explained that his actions were premeditated and that he was targeting feminist activists, and therefore his actions were politically motivated. (p. 323).

Unsurprisingly, the responsibility for adopting a history curriculum that misrepresents the diversity of the province is shared. These textbooks, which teach local history from pre-contact to the present, were first ordered by the Parti *Québécois* aiming “to emphasize Quebec's struggle

for nationhood” and they reflect on a curriculum approved by the previous Couillard administration (Shingler, 2018, para. 7). These textbooks, which are taught across the province, were defended by then Education Minister Jean-François Roberge who, by using an argument based on how debatable history accounts can be, dismissed the independent revisions from experts commissioned by the English Montreal School Board flagging the need to remove the textbooks (Shingler, 2018)

Some Critical Race scholars use the lens of Narrative Inquiry to observe the way trial lawyers built on narratives (theories of case) in the hope of resonating with the jury and inducing the adoption of their interpretations. Indeed, the perspective of colour used in legal storytelling and narrative analysis in Critical Race Theory (CRT) defends the narratives of minority groups by pointing out how the concept of justice holds conflicting meanings for the majority and minority groups (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). In this sense, well told stories try to reconcile divergent perspectives by describing the uncovered reality of the lives of minority groups to help readers observe and break the gap between their worlds and the unfamiliar one of the *Others* (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017).

Furthermore, while grounded in racial knowledge, counter-storytelling is an important means used by scholars to challenge the “stories of those in power and [which are] a natural part of the dominant discourse” (Delgado as cited in Solorzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 156). Delgado’s (1989) counter-storytelling was conceived as a method of telling the story of marginalized individuals as well as a tool for analyzing and challenging the narratives of the dominant culture. As such, critical storytellers address the society’s *unconscious* tacit agreements that continuously place the *Other* in marginalized positions in order to challenge racist, sexist, homophobic, and classist forms of dominance (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). In effect, critical race counter-stories

provide an opportunity to understand and question the status quo when juxtaposed with the majoritarian stories (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). This can be seen in the myths and preconceptions involved in dominant narratives that result in the oppressive characterizations of immigrants. To illustrate, the stereotype that all Latin Americans in Canada are refugees and living in low-income areas (Calabrese, 2013), the racial profiling faced by Black men in encounters with police in Montreal (Rukavina, 2017) as well as the pervasive association of Muslim or Middle Eastern looking people with terrorism and/or Islam with terrorism, which was publicly said by former Premier Couillard of Quebec (Shingler & Smith, 2017). Following the stabbing of a police officer at a Michigan airport in which a Muslim Montrealer had been arrested, the Premier declared: “Unfortunately, you cannot disconnect this type of event [terrorism] from Islam in general” during a news conference in Quebec City in June 2017 (Shingler & Smith, 2017; “Quebec premier defends”, 2017).

In addition, this form of narrative can create strong sentiments of empowerment and community among those individuals who are targets of discriminatory practices and/or victims of microaggression (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). In Delgado and Stefancic’s (2017) view, powerfully written stories give a voice to minority communities that reveal other people, groups or communities face the same struggle. They argue that stories can label the type of discrimination, such as microaggression, unconscious discrimination or systemic discrimination, so that it can be adequately combatted. They also contend that racism and prejudice should be able to deconstruct the narrative as these terms are in reality socially constructed (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). In that vein, convincingly written narratives can help start “a process of correction” of belief systems (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, p. 51) that have historically tended to deny evidence of White privilege, dominance, and discrimination.

Narrative Ethnography

Tedlock (1991) illustrates the emergence of narrative inquiry in the 1970s, which initiated a shift in emphasis “from participant observation to the observation of participation”, mostly known as *ethno-sociology* and *auto-ethnography* (p. 78). In effect, this change in ethnographic epistemology included key ethical and analytical issues observed in the process of self-examination that led to the shift “from the *ethnos* in ethnography to the *graphia* - the process of writing” (Tedlock, 1991, p. 79). More importantly, the relationships built between ethnographer (Self) and informant (Other) that allow the creation of “a world of shared intersubjectivity” are central to this approach (Hampshire et al., 2014). In this respect, Tedlock (1991), provides an analysis about the new role the researcher plays. He asserts:

If today’s ethnographers are writing not only for various academic audiences ...but also for the educated public, including members of their host communities then they are no longer able to write as if they themselves were *the only active parties* [emphasis added] in cross-cultural exchanges. Not only did Edward Said’s (1978) discussion of Orientalism reveal this form of exotic portraiture to be unacceptably neocolonialist but a local audience would also know it to be a blatant falsehood (p. 81).

Following the lead of feminist critical theory, Tedlock’s version of narrative ethnography strongly encourages researchers to reflect upon the past colonial practices that maintain the development of authorial and dominant figure of ethnographers in the research field. Tedlock (1991) claims that to solidly build paths that could further develop a “productive dialogue between persons of differing cultural background and political situations” (1991, p. 82), the new generation of ethnographers (many of whom are subalterns of class, gender, or ethnicity) need to embrace the change to ethnographic epistemology based on the coproduction of knowledge. To that end, he contends shifting away from the written memoir of the researcher as the only central

character and engage in writing about the dialectical political and personal relationship between *Self* and *Other* so that narrative ethnographers purposely become secondary characters. More importantly, the development of the *Self* and *Other*'s co-participation within the ethnographic encounter aims to promote empowerment and social justice (Tedlock, 1991).

Narrative as a Decolonizing Methodology

The importance of using narrative as a decolonising methodology is multifold (Hamdan, 2009). First, by exploring the Latin American immigrants' perspective of the issues related to interprovincial migration in Quebec, narrative inquiry contributes to a better understanding of this ethnic group as significant members of Quebec society. Such understanding certainly broadens general knowledge about the distinctiveness of the Latin American immigrant integration experience in Quebec. Second, by using narrative inquiry strategies, this study aims to deconstruct assumptions, prejudices, and discrimination as symbols of oppression towards the Latin American community that could impede a smooth economic integration translated into, for example, employment in line with professional credentials and experience. This could certainly provide up-to-date information that might be applicable to different minority groups in Quebec. Third, the use of narrative as a method helps decolonize societal attitudes that results in the social, economic, and educational marginalization of minority groups in the province and ensures that the needs of these ethnic groups are being addressed fairly. Fourth, given the gap in Canadian scholarly literature about the economic integration experiences of minority group immigrants that result in interprovincial migration from Quebec, hearing the individual voices and perspectives of Latin American immigrants helps provide a balance in the way they are portrayed in written works and thus "expand the options for us all on the cultural level" (Atkinson, 1998, p. 19). Lastly, through creating a safe space for the members of this important

ethnic minority in Quebec to have their voices heard, it is my hope that this study results in the creation of an initial platform for their empowerment.

The Role of the Researcher in Interview Narratives

Narratives are, undoubtedly, powerful constructions which can function as tools for social impact and change. As such, Canagarajah (1996) argues that the use of narrative methodological strategies goes against elitist scholarly discourses and, more importantly, its use provides an opportunity for marginalised groups to be part of the knowledge construction in the academy (as cited in Duff & Bell, 2002). Thus, the role of the researcher in the context of narrative expression is not only of great importance but diverse, as suggested in the previous sections of this chapter. Indeed, the role researchers play in narrative research vary in the distinct contexts of narrative approaches. In his study, Slembrouck (2015) analyzes the researcher as an interactant in the research interview and “as a (post hoc) analyst of interview data” (p. 240). He argues that for narrative inquirers to reach “a more reliable interpretation of the social world”, the contingencies that might occur during data collection, data management and data analysis can only be “actively embrace[d] and heed[ed]” (Slembrouck, 2015, p. 252). More importantly, because of the double dimension of storytelling, as an experience and as a social activity, a continued methodological and reflexive engagement is expected from narrative researchers (Slembrouck, 2015).

In addition, Yardley (2008) casts a critical eye on the ethical considerations in narrative inquiry. She explains how interpretation in narrative inquiry goes further in reportage and recording of data and paints a broad picture about how ownership and validity of stories have a direct effect on the ethics of narrators. In effect, the shared concept of “truth” is strongly related to the careful construction of a story based on the researcher’s chosen narrative ethic (Yardley,

2008). In other words, while the researcher or narrator constructs a story thus giving a beginning, middle, and an end built according to his/her own experience and point of view, the interconnected meanings of this story must not be altered. Specifically, individual stories and the stories of other protagonists, cannot be separated and/or placed in different narrative territories without robbing ownership and thus damaging the “authenticity of stories in the pursuit for knowledge” (Yardley, 2008, p. 13). Indeed, the way questions are designed, and the processes made in narrative research are undoubtedly critical, therefore embracing the narrative framework makes essential demands upon researchers, as listeners and writers (Becker as cited in Yardley, 2006). As Loh (2013) succinctly puts across, narrative researchers “are regularly queried for its [data] rigour and its quality” for which they need to facilitate that narrative inquiry “stand[s] up to scrutiny by others” (p. 3). In this sense, Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) work is mirrored by Loh who prudently advises selecting the appropriate trustworthiness criteria and techniques for establishing them.

Another method of data collecting wherein participants explore collectively how they perceive a particular topic through photographs is called Photovoice. The next section describes the use of this participatory action research method.

Photovoice

The original work by Wang and Burris (1994) on Photovoice has received significant interest over the last decades by researchers in health, education, and social sciences studies. Known by its flexibility and uniqueness among the many qualitative methods of community-based participatory research (CBPR), photovoice “emphasiz[es] community involvement through partnership as integral to the research process” (Hergenrather et al. 2009, p. 686 by having participants use photographs and sharing the stories/narratives about them to point out and

represent salient community issues in their every-day lives (Nykiforuk et al., 2011). It is therefore, through the empowerment education of community member participants and/or culturally diverse group members in social action that the photovoice method aims to raise awareness, open a dialogue with policy makers and influential advocates, and hope for the enactment of policy change (Hergenrather et al. 2009; Johnston, 2016; Wang et al., 2000; Wang & Burris, 1994). More fundamentally, the goals of photovoice are: “a) to enable people to record and reflect their community’s strengths and concerns, b) to promote critical dialogue and knowledge about personal and community issues through large and small group discussion of their photographs and c) to reach policy makers” (Wang, 1999, as cited in Johnston, 2016, p. 801). With this aim, I used the photovoice method by providing participants with tools and opportunities to allow them to critically reflect and share social knowledge about their specific needs (Johnston, 2016). Furthermore, by working in partnership with lay members (Hergenrather et al., 2009) of the Latin American ethnic group I further enhanced the richness of the data collection as well as my participants’ representation of the “strengths and concerns” (Wang & Burris, 1997, p. 369) of their ethnic group.

Methods and Data Analysis

In the following section I describe in detail the strategies and techniques I chose for the selection of participants and for the collection, management, and analysis of the data in order to answer my research questions. This includes participants and selection, data collection, data management, and data analysis.

Participants and selection

Polkinghorne (1989) suggests that researchers interview between five and 25 individuals

who have all experienced the phenomenon of interest. The participants in this study comprised 14 individuals as primary data sources: ten participants were living in Quebec and four decided to leave for another Canadian province. For this study, the participant selection criteria included the following:

- 1) Participants who arrived in Canada as Quebec-selected skilled workers between 8 - 15 years ago from any Latin American country.
- 2) Participants who are men or women, over 30 years of age as the median age of immigrants to Canada.
- 3) Participants who live in cities in the province of Quebec and participants who left Quebec for another Canadian province to look for better job opportunities.

For the selection of primary data participants, I used inclusion criteria based on Patton's (1999) purposeful sampling. This is a type of 'criterion sampling' which ensures that the researcher selects participants who meet specific criteria. For this study, participants were selected through a demographic survey form to determine their eligibility. The purposeful sample was based on accessibility of participants with the aim of including a varied range of Latin American nationalities and professions.

Referrals were an important form of recruitment of interview subjects (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981). Attached is the recruitment script for contacting referrals (see Appendix A) that I spread among friends and colleagues who voluntarily referred me to potential recruits. While I found most of my participants through referrals, some participants also referred me to other participants of the study (snowball method). Moreover, those who were recruited through the snowball method very quickly developed trust in me, since we were introduced through mutual close friends.

The description of the study included my invitation to participate in a voluntary study (see Appendix B) exploring the integration experiences of skilled Latin American immigrants related to their education and employment in Quebec to produce useful data about their attitudes towards out-migration and to understand how perceived systemic discrimination could influence their attitudes towards out-migration.

Once I was given the contact information of voluntary respondents, I immediately sought to establish a comfortable and trustworthy rapport with them by answering all questions related to the purpose of the study. Specifically, I explained that they would be asked to complete a survey questionnaire, for which they would need to sign a consent form (see Appendix C), to determine eligibility to the study and provide an overview of the pertinent demographic and contextual information as well such as age, sex, nationality, and length of work experience in Quebec (see Appendix D). I explained as well that participation of the study included face-to-face interviews and a request to capture 3-4 photographs on participants' own time that they feel could answer the research questions of my study.

Data from the completed surveys were summarized and used to determine the purposeful sample of 14 individuals who met the criteria of the study which created "a diverse pool of possible participants from which those to be interviewed were purposively selected" (Polkinghorne, 2005, p. 141). Next, the selected sample was contacted to receive the consent to participate in an interview and photovoice project (see Appendix E) which includes requirements of participation such as commitment to 1) A 60–90-minute interview and 2) a participatory photographic research method called Photovoice. The letter also presented ethics of research, such as potential risks and benefits of participation, information regarding privacy and confidentiality, and an assurance that participants can withdraw from the study at any time and

for any reason without penalty. Consent forms were carefully developed and outlined the research process in language that was easily understood by the participants. They were written in Spanish and English.

Sharing the native language and cultural background with most participants (14 of 16) provided me with a distinct advantage for two main reasons. First, I was confident that participants interpreted the methodology that I designed for the study in the ways in which I intended (Gilbert et al., 1998). Second, having knowledge and familiarity of my ethnic group allowed me to “develop intuitions about participants” which ensured that my research was culturally informed (Gilbert et al., 1998, p. 1426).

Ultimately, the participant selection criteria included 14 skilled Latin-American immigrants who emigrated to Quebec from six different countries of Latin America: Colombia, Argentina, Venezuela, Mexico, Brazil, and Peru. Nine participants were living in the city of Montreal and four participants had moved from Quebec to the provinces of Ontario and Alberta. I interviewed four women and nine men participants who were between the ages of 36-66 years. Participants are foreign-educated individuals, bachelor’s and master’s degree holders, with considerable professional experience who arrived from 2009 to 2015 as Quebec-selected skilled workers, that is they arrived as permanent residents of Canada to live in Quebec. The participants’ length of residence in Canada ranged from 4 years to 10 years. Moreover, the lifestyles of the participants would be considered middle-class by Montreal and Calgary standards. Table 1 gives an overview of the background information about the participants in this study.

Participants Table 1 gives an overview of the profile of participants.

Table 1: Background Information about Participants

Participant (Pseudonym)	Place of birth	Participants' age and gender (F) / (M)	Participants' age when arriving in Canada	Length of residence in Canada (years)	Main language spoken at home	Profession prior to immigration	Profession or occupation post immigration
Pedro	Peru	41, M	31	10 y	Spanish	accountant	auditor & student
Patricio	Peru	42, M	32	10 y	Spanish	hotel administrator	implementation consultant
Rodrigo	Colombia	35, M	30	5 y	Spanish	journalist	administrative agent & student
Agustin	Colombia	40, M	31	9 y	Spanish	cinematography specialist	3D artist
Lucia	Colombia	39, F	30	9 y	Spanish	high school teacher	early childhood educator
Katya	Mexico	39, F	29	10 y	Spanish	industrial engineer	industrial engineer
Joaquin	Mexico	36, M	25	11 y	Spanish	mechanical engineer	mechanical engineer
Emilia	Mexico	36, F	25	11 y	Spanish	trade relations specialist	human resources agent
Lorena	Venezuela	39, F	29	10 y	Spanish	electrical engineer	electrical engineer
Dario	Venezuela	65, M	55	9 y	Spanish	electrical engineer	in transition
Roberto	Brazil	36, M	28	8 y	Portuguese	chemist	chemist
Thiago	Brazil	35, M	31	4 y	Portuguese	journalist	sociology student & research assistant
Elsa	Argentina	35, F	25	10 y	Spanish	biologist	site administrator
Ramiro	Argentina	43, M	33	10 y	Spanish	biologist	clinical research coordinator

Additionally, to achieve adequate variety in kinds of evidence (Morrow, 2005, p. 255), data were obtained from two Latin American community leaders in Quebec who are professionals, employers or employees, dedicated to facilitating the successful integration of Latin Americans in Quebec and Canada as well as the strengthening of ethnic communities. Participants were the director of a community organization located in the city of Montreal that promotes the integration of the Latin American ethnic group into Quebec society, and a communicator and specialist on immigration, multiculturalism, intercultural organizations, and non-governmental organizations. It is important to note that these individuals did not need to immigrate to Canada as skilled workers as the rest of the participants. They were also recruited through referrals.

Data Collection

The primary source for data collection was in the form of audio-recorded interviews which were conducted in Spanish, English and French during the months of June and November 2019. All participants set the date and time at their convenience. Also, they were invited to suggest a public setting where they would feel physically and psychologically comfortable, as suggested by King and Horrocks' (2010). The locations were mutually agreed upon and I did my best to ensure that these public spaces provided safety, comfort, and privacy. The interviews were conducted in different coffee shops in the city of Montreal and Brossard, such as Tim Horton's, Second Cup, Café Dépôt Gelato, Starbucks, in the Ahuntsic, Mile-End, Verdun, Rosemont-La Petite-Patrie, Lasalle boroughs and downtown Montreal.

It is important to note that I travelled to conduct the face-to-face interviews with two of the four participants living out of the province. They lived in the city of Ottawa (province of Ontario) and they also set the date, time as well as public setting for the interviews, however, this

occurred one month in advance of the meeting. I conducted the interview with the two participants living in the city of Calgary, province of Alberta, via Skype. Each interview took approximately 1.5 hours to complete. While there was no incentive for their participation in the research, I offered participants \$20 in the form of cash to thank them for participation. I believe that this small amount helped to express gratitude without influencing what participants would say in the study.

To obtain rich data from the participant interviews, I applied a three-part interview protocol approach advocated by Seidman (2013). This approach involves three separate interactions with each participant. The first exchange “establishes context of participants’ experience,” the second “allows participants to reconstruct experience within context,” and the third “encourages participants to reflect on meaning of experience” (p. 11). In this study, the first exchange was introductory and was done via telephone (first step), followed by a semi-structured, audio-recorded open-ended interview (second step), and then by a short photo discussion, in person or via Skype for approximately 15 minutes (third step).

As mentioned earlier, prior to conducting the individual face-to-face interviews, I developed an interview guide (see Appendix G) with questions to help facilitate the interviewing process. I used these open-ended questions to ensure that all questions or topics listed were explored with each interviewee (Patton, 1999). Posing open-ended questions encouraged participants to provide answers in a reflective and free way and reinforced the value and worth of their perspectives (Ritchie et al., 2013), while allowing me to elicit their experiences and perspectives. In addition, for clarification purposes and to avoid any misrepresentations occurred during the process of translation and transcription, I conducted an additional exchange with some participants by e-mail. After interview transcriptions were sent, I made follow-up questions that

were specific to individual participants (Turner, 2010). For instance, I asked Pedro (pseudonym) to explain what he tried to say when he described the treatment that people from abroad receive from people the countryside in Quebec. He replied that people from small towns in the province are kinder to immigrants as they see immigration as an opportunity to learn about new cultures in contrast to people in Montreal who are so used to immigrants in the city that they probably have a negative vision of immigration.

In qualitative research, the development of a positive relationship with participants is essential not to mention the importance of showing constant appreciation of the trust given in sharing their insights (Creswell, 2007). I attempted to be as attentive and engaging as possible before, during, and after the study yet I avoided influencing, in any possible way, the thought processes of my participants. More specifically, I attempted to conduct my research in a manner that was sensitive to ethical issues: I created rapport with participants by showing respect, understanding and empathy (Thompson, 2000) and I lent a sympathetic ear without playing a counselling role and by encouraging participants to elaborate without expressing approval, disapproval or judgment (Mack, et al., 2005). I believe the interview process was as positive an experience for all my participants as it was for me. Occasionally, I lightened a situation with humour or shared a joke made by the participants which I believe promoted a sympathetic environment and in a fluid interviewing process (Ritchie et al., 2013). Subsequently, I annotated the verbatim transcripts which included the description of body language such as laughter, smile and tone of voice. The following excerpt gives an example from an annotated transcript. Please note that I have referenced this excerpt by the participant's pseudonym.

P: I wouldn't know, I don't think I can explain why it hasn't happened [to have friends of the Francophone or anglophone communities in the city]. Yes, I have realized this after the first year of my arrival in here when my parents came to

- visit: “I’ll introduce you to my friends!” “Great, where are they from?” “one is from Tabasco – a city in Mexico – [laughter]
- I:** [laughter]
- P:** The other is from Mexico City
- I:** **I imagined they laughed**
- P:** They did, they said: “why don’t you go to Mexico and look for friends there you...you had to come all this way?” [smiles]
- I:** [smiles]
- (Katya p. 6 / Interview)

The transcriptions were dated, labeled, and the lines numbered. Next, they were translated into English by me. As most of the interviews were made in Spanish, some participants integrated French and English words as they spoke. Other participants used Spanish expressions that do not have a translation. While most participants originated in Spanish speaking countries, the two participants from Brazil opted to be interviewed in English and in French. All excerpts from the transcribed interviews used in this dissertation are indented and use the pseudonyms assigned to participants. For example, *Dario / Interview 1 / p. 2* indicates the first exchange with Dario in the form of interview, on page two; and *Katya / Interview 2 / p. 1* indicates the second exchange with Katya in the form of discussion for the photovoice project.

This way of referencing participants’ excerpts facilitated an easy return to the original interviews. Furthermore, I used different punctuation during description in order to retain as much accuracy as possible. For example, I used ellipses (...) to depict hesitation in a sentence, and commas for clearer pauses. Also, while transcribing, I placed non-verbal cues in brackets next to the excerpts of speech. This allowed me to reflect on its original meaning as closely as possible. For instance, the following excerpt can be used to illustrate how Elsa’s statement could have been interpreted as an insignificant comment if I had not included the fact that it was spoken in an emphatic tone of voice. In my interview with her, she stated: “she advised me that they will not treat [me] like they treat Quebecers” and gave me a list of recommendations of how

to be [emphatic tone] at work, so that they wouldn't, can't think of another word, 'F(---) me up' ... because she had been there for a long while and knew of the difference they make." (Elsa / Interview 1/ p. 8).

The collection of additional data served to corroborate or disconfirm what was emerging from the study (McMillian, 2000). I chose to conduct these additional interviews with two individuals engaged with local Latin American communities and/or associations as leaders at the end of the final data gathering phase so as to not influence my understanding of the perspectives of my participants about their integration process in Quebec.

To eliminate risks related to the COVID-19 outbreak, I wrote a COVID-19 temporary protocol deviation report to the Research Ethics Board Office of McGill university to replace the individual audio-recorded interview with participants and have an audio recorded phone interview instead. I interviewed these participants in the months of June and July 2020.

As will be shown in the next chapter, these interviews proved to provide extremely useful data which greatly enhanced the analyses. Table 2 provides background information about the participants who provided the secondary data for this study and helped to corroborate and elaborate on what I was finding.

Table 2: Secondary Data Participants' Profiles

Participants (Pseudonyms)	Place of birth	Gender Female (F) / Male (M)
Leader 1	El Salvador	(F)
Leader 2	Peru	(M)

Before proceeding with these interviews, permission was similarly obtained using the consent form to participate in an interview (see Appendix F). The interviews were conducted in Spanish using the most salient questions of the interview guide (see Appendix H) as well as questions that emerged from the interviews with immigrant participants.

Table 3 below provides an overview of the data collection schedule including all primary data interviews and secondary data interviews.

Table 3: Data Collection Schedule

Data	Source	Date	Mode of communication
Interviews with skilled Latin American immigrants	Pedro	July 2019	Face-to-face
	Patricio	August 2019	Face-to-face
	Rodrigo	September 2019	Face-to-face
	Agustin	November 2019	Face-to-face
	Lucia	January 2020	Face-to-face
	Katya	January 2020	Face-to-face
	Joaquin	January 2020	Skype
	Emilia	January 2020	Skype
	Lorena	November 2019	Face-to-face
	Dario	August 2019	Face-to-face
	Roberto	November 2019	Face-to-face
	Thiago	November 2019	Face-to-face
	Ramiro	September 2019	Face-to-face
	Elsa	September 2019	Face-to-face
Interviews with community leaders	Leader 1	July 2020	Phone interview
	Leader 2	June 2020	Phone interview

Photovoice

I used photovoice to complement interviews with primary data participants and further enhance the richness of the data by encouraging critical dialogue. As mentioned before, permission was obtained from participants using the consent form to participate in an interview

as well as in photovoice project (see Appendix E): to doing the photovoice as well as sharing the results of photovoice. At the end of every first face-to-face interview, I identified the photo assignments for participants (Hergenrather et al., 2009): they were asked to capture 2-3 photographs on their own time that they felt answered the research questions relating both to their personal experience and aspects of the Latin American community's strengths, struggles and collective experiences. Before carrying out this project, I made recommendations to participants, orally and by email, on photographic ethics and power dynamics. These included discussions on, for instance, the reasons why minors could not be photographed and the situations that should not be photographed, or, more importantly, the reasons why it was necessary to have someone's written permission before having him or her photographed (see Appendix I). Specifically, since photographs taken of people without their explicit consent could not be submitted nor be used, participants and I discussed the reasons for this instruction, and they also learned how to obtain consent to take pictures of other people in the Photographic Release Form (see Appendix I) to be completed by individuals who wished to have their photographs taken. Such recommendations as well as the main purposes of the photovoice project were also indicated in a Power Point Presentation that I sent to all participants in Spanish and English, according to their language preference, as a brief guideline to their participation.

Considering that the photovoice technique is highly flexible as it can be adapted to the needs of its users (Wang & Burris, 1997), participants did not need to receive intensive training in photographic concepts due to the widespread coverage of digital photography via cameras, cellphones, and other devices including tablets. Participants were then asked to use their own devices. However, if any of them had not owned such a device, I would have provided one to

him/her. For their research project, two participants opted to photograph people from whom permission was obtained in the participant photographic release form (see Appendix I).

Keeping participants engaged at this stage of the research was a bit challenging since getting participants to take pictures took longer than anticipated. Some participants took the photos at a rapid pace and while others needed to be constantly reminded and encouraged to take them and/or requested to be given further explanation of how their photos were expected. After I was sent participants' images electronically, I met seven of the ten participants living in Quebec individually for a brief audio-recorded discussion of approximately 15 minutes in different coffee shops, as it occurred with the interviews. The remaining three participants chose to attend to a virtual meeting instead. The reason for choosing not to have an in-person discussion was due to safety and convenience during the COVID-19 pandemic. In this context, I reported the change in form of data collection to Research Ethics Board Office of McGill university, as previously mentioned, before speaking those participants via Skype. Photo discussions with participants living in the provinces of Ontario and Alberta were made only online. The purpose of photo discussions was to know about the narrative or story behind each photograph and be explained the way participants felt their images addressed the research questions of the study. More importantly, participants contextualized the photographs they took and explained how they felt each image addressed the proposed questions by engaging in a critical dialogue about the common issues of skilled Latin American immigrants in Quebec and Canada. Building on Hergenrather et al.'s (2009) root-cause questioning, I facilitated the discussion by asking the following questions:

1. What is happening here?
2. How does this relate to your life?

3. How do you feel the image addressed the proposed question?

Most participants preferred to have the discussion in Spanish except for the two participants from Brazil with whom one photo discussion was in English and the other French. In addition, study participants were explained that with their consent selected photographs would be disseminated in my dissertation as well as published in academic journals and presentations, in print and digital form, and/or in media.

Reflective Memos by the Researcher

Lastly, the use of reflective memos was also an important aspect of the research methodology to note my immediate reactions and impressions and include details that might not be explicitly stated during the interviews (Glaser, 1978). A memo is the recording of the reflective ideas of the researcher about the transformation of collected data into categories and their relationships (Glaser, 1978). I wrote memos on an ongoing basis while collecting data, from July 2019 to July 2020. Memos helped question biases and assumptions that I might have held prior to undertaking the study. A specific example would rely on the fact that I am a member of the Latin American community in Montreal, and I thus acknowledge that I have certain biases regarding integration and interprovincial migration. In addition, through the use of memos, I kept track of questions that arose throughout the research process (Birks et al., 2008; Creswell, 2007; Glaser, 1978). Since researchers are encouraged to develop a personalized approach to writing memos as there is not a definitive way of writing them (Charmaz, 2006), reflective memos were hand-written in a journal after each interview and discussion with participants.

Data Management

During and after data analysis any personal information obtained from participants was stored securely. To protect participants' privacy and maintain confidentiality without risk of

disclosure or deductive disclosure, identifying information was separated from an individual's data: all identifying characteristics were changed by a pseudonym in place of names, locations or company names participants referred to. Moreover, I created a computer file of all replacements, aggregations or removals made. This computer file (or anonymization log) was stored separately from the anonymized data files as well as encrypted and password protected. Besides guaranteeing confidentiality, it also facilitated the easy storage, organization, and retrieval of data.

All audio-recorded interviews, photo discussions and their transcriptions as well as participants' photographs were stored on my password protected personal computer in my place of residence. Identifiable data stored on computers was placed into password protected files or folders. This includes all audio recordings and the code linking pseudonyms to actual participant, locations or company names. Scanned consent forms were also password protected for secure storage. While I had initially planned to have the images printed for the in-person discussion with participants, I decided to show the photographs corresponding to each participant in my tablet, which was password protected. The high image quality of tablets screen and their tools to enhance and enlarge images were the reasons for the change.

Back-up copies of the data (including the digital audio recordings) were transferred to an external hard drive and stored in a locked filing cabinet also at my personal residence. Lastly, the journal where I wrote my reflective memos was also stored in a locked filing cabinet at my personal residence.

Data Analysis

Once data collection began, interviews were carefully translated and transcribed into English by me. Even though transcription is considered to be the lengthiest aspect of the data

analytic process, I decided not to use transcription software because I was convinced that such *familiarization* process would help me become much more familiar with the data (Morehouse, 2012) and retrieve parts of the transcripts more efficiently, as needed (Rapley, 2007). Indeed, during the process of transcription, I highlighted different excerpts containing relevant topics while taking notes in my reflective memos.

Next, all participants were sent a copy of their transcribed interview electronically and were invited to review their interview transcriptions to verify accuracy of their answers. Since it may be difficult to retain participants for the duration of a study, follow-up questions that were specific to individual participants were asked for further clarification or explanation via email as needed.

I opted for thematic analysis as my qualitative analysis method because it identifies and analyzes data in a rich and detailed manner (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Nowell et al., 2017). It is important to note that because of the flexibility of this analytical method, thematic analysis is not tied to any theoretical framework, so it is used across several other research approaches, such as, case study, ethnography, grounded theory, narrative inquiry, and phenomenology. However, it is important to account for the assumptions about the nature of data that each theoretical and epistemological framework in terms of transparency (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In this study, identified, coded and analysed themes are an accurate reflection of the entire data set. In this sense, through the use of thematic analysis, I provided a rich description of the content of data that could reflect the immigration experiences of skilled Latin American immigrants related to their education and employment in Quebec. I believe that such a qualitative approach helped me adequately represent a group of immigrants that is understudied, and, perhaps more importantly,

a group of participants whose views on interprovincial migration are not known (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

To conduct a thematic analysis of interviews, the data of photo discussions (photovoice) and reflective memos, I followed Braun et al., (2016) six steps method of analysis: 1) Familiarizing myself with the data, which was done since the initial process of transcription, reading and taking notes of data from interviews, photo discussions, photographs and reflective memos; 2) Generating initial codes: this step started when highlighting phrases and/or sentences containing salient topics and giving them a label or “code” that could adequately describe their content; 3) Searching for themes: for this phase patterns within codes were identified and these were maintained or collapsed into broad themes according to relevance or vagueness. Importantly, the creation of themes was in relation to the research questions which were compared and analyzed in relation to each source of data.; 4) Reviewing themes: in order to verify the accuracy of themes’ representation of the data, they were split up, combined, discarded and even became part of the new more data-reflective themes leading to interpretations; 5) Defining and naming themes: for this step of the analysis I looked for concise and incisive names that would quickly give the reader an idea of theme content; 6) Producing the report/manuscript, which refers to the writing of the analysis of data in response to the research questions and objectives of the study.

I employed an inductive approach to the identification of themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006) through which the analysis is strongly linked to the data (Patton, 1990) and themes are derived from the participants’ narratives (Neubauer et al. 2019). It is important to note that since these themes are data driven, they did not always address the exact questions that I asked to participants as they could veer off topic (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Therefore, the inductive

analysis becomes “a process of coding the data without trying to fit it into a pre-existing coding frame, or the researcher’s analytic preconceptions” (p. 12).

In line with Hergenrather (2009), issues in the images were defined and codes were assigned to categories as they appear. Next, photovoice themes were identified, analyzed and then they were compared with those that emerged in the 14 face-to-face interviews with immigrant participants.

To conclude, I draw upon my proposal paper (Calderon Moya, 2017) to describe the data analysis of themes that resulted from the interviews with leaders from the Latin American community. This was compared with the themes that emerged in the interviews with immigrant participants, photovoice and memos. Initial categories were collapsed into a smaller number of categories within larger and more conceptual themes that answered my research questions.

Additionally, I revised the memos that I had written after each interview to cross-check them with those written during the process of data analysis to elaborate on emerging issues (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). For instance, I had the initial impression that Quebec culture was perceived as a factor against the social integration of skilled immigrants from Latin America into the work circles of *Québécois*. However, as I started the process of data analysis, I realized that for other participants, the French language was a barrier against the building of positive social relationships at the workplace with Quebec born peers. Interestingly, the language factor, in this case, did not refer to having a fluent level of the language, but rather to being a Francophone from Quebec. The following memo shows how the interviews with some participants made me relate to personal work experiences as a teacher in Montreal a few years ago. This certainly influenced me to reflect more deeply on the way I was interpreting data.

Note: On my face-to-face interview with Katya (engineer from Mexico) I learnt that she doubted she could ever identify with the *Québécois* culture as she sees the local culture as a barrier for social integration in her workplace. This information was different to the thoughts of Elsa for whom the language played an important role against the integration of minority immigrants in the labour market. Interestingly, the language barrier was also a factor for immigrants for whom French is also a first language, such as Arabs. (MC / February 2020 / reflective memo #12).

To address the assumptions that I held prior to developing this dissertation, and as the study progressed, I used ongoing rumination through the writing of reflective memos. Writing about my own general feelings, assumptions and biases was a helpful reflective activity that let me observe how my reactions were changing during the process of data collection. An example of it can be seen in memo # 16 where I wrote about the feelings of surprise and concern that I had felt when knowing that although some of my participants were exposed to acts of marginalization and discrimination when trying to get inserted in their professional field, they did not seem to hold any sort of grudge against the possible causes for these. Instead, they seemed quite comfortable embracing a positive attitude towards being grateful for what they have, rather than what they do not. I then decided to modify my interview questions with the participants that I had not interviewed so that I could avoid the possibility of imposing ideas that could possibly be absent from their narratives. The following memo reflects how this occurred during my study.

Note: I realized today that some participants give opposite insights about what the factors provoke the marginalization of newcomers in Quebec. I therefore modified my interview question guide so that participants' responses would better address the topics being discussed in future interviews. But I have realized how this subject is seen and perceived differently among my participants (MC / March 2020 / Memo # 16)

With this in mind, I changed my approach in the future interviews by maintaining the original group of questions I had designed, which was neutral and unbiased, in order to better

provide participants with the opportunity to explore topics in a spontaneous and unprompted way.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were an integral part of this study from its inception to its culmination. Following the ethical standards of research involving humans, I obtained ethics approval from the Tri-Council Research Ethics Board (REB) Office at the University level of McGill University before I started the process of data collection. I was granted the approval for the duration of a year.

Similarly, as mentioned previously, consent (see Appendix E) was obtained from all of the participants prior to conducting interviews and photovoice assuring they fully understood the nature of the research as well as their role in the study. The consent form also included a description of the study's purpose and the requirements of participation to which each participant could refer back as needed. As mentioned before, the fact that participants, except two, and I shared the same first language helped to ensure that they had a clear understanding of the nature of my study.

Moreover, I assured the confidentiality of all my participants by omitting all identifiable data and using pseudonyms in order to protect their identities. I made sure of the removal of any identifying criteria by sorting through the data. Pseudonyms were used from the outset of the data collection, and these will continue to be used in any written report, presentation, or future publications. I did not reveal details about the locations of participants except for the name of the provinces in which they were living.

This study was conducted exclusively on a voluntary basis and participants were informed that refusal to participate in, or withdraw from the study, would not influence the

nature of the ongoing relationship the participant had with the researcher and/or the nature of their relationship with McGill University either then, or in the future. In addition, participants were informed and assured of their right to refrain from answering questions or participating in the photovoice project in written detail Consent Form (see Appendix E) though no participants made this decision.

Credibility

It is known that there are several approaches for addressing validity in qualitative inquiry, most of them hold a different terminology and use terms such as authenticity, verisimilitude, trustworthiness, and credibility (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Be that as it may, studies under the qualitative research need to demonstrate the credibility and high quality of their work to be judged on the accuracy that their accounts reflect participants' realities of the phenomena under study (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Drawing on Narrative Inquiry, which is situated within the interpretive-constructivist paradigm, my objective as a researcher was to focus on the interpretation of data, rather than merely the collection of data, to persuade readers to picture events in a specific way (Riessman, 2008). I therefore applied some of Lincoln and Guba's (1985) trustworthiness criteria and techniques for establishing credibility: member checking, triangulation as well as thick description of participants and themes (Shenton, 2004). I will address below each of these as they relate to my research.

Member checking is a technique that refers to the validation of participants of a study. In other words, participants are consulted to determine the accurate representation of their perceptions, impressions, and reflections (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). By using member checking, my participants were able to recognize their experiences in the transcriptions shared with them. As mentioned before, I sent a copy of interview transcription to each study

participants electronically to which they responded positively as they found these adequately reflected their experiences (Morrow, 2005). Furthermore, the use of a three-part interview design over time helped me enhance the trustworthiness of my study since participants and I could verify the accuracy of both transcriptions and interpretations (Butler-Kisber, 2010). Similarly, such design facilitated a prolonged engagement with participants which allowed me to build trust with them (Shenton, 2004).

Triangulation has been seen as a qualitative strategy that uses multiple methods or data sources to reach a deep understanding of phenomena (Patton, 1999). Morrow (2005) recommends the use of multiple data sources to obtain adequate variety so that validity of the study is attained through the procedures of triangulation (Carter et al., 2014). This criterion involves a pursuit for disconfirmation that addresses the common tendency of researchers to seek confirmation of their initial findings (Carter et al., 2014). I achieved validity through triangulation by including two additional participants playing salient roles in the local ethnic community in my interview process and I used these interviews to corroborate or disconfirm what had emerged from the interviews with the immigrant participants. Also, I applied the method of triangulation by using in-depth-interviews, photovoice and reflective memos as methods of data collection to obtain a more holistic understanding of the specific phenomenon (Polit & Beck, 2012 as cited in Carter et al., 2014). Equally important, triangulating my findings should enable others to judge positively the persuasiveness and trustworthiness of this study (Charmaz, 2006).

In addition, by collecting data through in-depth individual interviews from 14 immigrant participants from different Latin American countries, holding diverse professions and living in three different provinces of Canada as well from two leaders from the local ethnic Latin

American community in Quebec I applied data source triangulation (Carter et al., 2014).

Through this strategy I believed that I ensured multiple and rich in-depth perspectives about the addressed topic thus validation of data. Moreover, I argue that the credibility of my study relates to how I steadfastly maintained the authenticity of participants' perceptions, impressions, and reflections on their experiences which were grounded on my interpretations.

Moreover, Loh's (2013) study of trustworthiness and quality in narrative studies points out that because of the nature of narrative inquiry, which focuses on the interpretations of personal realities, the criterion of verisimilitude needs to allow others to develop empathy and therefore grasp the decisions and emotions of participants. In other words, well crafted and highly descriptive narratives facilitate the understanding of the inside world of participants (Loh, 2013). In this sense, verisimilitude, known as the believability of the study, was established by writing rich descriptions of the themes from participants' narratives. Furthermore, being a first-language Spanish speaker (the chosen spoken language for 14 of the 16 participants in this study) and having similar aspects of cultural background and experience with participants enriched my understanding of their connotations and hidden meanings, which certainly strengthens the credibility of the study (Ritchie et al., 2013). Lastly, by constantly monitoring my interpretations through these multiple avenues, I feel that I have enhanced the transparency, and thus, the credibility of my study.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided the rationale for the research design, methodology, and tools of inquiry used to conduct this study. As outlined in this chapter, I explained why the narrative inquiry was the most appropriate approach in exploring the perspectives of the 16 participants of this study about their integration experiences to Quebec in terms of education and

work. Specifically, I described the procedures for data collection, data management, data analysis, as well as a discussion of ethical strategies to establish the credibility of my study. In the following chapter, I explore the heart of the research, that is, the categories and themes that arose from the thematic analysis of the participant's interviews and photovoice project.

Chapter Five

Arriving in Quebec

“What we should do in light of this aging population, in light of the fact that Canada has always been built on immigrants, we should seek out the best and brightest.”

Michael Bloom – The Conference Board of Canada

Introduction

The present chapter introduces the heart of this research, the study participants who arrived in Quebec as high skilled immigrants. It also presents the first two of a total of six themes of the findings of this research. The first section of this chapter provides a profile describing participants and their journey towards integrating into the professional labour market of Quebec. The purpose is to add more context to the realities of Latin American skilled immigrants, highlight the commonalities in these stories to later make connections to the theoretical framework. In the second section of the chapter, I will start discussing the findings of the two themes “Welcome to Quebec” and “Labour Market”. Additionally, stories shared in each category are enriched and given a deeper meaning by using the photographs participants sent me electronically after the first face-to face interview. Participants’ descriptions of their images are portrayed in a small paragraph below them.

Profile of Participants

Participants were middle-class individuals in their country of origin as they immigrated to Quebec by choice rather than by need. Most of them arrived in the province for the first time but five of them had previously stayed in Canada for a short sojourn: three as international students and two as tourists. Furthermore, participants agreed that they chose the Quebec-selected

immigrant program over the Federal Skilled Worker Program due to the speedier and less costly processing time offered by the provincial government.

On arrival, most participants were between 25 and 33 years old except for one of them who was 55 years of age. During the time of the interviews, participants were individuals with ages from 34 years through 64 years. While there is a significant difference in age with the average group age, the experience of the oldest participant greatly mirrored and reinforced those of younger recent skilled immigrants from Latin America in Quebec.

Participants were nine men and five women: nine of them moved with their spouses. Among the married participants, Dario, aged 55 on arrival, came with his three children; and two participants arrived with one school-aged- child. Further, two participants were accompanied by their common-law partners and three immigrated alone. While the 14 participants migrated with or without dependents, all of them, except Dario, were of reproductive age and yet only four participants had children after their arrival. It is worth noting as well that two female participants got divorced during the initial phase of integration to Quebec, that is during their first year in Canada.

At the time of the interviews, participants had stayed in Canada for varying lengths, the shortest one had been here six years while the longest one had lived here for 11 years. In addition, Spanish is the first language for the majority of participants except for two whose first language was Portuguese. All of the participants lived in homes where only their mother-tongue was spoken, except for Katya and Thiago (pseudonyms) who lived with their partners from Quebec. In addition, participants were from different occupational backgrounds, half of them were from fields of study that typically lead to regulated occupations. Specifically, there were

four engineers, two biologists, two journalists, a schoolteacher, a chemist, an accountant, a cinematographer, a hotel administrator, and a trade relations specialist.

Across participants, the knowledge of French and English varied on arrival to Quebec. Most participants had knowledge of both French and English. They indicated that they had advanced proficiency or intermediate level in one of the official languages and basic knowledge in the other. Specifically, four of them had basic knowledge of French and three of them had basic knowledge of English, and four of them had reached intermediate level in both languages. Three of them had basic level proficiency in the two languages.

Once in Quebec, all participants decided to settle in the city of Montreal yet only ten of them continued living in the city. Four participants opted to leave Quebec for the provinces of Alberta and Ontario to look for work opportunities that would allow them not only to work in their field but to grow professionally.

At the time of this study, most participants were working although not all of them were in their professional field. Specifically, 11 participants were working in their profession, or new chosen professions. Among them, 10 had full time jobs, and one worked part time while studying. Two participants were doing lower-skilled jobs and one participant was on work leave. Moreover, two of the participants were PhD students and one of them was studying for a bachelor's degree. Those participants who were living with a partner reported that they were both working and thus the lifestyles of most of the participants would be considered middle-class by Montreal standards. An overview of the background information about the participants in this study will be provided in Table 1.

In the next section, I describe each participants' demographics.

Rodrigo

Rodrigo is a 35-year-old journalist from Colombia who arrived in Quebec with his wife, a schoolteacher, in 2014, looking to find new horizons in life. Although the Quebec immigration counsellor was hesitant of their eligibility to receive the Quebec Selection Certificate / *certificat de sélection du Québec* (CSQ) during the interview in Cali (his hometown), they received a positive assessment and were advised about the process for obtaining accreditation and finding work in their fields. Although Rodrigo came with intermediate level French (and English), he knew that it was not sufficient to write as well as he did in Spanish. He took a French course offered in an immigrant support centre as well as francization classes. He also studied for a certificate of written French at a francophone university. By the end of 2015, he concluded the program and saw his savings decreased significantly. So, he decided to get any survival job. Rodrigo needed to postpone his academic plans in order to secure the family income that would allow his wife to fully invest herself in getting a major in Children's Studies that could get her inserted in the labour market. He worked in a call centre for a year. Then, he decided to become a translator so that he could apply his knowledge of written Spanish and work independently. Since January 2017, he has been studying translation from English into French as a part time student while working full time as an administrative agent (40 hours uninterrupted, except for periods of vacations) in the customer service department of a video games company. Even though Rodrigo currently works in the customer service department, he hopes to be switched to the translation department once he ends the academic program and enters the professional order of translators of Quebec. However, he is considering the idea of quitting his job due to a hostile work environment.

Agustin

A 40-year-old cinematographer, Agustin immigrated to Quebec from Colombia in 2010. He started learning French at the age of 4 at a private school and it became his second language. While Agustin always dreamed of living in France, the enormous stigma of drugs and violence that Colombians carry worked against his visa application. Yet, it was at that time that he learned about Quebec's call for professional immigrants. He arrived in Quebec 11 months later as a skilled worker. For Agustin, improving his French skills was the main priority thus, once he arrived in Quebec, he studied French at an immigrant support community for three months while waiting for the francization program offered by the ministry to open. His job agent at *Emploi-Québec* gave him the *PRIIME* letter, an acronym in French for *Le Programme d'aide à l'intégration des immigrants et des minorités visibles en emploi* (The Program to Support the Integration of Visible Minority Immigrants in Employment). This is a financial assistance offered to new newcomers and visible minorities that covers part of the person's salary in order to support integration into an initial employment in the field of competence. This program helped him enter the labour market at a small TV broadcasting office for which he worked for two years. Right after this, Agustin was unemployed for seven months. During this time, he kept looking for a new job, attended a job-hunt workshop funded by *Emploi-Québec*, and learned about the high demand for 3D animation specialists. He opted to go back to school and registered at the program of Visual Arts, Design and Animation at a French university. Two months before getting his degree, he got a job at a 3D studio that makes movies and videogames. Agustin has accumulated four years of professional experience in Quebec, and he feels very thankful to the city for having opened its doors to him so he could grow professionally. In addition, having had a personal relationship with a Quebecer for six years allowed him to learn about how Quebecers often act in their intimate circle.

Lucia

Lucia, 39, came to Quebec from Colombia with her husband in 2012 after two years of financial preparation. She brought a master's degree in Education and nine years of experience teaching at high schools. Having arrived in Montreal in the month of April, Lucia needed to wait until September to enter the francization program. Those months were fraught with personal difficulties and frustration. Not being able to communicate fluently in the official language resulted in psychological and emotional struggles to adapt to the new life in Quebec. In addition, Lucia and her husband dealt with the process of adaptation and integration to Quebec so differently that they started to grow apart and decided to rapidly end their marriage. Perhaps more importantly, such a struggling adaptation phase took a toll on her physical health as well as a loss of self-confidence. However, Lucia found in her passion for teaching a fortunate method to recover her physical and emotional wellbeing: she studied early childhood education, against the recommendation of her job agent who thought this step could be a setback in her professional career. Once in the labour market, Lucia greatly enjoyed working with kids for years. However, due to a work-related accident, she is currently on work incapacity leave. Because working in education has been her tool for freedom and an escape from depression and loneliness, and despite not being able to physically move as much as she wants to, she hopes to pass the Ministry of Education exam as a condition to receive the teaching permit to re-enter the high school as a teacher.

Ramiro

Ramiro, 40, is a biologist from Argentina who arrived in Montreal eight years after his first visit to the city. This time he did not come alone to visit his cousin, he came with his common law partner to settle permanently in the province. They opted to migrate to Canada

instead of Australia, which has a very similar migration process, or Spain, where his mother is a national, because Canada was geographically more convenient. He obtained a Canadian master's degree in Experimental Medicine at an English university to improve his opportunities to get inserted in the labour market. Unfortunately, he was unemployed for four months and then underemployed for almost 1.4 years: he had a mechanical job in a factory for assembling lighting fixtures. After doing an online course on clinical trials he got a biology-related job in a clinic that involved clinical trials with medication for specific viruses, processing samples and providing medication. But Ramiro quit his job to follow his partner to Ontario. She found a job offering better opportunities in Toronto and this way they followed their old plan to leave Quebec for Alberta or Ontario. The main reason for postponing their departure was the delay in selling their apartment, which took approximately 2 years. Today, they both live in their newly constructed house in Ottawa. Although Ramiro works below his level of qualifications, he feels highly satisfied with his professional position in Canada.

Elsa

Elsa was 25 years old when she immigrated from Buenos Aires, Argentina with her common law partner in 2009. She had a bachelor's degree in Biological Sciences. Prior to immigrating, she worked in Argentina as a biology schoolteacher. Her levels of English and French were high: she had received bilingual primary and high school education and she had studied French before coming to the province for 2 years and a half. In Buenos Aires, she first attended the *Alliance Française* and later at the Centre for Canadian Studies so that she could be familiarized with words and terms spoken in Quebec. Because Elsa and her partner wanted to leave the Argentinian social and economic crisis behind them as soon as possible, they decided to settle in Quebec, instead of other parts of Canada, given that the application process to Quebec was significantly shorter. Once she received the CSQ (Quebec selection certificate), she did the

francization program online from Argentina. In Montreal, she also did this program online as well as a face-to-face course. Nevertheless, she decided to quit this program since she found that level taught in it was too basic despite the placement test that she had passed. Elsa preferred to register at a linguistic pairing program and later at a conversation (and written) French course which were offered by a French university. Her insertion to the labour market was, unfortunately, problematic. She was not able to find a job in her work field for very long. She tried to get a master's degree in order to improve her chances of employability, yet she was not able to find a principal investigator to accept taking her in his/her laboratory. Thus, taking a lower-skilled job was her only option for some years. For Elsa, the assistance that the several job agents had given and the workshops she had attended were simply not effective in finding employment. During this time, she decided to switch to a technical career in medical laboratory technologies that would allow her to find a job fast. However, the pressing need to make money led her to quit the college program on the second year of studies. Around 2014, Elsa decided to take an online course on clinical trials and, short time after that, got her first qualified job. She accumulated 4 years of professional experience in Quebec before leaving for Ontario. Work discrimination and xenophobia were the decisive factors for her decision.

Dario

Dario was 55 years old from Venezuela when he arrived in Quebec. At the time of this study, he had been in Montreal for around 11 years. He came with a degree in electrical engineering, a master's degree in Business Administration Education and 28 years of experience in the field. In Venezuela, Dario worked as the manager of complex projects, not only in electrical related processes, but also in mechanical and civil engineering. He immigrated with his wife and children - three young teenagers. Although the process of integration into the labour market has been particularly difficult, Dario feels great satisfaction in having his children

studying at local universities. He studied in the program of Improvement in Engineering for graduates abroad at an engineering school affiliated with a French university in order to reinforce the necessary skills to be admitted at the *Ordre des ingénieurs du Québec*, enhance his employability and thus facilitate his integration into the local engineering labour market.

Although he obtained his certification, Dario has not been able to practise his profession: the gamut of excuses that he has heard from potential employers to refuse him jobs in the field, or the fact of not getting called for an interview have resulted in taking various different jobs, mainly through placement agencies, that have been only short-term contracts. Interestingly, for Dario his story has not ended yet as he is still in the pursuit of his personal objectives. He has never stopped looking for professional opportunities in and out of Quebec. At the time of the interview, Dario was about to travel abroad to work in an engineering project.

Lorena

Lorena is a 39-year-old electrical engineer from Venezuela. At the time of this study, she had been in Montreal for around ten years. She came to Quebec with her husband and their six-year-old son, and four years of work experience after having saved money for two years. The main reason for migrating as an educated immigrant was to escape the socio-political instability and insecurity, specifically, the kidnapping of children from wealthy homes. They chose to settle in Quebec, instead of other parts of Canada, because the application process in Quebec was much less costly. She had studied French before coming to Quebec. Once in Montreal, she continued studying French in free courses offered in churches, immigrant support communities and in the francization program for three months after which she was able to obtain a job as an electrical technician. A short time after that, she divorced her husband due to lack of shared objectives and compatibility. She entered the *Ordre des ingénieurs du Québec* in 2013. Since

then, she feels that she could reach the level of work she used to have in Venezuela. Lorena feels that she has been lucky getting a job and being able to grow professionally in the field. More importantly, she credits her success to her personal ambition: “I demand a lot of myself, more than what I can give”, and patience “I have learnt you can’t have things instantly, a proof of that is migration: you can’t have anything on day one. At some point, you are going to be fine”.

Lorena re-married and has another son.

Joaquin

Joaquin is a 38-year-old mechanical engineer from Mexico. He arrived in Montreal with his wife in 2009. Five years before, Joaquin was in Toronto as an international student for three months in order to improve his English skills. The reason why Joaquin and his wife migrated to Quebec instead of Ontario was mainly because Montreal is considered a bilingual city and, more importantly, because the application process to immigrate to Quebec was less complicated. He invested heavily in learning French by studying in the francization program for eight months which greatly helped him develop his French skills, though his English became less and less fluent. Studying in the French language program allowed him to build strong friendships that he continues to maintain now. He had postponed applying for the equivalence process at the Ministry of Immigration due to budget limitations. Joaquin’s first work experience was a lower-skilled summer job at an oil terminal at the Montreal port. Lacking guidance on the best path to enter the *Ordre des ingénieurs du Québec*, he decided to get a four-year degree in industrial engineering, instead of a master’s in mechanical engineering, at a professional school affiliated with a French university. He was told that studying a master’s program would not be recognized by the order and get him the permit. He was in the program only for less than a year. The different system of studying as well as the pressing need to work full time and generate income

made him think of getting a technical degree in drawing hoping to find a job as fast as his close friend had done. Getting inserted in the labour market sooner, Joaquin would have to dedicate less time to study and spend weekends applying for jobs. Looking for guidance to get a job in his field he met with some immigrant support agents who he feels could not be of much help. His first job-related opportunity came suddenly from the province of Alberta. Joaquin felt he needed to take the job offer immediately and sold his car and left Quebec a week later. Joaquin and his wife have been living in Calgary since 2012.

Katya

A 39-year-old industrial engineer of Mexican origin, Katya had worked for four years in engineering before coming to Montreal. Aiming to achieve an international experience that could enhance her résumé, she studied English and French in Quebec for nine months as an international student. The cultural diversity of the province and the professional opportunities available in her professional field influenced her decision to return as a permanent resident under the category of the Quebec-selected Skilled Worker program. She worked in a restaurant for two weeks until she got a field-related job as a quality technician. Although Katya “was not fully happy” with her second job which involved repetitive inspections, she kept it for three years in order to pay the bills while studying for a master’s program at an English university in Montreal. For Katya, holding a degree from a local educational institution represented a complete change from living as a person who was working in Canada. She strongly believes that without such an experience, “it would be impossible for [her employers] to [even] read [her] résumé.” Katya expressed a high degree of satisfaction with her work at an international company as she feels “it can support [her] professional development.”

Emilia

Emilia, 36, arrived in Quebec from Mexico with her husband a year after she completed her undergrad degree in trade relations. Because her level of English was higher than her level of French, once in Montreal, she focused on learning French by taking francization classes for a year and a half. Since the francization program started four months after her arrival, she found a job “to pay the bills” at a souvenirs store in the old Port. Emilia found this work convenient since it required her to work only on weekends and during the summer season which allowed her to focus on the francization program on weekdays. She highly treasures this learning experience because it gave her the opportunity to deeply identify with her classmates who were also digesting “the process of moving from one country to another and all that this implie[d].” Eventually, Emilia became interested in studying Marketing, so she studied another French course, this time at a French university, to increase her proficiency in the language. During this program, a marketing agency took her as a trainee in two trade-mission projects. She was hired right after that. Emilia had worked for this agency for approximately a year before she quit and left for Alberta following her husband, an educated immigrant who “didn’t have a positive experience at all” and who “found a lot of discrimination” in Montreal. The decision was not difficult to make for Emilia: “if there isn’t an opportunity for you here, let’s go” “we already moved once from one country to another, we can surely move from one province to another”. Emilia has been living in Calgary for eight years. She currently works as a Human Resources agent.

Roberto

Roberto, a 37-year-old chemist, arrived in Quebec with his wife, a chemical engineer, and their two-year-old son in 2011. As a Brazilian, his first language is Portuguese. The main reason to leave his country was his concern about the growing rates of crime and violence in Sao Paulo

and its possible negative impact on the development and safety of his child. Once in Montreal, he focused on learning French since he described his French language proficiency as basic. He and his wife studied in the francization program for seven months, yet Roberto could not be fully invested in studying as he was getting more and more concerned about paying the bills, such as for day care. Therefore, he took a lower skilled job repairing pellets for four months as it was his only employment option by then. Right after that, he attended a job-hunt workshop for three months, which was funded by *Emploi-Québec*. Although the program did not offer much job search strategies, the three months he spent in the program allowed him to focus on improving his communication skills. As a chemist, he faced several difficulties to find a job in his field. Nevertheless, Roberto was able to insert himself in the labour market and overcome different obstacles in the workplace. Although Roberto decided to postpone his application to be admitted to the *Ordre des chimistes du Québec* (Quebec's Order of Chemists), today he has a satisfactory salary which, he claims, is higher than that of members of the order.

Thiago

Thiago, 36 years old, was born and raised in Brazil. While he is a native speaker of Portuguese, he also speaks Spanish as a foreign language. As a journalist, he worked for a public broadcast company for seven years. He decided to leave his country because he did not feel he could ever fully integrate to the local labour market. Specifically, the challenges of delivering good quality product contents due to political pressures from the Bolsonaro administration as well as the disrespect to the workers' law were the main reasons for Thiago to look for a new long-term project. First, he arrived in Toronto as an international student to take an English immersion course. Once in Brazil, he decided to return to Canada as a skilled immigrant. Thiago is a cyclist, and he claimed that Montreal was the best cultural, social, economic choice to live.

Despite his very good language skills in English and French, besides Spanish and Portuguese, he was aware that being an allophone would have a direct impact in his professional development as a journalist. Further, as a strategy to build and establish a network of connections, Thiago studied for a master's degree in Demography at a French university. At the time of this interview, Thiago was studying for a PhD. in Sociology in an English university and working as research assistant for his supervisor. He plans to work for the government, an agency or a university doing social analysis.

Pedro

Pedro is a 44-year-old Peruvian who arrived in Montreal with his wife, also an accountant, in 2009. At the time of this study, he has been in Montreal for around 12 years. He used to work for an international company in Lima where he had headships and communicated with the directors in English. In Peru, he learned French to the intermediate level. His first intention in Quebec was to obtain a certificate in accounting from a renowned university and time after that, complete a master's program. He was convinced of the relevance of holding a degree from a Canadian university as "nobody knows [of his] university" out of Peru. For Canadians, it is as any university that has no value or a limited value." By the time he arrived in Montreal, his application to study for a certificate in accounting was already accepted at an English university and the equivalencies, his and his wife, had already been processed. During their first year in the city, Pedro studied for the certificate and francization mainly because of the financial assistance given to language students. He also participated in different labour-related workshops offered in immigrant support centres. It was through one of them that he got the *PRIIME subsidy*. He has had four jobs with different levels of responsibility as an accountant. He

is now the father of two kids and works in auditing for a public company while pursuing a M.B.A. degree at a French university in Montreal.

Patricio

Patricio is 43-year-old and from Peru. He immigrated to Quebec with his wife and his six-year-old daughter in 2009 looking for better quality of life for his child. Knowing that Peruvian nationals do not have open doors in many countries, Patricio had two choices for migrating: Australia or Canada, he preferred to stay in Canada and, specifically in Montreal because of its European flavour and only a hint of American influence. He came with a degree in administration of hotel and tourism services and 12 years of work experience in the industry. His mother tongue is Spanish, and he spoke English to the advanced level and French to the intermediate level. He studied in the francization course for five months until he found his first job in the field. While he worked for six years in the hotel industry, he decided to change his career path and become an implementation consultant for a company that manages human capital. Patricio had realized that other hotel positions would not provide a higher salary than what he was already receiving. His new employer paid for him to study the Payroll Compliance Practitioner Program given by the Canadian Payroll Association at a *CEGEP*. He works in three languages. He is currently a senior consultant and has two daughters.

Additional Participants: Leader 1

Leader 1 is the director of a non-profit organization that provides support services to children and young Latin American immigrants as well as their families, in order to facilitate their integration to Quebec. As a Latin American immigrant, a parent, a lawyer, and an executive director for almost two decades, Leader 1 has closely witnessed “the difficulty the Latin American immigrants have to integrate into the labour market in their domain”. In that vein,

Leader 1 has constantly played a salient active role voicing the struggles of the Latin American ethnic group to academics, journalists, and political authorities.

Leader 2

Leader 2 is responsible for a digital magazine based in Quebec that provides relevant information to the Latin American community in Canada to optimize their integration process in the country. As a Latin American journalist and communicator with almost 20 years of professional experience, Leader 2 specialises in the management of immigration projects and multiculturalism and is highly knowledgeable about intercultural organizations, ethnic communities, and non-governmental organizations.

To summarize, this section introduced the study participants and provided a window to their profile right before migrating and in Canada. It also provided information on the participants' life stories and journeys towards integrating into the professional labour market. In what follows, I present the findings of this qualitative study on the integration experiences of skilled Latin American immigrants in Quebec. As described in Chapter Four, interview data as well as the photographs (and discussions) from photovoice were analysed thematically and they are presented through excerpts from thought-provoking statements which are organized in six themes.

Theme One: "Welcome to Quebec?"

Most participants attended different centres supporting the integration of immigrants into the labour market. While most participants attended the settlement centres during the first weeks of their arrival in Montreal, some sought guidance at different moments of their new life in the city. Participants agreed that workshops on how to get a job, which were offered in several organizations, seemed to be an adequate step to learn of the different characteristics of the Quebec labour demand. In these four-to six-week courses, participants learned about the Quebec

résumé style, rehearsed interviews with employers, and made phone calls to company directors or the managers of the human resources departments requesting an interview to offer their professional services. Interestingly, although participating in this workshop was funded by The Ministry of Immigration, Francisation and Integration, for many participants, the program was not as useful in the labour search as they imagined. Others, on the other hand, found that the workshop helped them improve their conversation skills.

Since I was not getting a job, I was suggested to take a course about how to get a job... The teacher of the course incited us to call companies, introduce ourselves and, using different techniques, so that we could skip the secretary and talk to someone holding an important position in the company and try to force them to have an interview. That was highly ... I mean, a complete waste of time. It was simply worthless. (Elsa / Interview 1 / pp. 3-4). It was paid, although it wasn't much it was good because during this course, I could concentrate more in the communication ... I could concentrate in the language. (Roberto / Interview 1 / p. 2).

Roberto made an important argument about the need to evaluate the efficacy of programs that support new immigrants. Some of them found difficulty to only be focused on the objective of, what they called, over-extended courses or programs. For participants like Roberto, agreeing to only learn as a strategy to enter the local labour market while seeing that day by day his savings decreased and his needs were getting greater was a distracting factor.

For me, I appreciated ... getting help from the government to start working in our profession. I think this is the great problem of immigration in Quebec... but it is not easy because it takes time, but sometimes you don't have money you need time, but you don't have money: money / time it is very difficult. Sometimes people have the impression that it is not working, it is very difficult. You never win in this game; it is like that. (Roberto / Interview 1 / pp. 3-4).

Integration Services

Some participants required the services of guidance counselling to enter the labour market through an agent from *Emploi-Québec*, and attendance in work-search workshops. Many

interviewees found the guidance from their job agents helpful in securing the possibilities of being given their first job in the field by receiving the *PRIIME* subsidy.

In those workshops I also got informed about a government program [*PRIIME*] that subsidizes companies that hire immigrants. In [my] first job, a part of my salary was subsidized by the government. I don't remember the name [of the community centre through which I received it] but they gave me letters that I took to the interviews. I think it was through one of the workshops of *Emploi-Québec*. (Pedro / Interview 1 / p. 3).

I went to *Emploi-Québec*, my job agent gave me the *carte PRIIME*...so by mid-December, I found a Latino TV channel ... a small TV broadcasting in which they weren't hiring at the moment but that they were accepting volunteers. I agreed to that as in *Emploi-Québec* they told me that it was something well seen here. Then, I took it...Then someone ... was leaving in February. They asked me if I wanted to work for them in his replacement. I said yes, they asked me for the *carte PRIIME* ...Then, I signed a contract for a year. (Agustin / Interview 1 / p. 2).

At the same time, some participants attended several meetings with their job agents at *Emploi-Québec* without any success. For them, oftentimes new immigrants do not receive personalised support as they felt that their visits to the agent involved answering a fixed structure of questions and actions utilised for every immigrant requesting their help. Elsa put it lucidly when she described the meetings with newcomers as check-list routines that compromises the effectiveness of the government support.

I went to several *emploi centres* in different parts of the city [and] I had several meetings with their *agents d'emploi* ... the agent, basically, has a talk with you, tries to provide orientation, your educational background, your work experience, the style of your resumé and they adapt it in the way they think it would work in the province of Quebec. Every work agent rearranged my résumé differently. Then, they ask you to send several of them (resumés) for job applications. Then, you need to report back to them commenting ... In my case, that did not happen. Nobody was calling me. If it didn't work, they didn't tell you anything. They had a sort of speech to tell you, they had boxes to check, and they made questions, once they ended the forms, they would say, "ok, thank you. I have another client waiting" so I left. It was a like doing a paperwork. I, eventually, stopped going because it was worthless for me... I went to the one in Verdun for 2 or 3 months after I arrived. Then, years after, when I was unemployed, I went back to these centres to get some help. 4-5 years after, after several meetings with my agent, we couldn't find a company that could hire me. (Elsa / Interview 1 / p. 3) ...They started offering me jobs doing anything else, not a job in my field but a job without qualifications, which was

something I could certainly do on my own. The reason for going to *Emploi-Québec* was to get help to work in my domain. If I am to work for a supermarket, I can get that job on my own. (Elsa / Interview 1/ p. 8).

Similarly, during our photovoice discussion, Elsa elaborated on her several experiences attending recruitment events in Montreal. She shared:



This was in Palais Congress de Montreal. It was in one of those events that lasts two or three days in which there are a lot of booths of companies, hospitals looking for job candidates. They called it job salons. The thing is you go with your resume and your cover letter to see if they could have an interview with you. They have a list in which they specify what type of job they are looking for, they are categories. You can have an interview with the people who are in the stands in their job fair. I used this picture because that was not the first time, I had been to a job fair; I have been to many job fairs. I took my resume with me, went there “prepared” yet they were worthless for me except that I got cloth bags with little pencils inside [laughter]. Clearly, it didn’t help at all, it was a waste of time, as well as of “money” because I had to pay the travel expenses. I found no difference between it and sending resumes from my computer at home or calling companies offering services. I think it was mainly commercial. If it contributed to the immigrant? Really, through these job fairs they didn’t work. Why did I go? Because they were suggested to me in *Emploi-Québec*. In other places, I was told that it was a good place to go to, “you could speak to people from different domains” ... I didn’t go to the hospitals or sciences section, I went to all of them, I was not looking for a job in my field, I just needed to get a job. (Elsa / Interview 2 / p. 1).

Nevertheless, getting established in their professional fields was a difficult and long path that most interviewees saw themselves in. Interviewees took different steps such as taking language courses, meeting with job agents, attending job fairs and workshops to find jobs that were relevant to their experience and could contribute to building a successful career in Quebec. While some participants did not have to wait long to start working in their field, with two of them recipients of a subsidy from the government, seven of the interviewees experienced unemployment and underemployment for long.

I thought it was going to be easier to get a job, but it was not. That was a disagreeable surprise... It is also true that I applied to many jobs, for the government and in the private sector and it is not that they didn't give the job, and was not even called for the job, I didn't get any job interview, period [emphasis]. I am talking about since May until late October 2013. I was not called for a single interview... I didn't apply to be the CEO of any company, I was applying for a lab technician, a position for which I was overqualified for my experience and my diplomas. And nothing. (Ramiro / Interview 1 / p. 3).

I had very big expectations ... I passed some interviews in Ontario for a company that is here [in Quebec] but they interviewed me there. But things didn't come to an end because of the reasons I will tell: the language, my profile which perhaps was too much ... Overqualified for what the company I was looking for. I was here [in Quebec] not in Ontario. I don't know, the thing is that it didn't work. I had interviews for different positions: technical, nontechnical for engineering development, well it didn't work. (Dario / Interview 1 / p. 3).

I used to have a friend from Colombia who was an immigration counselor... he used to work for a very big association for immigrants. He helped me a little, I went to different interviews, but nothing turned up. (Joaquin / Interview 1 / p. 3).

During the first weeks of their new life in Quebec, participants could gradually learn about the labour market while seeking employment and having job interviews. An example of this was Pedro who observed a mismatch between his skills and the jobs he would likely be offered. After deleting years of experience in his résumé, he applied to jobs doing much less responsibilities and got his first job. Yet, underreporting his qualifications to gain employment

did not cause a negative impact in his mental health, such as low self-esteem and negative coping mechanisms doing this job, as will be described in more detail in Chapter Five. Being underemployed allowed Pedro to learn of the different characteristics of working in the accounting field in Quebec. He elaborated:

It was a little hard because in Peru I had headship. I saw that on the interviews, they found me overqualified for the positions I was applying to. A position of headship required to be in the order [of accountants], and I had too much experience for a lower position. They thought: “you have too much experience, you will get bored, and you will leave”. My strategy then was to eliminate experience from my résumé. To accept that was the reality and to start from zero. So, I had to start in a lower level. (Pedro / Interview 1 / p. 3) ... There was a training process. But the accounting systems are almost the same. I had already worked with several of them in Peru so working here was not anything special. (Pedro / Interview 1 / p. 4) ... I saw that there were more scales here than in Peru. In Peru there are two: the assistant and the boss, the assistant does everything and the boss, depending on the company, does a thousand things at the same time. Here the positions are well established. Because of the [strict respect] to the schedules, there isn't a work overload as there is in Peru. Positions are divided so I saw that if I aspired to a headship position, I needed to work on different positions first (Pedro / Interview 1 / p. 5).

Francization

Offered by the Ministry of Immigration, Francisation and Integration, these free-of-charge courses are offered to immigrants who wish to improve their knowledge of French. Importantly, financial assistance is offered to immigrants registered in this course. As previously mentioned, the level of French in participants was varied. While most of them had an intermediate or advanced level of French, most participants found the accent spoken in Montreal new and challenging and thus considered that taking the francization program was necessary.

Participants shared:

What was shocking for us was the language, we thought we spoke French [laughter]. Well, we spoke some French and then when we arrived here, we realized people speak a pretty peculiar version of it: Quebecer. Even the simplest things became difficult for us: interacting in the supermarket, people talking to us in the street. We took it humorously. We knew of the Quebec accent; we knew the *Québécois*. We were given some basic tips of the French here, yet we were learning mainly French from France. I didn't take this

wrongly but yes it cost me that I couldn't be at ease with the language. Anyway, I saw it as a challenge, I wanted to be able to understand them. I don't think I wanted to express the way they do, I needed to maintain my level of French. (Ramiro / Interview 1 / p. 1).

Despite I had an advanced French, I had studied it at *Alliance Française* for 2 years, when I arrived here, I didn't understand anything. The accent is very different, it took the whole time I was here to learn it. (Katya / Interview 1 / p. 1).

The language you learnt at home is not the same you learnt here... [the challenge] was to understand the way people speak here. After a month and a half, I could understand what people were saying on the bus. (Lorena / Interview 1 / p. 1).

Because the average waiting time for the course to initiate was of three months, many of them felt lucky to find free French courses offered in places like churches or communities where they could register. While these courses were not grammatically demanding, as newly arrived immigrants, participants appreciated the offer so that they could increase their communication skills immediately while waiting for the francization program to start. All participants took the francization course, whether in person, or online for mainly three reasons: the imperative need to improve the language skills, to get familiarized with the Quebec accent, and to receive financial assistance while seeking for employment.

When one arrives and is directly exposed to French, one realizes that there is more to learn. I think Francisation was a very good program, I had a very good group, the teachers I had were very good. (Joaquin / Interview 1 / p. 1).

I think the French course was worth it, during those 3 months I defended myself. I learnt things. I finished the course by January 2011, and I got a job in February. My French level was good when I passed the interview. (Lorena / Interview 1 / p. 1).

I did the francization, too. But it was mainly because of the subsidy one receives for studying. ...I had concluded the intermediate, I think [my level of French] was advanced. (Pedro / Interview 1 / p. 1).

Nevertheless, participants were able to observe the limitation of the publicly funded program as the level of language taught and targeted did not fit the French skills the immigrant students had. More importantly, participants did not feel the program helped them reach

language autonomy. Specifically, factors like the mixed levels of the language in a class group, or the seemingly slow pace of the class discouraged students of a solid level of preparedness they would get in order to feel at ease when entering the professional labour market.

There were different levels of French in the class. Some had a higher level and others started at zero. (Lucia / Interview 1 / p. 2).

I registered in a course in a secondary school while I didn't have a job...I went there for two days because I got fed up. It was a very basic course in which students were taught the numbers. I took [a placement test] and I was placed in a group where I got bored. It felt like I was not making a good use of my time. I quit. (Elsa / Interview 1 / p. 1).

My wife and I did francisation for seven months. It was very basic. (Roberto / Interview 1 / p. 2) ... It would be better, I think, to do more exercise, to write more in class...I think the francisation needs to be a bit more different and give them a bit of experience and a lot more support in the communication. For me it is a program, but it is really not. For me, it isn't a good program, but [because] it isn't very serious. Roberto p. 4

For this reason, several participants dropped out of the program along the way to invest their time in applying for jobs, instead. For Roberto, being able to get a job will not only actively expose him to the official language but will cover his immediate family's economic needs.

At first, it was difficult because we had to pay a lot of things for the day care. (Roberto / Interview 1 / p. 2). [But] when I started to work, it was good because people speak with a French accent. And it was necessary because I couldn't understand the French from here in the course... for me it is better [to perfect French at work rather than in class] because in class it was helpful, but I was always *preocupado* [worried] for the money (Roberto / Interview 1 / p. 5).

In time, some participants opted to improve their language skills by studying a language certificate program, conversation courses, or registering at twinning program offered at universities. Interestingly, offering a "standard" level of French for immigrants holding different levels of language proficiency is a contradictory aspect of the Quebec government's rhetoric on the importance of learning French for integration. For Thiago, offering programs that aim to prepare immigrants with only the basic level of the official language disregards and denies the economic role that educated immigrants come to play in Canada. He elaborated:

It is the difficulty to, they are trying to have a standard [level] and the standard that they found, because immigrants are coming with many different levels of language skills, and then they have to offer the standard, so they decided to offer the basic [level] to immigrants to achieve the minimum required by the society. But that is not enough anymore in this high-skill human capital society that kind of become a service society, especially in the service sector. Then, language skills become more important than industry in the agricultural sector, in the service sector, economic activity in Canada has a role as a whole. (Thiago / Interview 1 / p. 5) French should be the priority for immigrants coming to Quebec. These immigrants should be paid to take courses until an advanced level. I don't know how to design these but maybe a PRIIME, like "we don't pay you until you reach an advanced level and then if you do, we will give you 2,000 bucks- 5 000 bucks, we give you a PRIIME" [means] an incentive, a grant. So, you are helping yourself to help the society and the society is helping you help her; we need to work together with immigrants. No more imposing constraints on them. (Thiago / Interview 1 / p. 5).

Leader 2 reflected on failure of the francisation program by pointing to the annual report that the Auditor General, Guylaine Leclerc, presented in the National Assembly in 2018 in which the Ministry of Immigration was severely criticized for not carrying out any evaluation of the language program over the years.

And that [issue] has to do with a number of things. Two years ago, the evaluation from the Auditor General was published in all media, this evaluation was about francization in the past five years. I'm talking about 2017-18. To sum up, it was a failure. The [Quebec] government invests millions on it. (Leader 2 / Interview 1 / p. 7) ... One of the reasons why the General Auditor said the francization service was not optimum was because the government had invested a lot of money in program, yet it didn't bother to do a follow up job in order to evaluate if all the people coming out of the program remained in Quebec, studied at university, college or had found a job. Francisation by then was pretty basic. (Leader 2 / Interview 1 / p. 8).

Unfulfilled Expectations

Most participants felt that the idea they had of their initial life in Quebec was nothing like what they encountered when trying to enter the labour market but rather controversial. In other words, most participants encountered professional integration problems when trying to enter the Quebec labour market. Agustin talked about the feeling that used to overwhelm him while trying

to insert himself into the labour market. For him, educated immigrants arrived in Quebec not fully informed of the language barriers, the obstacles found when seeking a job as well as the anxiety that can come with it. In addition, Katya underlined that the portrait of Quebec that was painted at immigration conferences in Mexico in which it is sold as an open labour market for skilled immigrants provided unrealistic information of what employers look for in immigrant job applicants.

I think that saying that they need skilled workers to fill the demands of the labour market is a hook for immigrants to come to fill the country for a reason I don't know. it doesn't make sense to say "we need this number of workers as they are leaving their jobs to fill the gap" because there are people who can do that. It is like "I throw the hook and wait and see what I can fish" I think... I don't think that the fact they say "come here, there is work for you" is completely true... You come here and you face the first barrier, the language. If you don't know well French or English, it is difficult to start working immediately. The process of francization and finding out what to do to enter the labour market. And if you get it, the nervousness that comes with it [because] you don't want to lose it either (Agustin / Interview 1 / p. 9).

Back when I was in Mexico, the information in the conferences was as if they are here waiting for you to give you the job. It is not like that. It is a very, very long path. The information given must be much more realistic and thus give people more opportunities [to be prepared]. However, if you don't know the language, you have to start learning the language to have an internship and thus no company will take you (Katya / Interview 1 / p. 10).

When I attended the talks about immigration to Quebec, I would say that coming here was overvalued. The way I was explained things, everybody would receive you with open arms when you arrive in Quebec. I was going to get a job from night to morning and all the experience would be recognized. But it really isn't like that. Specially people from the health sector. I believe all of them are misinformed. I think it should be explained how much it takes to enter to the labour market; how much it takes to get the equivalencies before they decide to come (Pedro / Interview 1 / p. 7).

They say that Quebec is multicultural, that they are very open people, and their cultures is open to everything. But in fact, I feel it is more theory but in practice no, no (Lucia / Interview 1 / p. 8).

Interestingly, Joaquin, a mechanical engineer who currently lives in Calgary (Alberta), highlighted the idea that the struggles for validating the academic credentials and experience of newcomers are not exclusive to the province of Quebec. He suggested that immigrants in every milieu need to be set for a more pragmatic attitude towards “life as an immigrant” as they all need “to make efforts and work hard.” (Joaquin / Interview 2 / p. 1) to achieve an adequate process of professional integration. He shared:



I think that [immigrants] should come with more realistic goals and know that things are going to be difficult. They are going to be difficult due to the limitations in there [Quebec]. I don't mean that things are easier in the rest of the provinces because we all have to work very hard anyway. I feel that sometimes people come with very high expectations to achieve [their goals] and it is also because of the way things are told to us in the talks we receive in our countries stating things as if there will be a job waiting for our signature in a contract at the airport [smiles] and things are not like that ... It is about finding a field and take the necessary steps to achieve that goal if that is what one wants. (Joaquin / Interview 2 / p. 1).

It is clear that participants lamented not having received correct information about the characteristics of the local labour market beforehand. The implications for skilled immigrants from Latin American origin to attempt to integrate into a network that is unlike what they were mentally prepared for resulted in an extended adaptation process seen in long language courses, attendance at job-related workshops, and constant visits to job agents. This is compounded by the effects of such adaptation in their personal sense of independence and resourcefulness as they felt they required continuous and personalized support to rapidly develop the necessary knowledge and competency to be able to read a situation correctly.

Theme Two: Labour Market.

After the initial period of studying French, getting guidance from either immigrant-support centres or job agents from *Emploi-Québec*, participants describe the problems related to access to employment. Indeed, despite their educational credentials, students faced a mismatch to available employment as they feel their application was screened out due to a lack of Canadian experience or a perceived overqualification. Added to this, given the limited finances that participants brought to Canada to support themselves for at least three months, they felt at risk of losing their savings before they could start working in their field.

Canadian Experience

Although participants were selected by Quebec as highly skilled immigrants and completed the comparative evaluation of their studies done outside Quebec at the Ministry of Immigration, Francization and Integration, they experienced difficulties getting inserted into the labour market. They found that their high levels of foreign education, language skills, and work experience were less appreciated than those of Quebecers. In other words, although participants were selected on the likelihood that their foreign acquired skills can stimulate the provincial economy, their foreign education and experience were not seen as “fully fit” by employers. Because of this, most participants opted for post-migration education to fight their employment disadvantage. In some cases, such new education replicated educational credentials and knowledge already achieved prior to immigration to Quebec. Pedro and Lucia said:

I knew that a degree obtained here was important because nobody knows the university [where I studied in Peru]. For them it is as any university that has no value or a limited value. And I knew that [studying a certificate program] would help me obtain the professional title [of accountant] here (Pedro / Interview 1 / p. 2).

[In Colombia] I worked at schools, at the primary and secondary level. And I taught adults, too. I told [my job agent] that I had never worked with kids 0 to 5, so I would like to have that experience. He did not understand [emphasis] that, [he told me] “you have certain level, why would do something lower to what you already have?” I told him that I was interested (Lucia / Interview / p. 4).

Notwithstanding the financial costs of higher education, participants shared the conviction that obtaining a Bachelors, Masters or PhD degree would expand the skills they acquired abroad, help them gain Quebec specific knowledge, and thus secure the employability in their professional field. Thiago stated:

I think it is pretty important to establish a network. Since you arrive as a skilled worker, you don't have a network, starting from zero and make new connections. That's how any society works. I think that coming back to studies was a good strategy to establish these

connections. It is because of that that I received my supervisor's offer to work with him until I finish the PhD, because I finished my master's degree (Thiago / Interview 1 / p. 2).

It is worth noting that post migration education provided an additional 'intrinsic' benefit to Katya's new sense of belonging to Canada. She indicated that having a new academic profile not only made her a more suitable job candidate for local employers but also positively affected her life satisfaction in the new society. She shared:

For me [getting my degree from a local university] was the change to living as a Canadian employee. I, then, really felt like I was in Canada. There is a huge difference, in my old job, when you don't have studies [from a local institution], the degree equivalencies couldn't do it, or when the company decides not to consider them. I really believe it has a lot to do with the fact that I did a master's degree here. If I hadn't had an educational experience here, it would be impossible for them to look at your résumé... That is what I can say based on my experience. The moment I concluded my degree, I had interviews but at a different level, I had such work experience and a different salary compared to what I used to earn (Katya / Interview 1 / p. 4).

On the other hand, one of the interviewees pointed out prejudice and lack of knowledge in potential employers as factors that could explain their hesitation and refusal to validate the studies of recent immigrant professionals from non-traditional countries. For Ramiro, who had validated his bachelor's degree in biology obtained in Argentina and had recently received his MSc degree in Experimental Medicine from a prestigious local English university, his foreign education and post-migration education could not be enough proof for decision makers as to what he had done or what he was capable of doing.

I think that there are two reasons for this: prejudice and ignorance. Most people know how things generally work in their country [so] they can't know naturally, be updated how things work in other countries. Then, I understand that for the employer, it should be like taking the "leap of faith", I mean "will this employee have what I am looking for?" "What kind of education will he have?" "Will it be equivalent to the Canadian one?" I can understand this from the employer point of view, there is some fear about that. Despite the equivalencies that the applicant could bring to the job. (Ramiro / Interview 1 / pp. 2 – 3)

One has the prejudice that if a person doesn't speak well, it can be shown in his job performance. I put myself on the other side and thought "if this person doesn't speak

well, he might not work well”. Then, I needed to try harder to show the value I had (Pedro / Interview 1 / p. 4).

Lastly, Leader 2 described recently skilled Latin American immigrants as newcomers who although they often find themselves without the recognition of their foreign acquired education, still have the aspiration to continue building their educational background at local universities or colleges (or *CEGEPs*). According to Leader 2, being educated in Canada is their last strategy to be credited as truly educated. He stated:

If they don't have the Canadian educational experience, they have the aspiration to study here, to complement their studies here. [For instance] someone who couldn't complete his postgraduate studies in Colombia, do a complementary study, [gets] an AEC (*Attestation d'études collégiales*) (a college degree), [takes] a course, or something that could open doors to them. They are people with many ambitions (Leader 2 / Interview 1 / p. 2).

The Luck Factor

It has been particularly significant to learn how participants talk about luck as the factor that led them to get a job or be able to maintain it. Interviewees granted great credit to a fact of chance rather than to equality of opportunity that the Quebec receiving society offers its international human capital to fully contribute to the local economic development and thus fight the current labour shortage.

My wife got a job because she entered a program for immigrants at the municipality, Montreal City Hall. She entered a training program designed for immigrants. [Those programs] are good. She was very *lucky* to hear about the program. I think she was on a bus or the metro and heard someone talking about it. She asked to the person from *Emploi-Québec* and she was given the information. Or else?? she would not have ever known (Pedro / Interview 1 / pp. 9-10).

The experience that some people have had with the locals can be [thinking] [I mean] locals can be not very open to the immigrant. But I was very lucky [emphatic tone] with my boss. He was very patient, very open, not only with me. With all people of this team (Katya / Interview 1 / p. 5).

I decided to go to a [newcomer support] organization called [x]. There, I was assigned an agent who could help me. I can say that I, compared to others, have had a lot of luck because my agent was an angel, he was very good (Lucia / Interview 1 / p. 3) ... [He] was a person that helped me a lot ... I had the [positive] experience that few other immigrant peers have with their agents. I was lucky (Lucia / Interview 1 / p. 5).

I cannot complain about that. I have been lucky on that aspect too. Not everyone is as lucky. I have this thing that, it is also very [emphatic tone] important as this doesn't discourage you, it motivates you. [Co-workers] willing to share their knowledge and not have professional jealousy just because you were a foreigner or didn't have the local accent. Right, no nothing of that. They were very open people, open to migration, newcomers. (Lorena / Interview 1 / p. 4).

It was highly interesting to also learn that Leader 2 placed emphasis on the role of luck in receiving employment-assistance services. He feels lucky to have had a job agent that could effectively assist him when he was a newcomer. The long experience working with immigrant support organizations and minority groups, allowed Leader 2 to share some of his initial experiences in the province as a skilled immigrant which speak to the same pattern immigrants from visible minorities encounter in Montreal. He explained:

I was lucky with my job counsellor. She was at an immigrant support centre, and he got me a job there. I was lucky [emphatic tone] [because we had a good talk, she had stayed in Peru [where I come from]. I know friends who have had really [emphatic tone] bad luck [emphatic tone] [with their job agents in the organizations, and with their job agents in *Emploi-Québec*. My agent in *Emploi-Québec* was very good, I am very lucky [emphatic tone] [(Leader 2 / Interview 1 / p. 7).

Inability to Work in Their Fields of Study

Participants, with and without, post-migration investments in education found barriers to successfully transitioning within their respective professional fields. Despite their professional experience, participants could not get a job in their field and made the personal choice to take lower-skilled jobs for which they were clearly overqualified. For some participants paying for a higher cost of living (than in their home countries) as well as for recurring bills, such as rent,

represented seeing their savings accounts decrease day by day. Consequently, most of them “adapted” their résumé to not appear as overqualified nor unfamiliar with menial tasks.

When I concluded studying [the certificate of written French at a francophone university], I had to work because it was my wife’s time to study and in November 2015 my money was over, all the savings. So, one had to work at anything, and I worked in a call center (Rodrigo / Interview 1 / p. 4).

I started looking for jobs doing anything, cleaning, in a supermarket sweeping the floor. That is how I got my first job at a local supermarket ... So, it was an invented résumé for a job that did not require any qualification, it was for a non-skilled worker. If I hadn’t invented that in my résumé, I wouldn’t have had the job. On one hand, I couldn’t get a job because I was overqualified, on the other hand, for jobs that didn’t require any knowledge, I was not taken either because I had a university degree [obtained in her country of origin], and they didn’t want that type of staff with them. So, I lied, and I worked cleaning floors, cooking fast food, placing food in the racks, placing fast food on trays, frying potatoes (Elsa / Interview 1 / p. 4).

Another strategy shared by Elsa was to accept a voluntary job in the hopes of one day applying internally for higher-level and permanent positions reflecting her qualifications. She was then optimistic that “in time” her supervisors would be aware of her higher capabilities. Yet, their internal applications were never considered. She explained:

The wife of my partner’s cousin was working for a company. There was a person pregnant there. Her replacement had to leave before the year. So, they needed someone to be there just for two months. It was a label technician. I was behind a desk, replying to emails, I brought and took messages/things ... They had posted job openings, I applied to them because I had the knowledge to it. I fitted the position, they knew me, I was working there for 2 months speaking French. But no, I didn’t even get invited to an interview. No one called. I even called human resources to ask if I could apply to the jobs, I was interested in directly through them. They told me “Ok, apply to the jobs on the website, if we are interested in you, we will contact you”. They never did. (Elsa / Interview 1 / p. 7).

Some others registered at placement agencies in which they were mainly filling employee sick leaves, maternity leaves and work overflow. Although such job agencies secured a much faster hiring process, the percentage that the placement agency charged them reduced even more

their already low salaries not to mention how precarious and unstable their temporary their contracts could be. Ramiro, Dario, and Elsa explained:

We reached the point where we were seeing our bank account getting lower and lower so I had to work doing no matter what. So, I went to a job agency. About this, I cannot complain because I was working for a factory the following day. It paid almost minimal salary doing anything that was not rational with what I had studied. At least I had a job and a salary. (Ramiro / Interview 1 / p. 4).

I decided to work at anything, I had to make a list, find a balance and evaluate things. That is when I started to contact placement companies... I wanted to find anything, anything. (Dario / Interview 1 / p. 6) ... That is very hard, that [work] is really hard. You can't imagine how hard that is. I will tell you why, you know that part of your salary is being taken by the placement agency. It is not that is bad, but, in the end, I wish I could have a better salary, but I couldn't aspire to it as a part of it is being taken by the placement company. (Dario / Interview 1 / p. 8).

In the factory where I was, I had to bend carton, sweep, put blisters of medicines in boxes and those in other boxes for shipping, 8 hours a day, for 7 months. I didn't always work every day. Needed to get up by 5 so that I could take the 6 am bus. I worked overtime and I was paid for that. [Working] helped the family basket but it wasn't a fixed income because I worked on call when there was great demand of their products. There were weeks when they don't call you because they don't need you. [Then] I knew I couldn't count with that entry [of money] every two weeks, and that is the job that I wanted. There were days in which I entered at 7 am and by 1 pm I was told "you have to go home now, there isn't any work to do" "what do I do? I am already here" "yes, but you still have to go, we will call you when we have work for you" they let everyone out because there wasn't any purchase, it was based on the purchase of their products. (Elsa / Interview 1 / p. 8).

Below is a picture from Dario reflecting his long journey doing different underqualified jobs despite his credentials as an electrical engineer and 28 years of professional experience in Venezuela.



I had to face the cruel reality. I then have no doubts to use adjectives, to have to walk a path different to what I had done all my life. Then the opportunities found here are under the manual force. You can have many possible ways, but it has to be handywork, not an intellectual one, or one on analysis, or one of studies. It is as if skilled paths are closed for immigrants so the path that is really open is the handiwork one. It isn't like this, and it has a lot of importance. I know that aging has an impact on bones, but I will have to say that I worked for a company where I had to stretch and stretch rubbers packing products, different kinds of them. It physically affected me, my two fingers in the right hand because it was the hand that I used the most, the cutting repetition. There were some days in which I felt a lot of pain, but I had to go with a lot of effort because I had to do it. It was the job until I had another opportunity. (Dario / Interview 2 / p. 1).

Some of these participants were surprised to find many other educated immigrants as coworkers in the low skilled jobs they had. More importantly, those coworkers were skilled immigrants from visible minority groups, that is, they came from racialized countries from Latin America and Africa. Through conversations during lunchtime or work breaks, these participants learned that their peers had been faced with their current circumstances for a long time.

My first impression was: it is a barbarity! I am overqualified and I must be the only one in this situation. I later realized things were not like that. The person who trained me when I first started was a guy who was leaving the job and who also held a master's degree. Later I met an engineer, a doctor. The doctor was Colombian, and the engineer was Mexican. Yes, I am almost certain and the guy that trained me was from some African country; and yes, the common point was that we were all immigrants (Ramiro / Interview 1 / p. 4).

In other cases, participants learned of essential job possibilities, which were mainly for short term contracts, through classmates from francization or from friends from friends or acquaintances from their ethnic community.

I worked in December during the holiday break. Someone from francisation told me "There is a job cleaning a place that got on fire. He said: "Do you want to work there?" I said: "Let's go. If there is a job, I work [emphatic tone]" (Patricio / Interview 1 / p. 4).

In my first job, I worked doing the repair of pellets, it was completely different. This was for people without qualifications. That's why at the very beginning it was difficult to work on my profession, I work on that for the money. Because in my mind there was the idea that I was not able to work on my profession. I have to be patient (Roberto / Interview 1 / pp. 1 -2).

My first job was in a souvenirs store. It literally was a job to pay the bills and I did it during the francisation ... I actually found it before going to francisation. I used to work there only in summers, for two summers. Less than a year until I got my second job (Emilia / Interview 1 / p. 2).

Career Change

Given the amount of education and professional experience new immigrants bring to Canada to work as high skilled workers, not getting a job in their profession placed participants in a very tough position. Choosing whether to continue to apply for employment at their level of qualification (and continue watching their savings decrease), to get a menial or survival job to support their families or whether to change careers and go back to school to obtain Canadian credentials were, undoubtedly, challenging decisions made by participants. Although the new chosen career was not always very distant from their original profession, participants felt that putting their foreign-acquired credentials aside was the only path they had to take in order to get a job.

As journalists, Rodrigo and Thiago recognized that although they had good French language skills, a career in journalism required a distinguished writing proficiency that they feel they would have only if they were native speakers. Then, Rodrigo decided to study translation and Thiago decided to go to grad school and study Demography and Sociology. In the case of Agustin, he observed the gap in the local labour market for 3D audiovisual designers while attending a workshop on how to get a job during his first year in Montreal. He studied that technical career and was offered a job in the field before concluding the program. Similarly, Lucia decided to become an early childhood educator as she was not as proficient in French as she needed to be to work as a high school teacher fast. Not being able to use their skills, talents, or experience in Montreal for years, Ramiro and Elsa decided to complete a certification in clinical trial management and have been working in the field since then. Patricio, on the other hand, switched from the hostelry to the management of human capital rapidly after receiving a job offer with not only a higher salary and additional benefits but a better schedule. Lastly,

Emilia developed an unexpected interest in working in Human Resources when offered the opportunity of changing position to a different job. They elaborated:

Because as a journalist, what I need is to have a refined level to write in the respective language. There isn't a professional school to go to. I was not entirely sure I wanted to continue working as a journalist... Then I decided to study translation/ Then I studied at an immigrant support organization, then I did study for a certificate of written French at a French university. I had a meeting with an academic advisor, and I was suggested to study translation. Then I thought it was a good option as I could apply my knowledge of written Spanish (Rodrigo / Interview 1 / p. 3).

[My agent] told me that for being a teacher, I needed to start a process and be proficient in the language. Then I was discouraged because I didn't have the level. He told me to think about studying something... study so I wanted to study. I went to a university: I told them I worked at schools, in primary and secondary levels. And adults too. I told them that I had never worked with kids 0 to 5, so I would like to have that experience. (Lucia / Interview 1 / p. 5).

I was very comfortable. Looking for other positions in the hotel business, they didn't offer me more of what the hotel offered me. Then, I didn't have to change jobs. Then one day, a friend... calls me and tells me "I am leaving the hotel and going to work in X company" I tell him "That's great, good for you, they will pay you more" He really was underpaid. "He tells me, "There is one more position open" I told him "What do I know about [that job]" he says: "let's go". I said: "all right". It was a Friday night, he told me to send him my CV so that he could send it to HR. Next Monday they called me for a phone interview. On Tuesday, there was a face-to-face interview with my current boss. I quit on Wednesday (Patricio / Interview 1 / p. 6).

I used to have a very good relationship with the general manager's assistant. He offered a position in a different hotel, bigger and more luxurious. He called me asking me if I would be interested in changing, yet he told me he didn't have a job in the sales department, it was for an assistant in H.R., I used to work in that department, it was then that I changed my career to H.R. and actually I loved doing it, I realized that I wasn't that good in sales, that the market was completely different, that I loved talking to people... after that, I did a certificate in H.R. as my career in Mexico was validated. Then, I wanted to learn more ... I worked there for three years while doing the certificate and getting experience (Emilia / Interview 1 / p. 7).

Similarly, during our photovoice discussion, Emilia shared a photo collage of the several certificates/diplomas she has obtained in Alberta to get experience in her new chosen field.



About the government, I think that they need to accept you, and I won't say to have patience, but to give us the opportunity to do different things. In my case, my photo represents the variety of things I was able to do. I may have done in Quebec. I mean, I could have probably done them there as well. I said "if I am going to work in HR, I can also do health and safety. Right? and why not being an auditor? I was given a certificate to be a trainer of trainers at work in a cultural program of the company. I also entered the association of HR. You look for doing all those things and the government also gives you the opportunity to do them. So, there are two things: not to give up and the government to provide immigrants with these work opportunities. And you as an immigrant don't give up or don't settle for anything else and go after them. (Emilia / Interview 2 / p. 1).

Professional Growth

Although nine (of fourteen) participants had to work below their level of qualifications doing survival jobs, it was highly interesting to find how appreciative of work in Quebec and Canada they were, and this is most notably the case of interviewees who left Quebec for another province. They shared:

I think that both cities [Calgary and Montreal] have been very good to me. Both cities have things to get fixed. I personally like the life in Montreal, but I have adapted well here [in Calgary] (Emilia / Interview / p. 9).

If there is something I have to recognize is that Canada, not just Ontario but Quebec as well, is that we could progress, it is not like we got stuck in the lowest and we continued there. With a lot of effort and sacrifice but we always could get some more and then some more to be really well, we can't complain in that sense. We are glad. (Ramiro / Interview 1 / p. 9).

I do think it is a good company. Like any other job, it is not perfect. It is the job that now gives, so far, the satisfaction that I want and need, and I think that it can support my professional development like to keep growing. I do see people very, very qualified. Regarding educational profile, all of them are engineers, all of them I can say. Regarding the attitudes they have as professionals and as people regarding communication and leadership "ufff!". You feel good there, you feel you are learning from everyone I learnt just by looking at them [laughter]. (Katya / Interview 1 / p. 8).

A similar appreciation was given by Lorena on our photovoice discussion. Her appreciation for having the opportunity to grow professionally in a work setting where her qualifications are given value is high. Being focussed on achieving her personal and professional objectives is her drive. For this, putting aside the factors that are not under her control is a means to this. These include the marginalization of extended experience of an educated immigrant from any minority group and xenophobic message behind Quebec's democratic values test for future immigrants.



When you come from abroad, you are a resource that Canada is letting in as there is supposed to be a lack of human capital. That is true and yet you are not as indispensable because there is a lot of people struggling to find a job. If the immigrant was so indispensable, he/she would get a job just like this. The immigrant is a complement to the human capital here, but it is not like we really are as needed as they make us feel during those speeches we heard first. And here, of course, I need to analyze how to enter the labour market, how to adapt myself to installation, space. If I can make it or not is up to what I can do with my objectives. Maybe I just can't, and I need to go to Toronto or some other place, or maybe I can make it. I see it as possibilities. There are many factors. In this case: the space, the walls, other walls traversing it, the new conduit they will insert, how it will impact the environment: will it generate more cold or heat? It is the same when you enter a company. You will generate something either positive or negative and you have to fight the other factors that are already there. (Lorena / Interview 2 / p. 1).

Chapter Summary

The present chapter discussed the first two themes of the findings of this research. The first theme, “Welcome to Quebec?”, described the experiences of participants in the various services provided by the Quebec government available to newcomers at integration centres, as well as the francization program. This theme also presented the unfulfilled expectations participants had of the process of settling down in the new society. The theme “Labour Market” exposed the various experiences of participants in the local labour market and their efforts to find a job that would match their qualifications. In the following chapter, I will discuss the findings of the third and fourth themes, “Discussing Discrimination” and “Outmigration”.

Chapter Six: Navigating the Quebec Society

Introduction

This chapter presents the third and fourth themes of the findings of this research. In the first section of this chapter, I will start explaining the findings on the theme “Discussing Discrimination” comprised of five categories that describe the different circumstances in which participants faced subtle or direct discriminatory treatment while trying to integrate into Quebec: *labour discrimination*, *accent discrimination*, *ethnic/racial discrimination*, *fear of the other* and *denial of facing discrimination*. In addition, this theme points out the different opinions of some of the participants regarding the possible reasons that explain the difficulties educated immigrants from visible minority groups face when entering the local labour market. In the second section of the chapter, I will discuss the findings of the fourth theme “Outmigration”. This term explains how leaving Quebec for another Canadian province became the means for a group of participants to escape experiences of systemic marginalization and/or get professionally integrated. The theme is comprised of two categories that I called, *looking for better opportunities* and *finding a welcoming society*. Additionally, the narrative is enriched with photographs taken by participants as well as the reflections they attach to those images written in a paragraph below each of them.

Theme Three: Discussing Discrimination

This theme describes various forms of racism, mainly through discriminatory hiring practices that participants encountered while seeking a job commensurate with their qualifications. Participants felt they were denigrated based on their innate characteristics such as race and ethnicity, accent, and origin. It is important to note that such discrimination was shown in subtle forms, microaggressions, prejudices or lack of required knowledge and/or Canadian experience. More importantly, interviewees never claimed their right to equal or fair treatment

due to a fear that their actions could jeopardize their chances of getting employment or keeping their jobs if they had been employed.

Labour Discrimination

Participants described displays of marginalization in the workplace context. Through subtle and, to a lesser extent, overt manifestations of marginalization, participants pointed out comments, tones of voice, biases, silences, or even actions showing prejudice towards them. An example of this differential treatment was given by Lucia who described her experience at a daycare while doing voluntary work as suggested by her job agent from *Emploi-Québec*. She described feeling shunned and excluded from the first day at work. She explained:

I went there, I introduced myself and I faced another case of discrimination. When I went to speak to the director [of the daycare], he wasn't in his office, so I spoke to the pedagogical advisor. From the moment I stepped foot in that place, I could see that, by the way she spoke to me, how she treated me, how she talked to me as if I was just a nobody [emphatic tone] that had come to help them. So, you are a simple [emphatic tone] immigrant that comes here. "Well, we'll open a file for you." She introduced me to all the work team and then she left me alone with a group of two educators. They worked in teams of two. She told me "You are going to work with them when they come to work" Yet, her attitude towards me was always discriminatory. As if "you are just a simple...[silence]" Her tone of voice, her behaviour with me. She was never interested in me. For instance, [making questions like]: "where do you come from? Or what do you do?" [to break the ice or make a short conversation] Nothing. "I will look for a spot, a space for you and you will just stay there". (Lucia / Interview 1 / p. 6).

Such statements were also made by Katya when describing her experience as a job applicant in the high-demand industry of engineering. She highlights having received call-backs from potential employers only after completing her master's program in Quality Systems Engineering at a local university. She was shocked and discouraged to find out that many members of her class cohort had been working in similar job positions long before they obtained the master's degree. She stated:

In my case, it did cost me, at least in my case, it cost me a lot to gain their credibility [employers] that I could do that job. Maybe it was just my perception. It did take me longer than it did other members of my master's program cohort to get a position of, I don't know, the position of a manager. Maybe it was just luck? But it can be discrimination, yes. (Katya / Interview / p. 7).

Elsa, on her part, is cognizant of how microaggressions are perpetuated in the workplace. Thinking of her personal experience in Montreal and those of some friends, colleagues, and acquaintances, she underlines the impact of wrong conduct towards immigrant groups remain acceptable or deemed unquestioned by employers, policymakers, not to mention, authorities. She said:

Evidently, there is some type of discrimination. Evidently when hiring a skilled person born in Quebec instead of someone who was not born here. There is preference for someone of Quebec origin. Opportunities are given to the Quebecer and not to the immigrant. The reasons for that? I don't know. There must be millions of different reasons. But when I lived in Montreal, I met people who were very qualified, spoke the two [official] languages, worked in many different domains and who could not integrate into the labour market. (Elsa / Interview 1 / p. 8).

Furthermore, Emilia underlined how surprised she was to learn that the job she did in Montreal for about two years and a half suddenly became truly recognized after quitting it to move to Calgary. Shortly after moving to the new city, Emilia was contacted by her previous boss to be offered the same job she used to do at a marketing agency in Montreal. Working remotely, this time, involved an outstanding raise in the salary. Emilia shared:

I was responsible for the American and Canadian markets for those missions ... You had to make the appointments for a designer, so there was pressure there. Yet, during the Montreal fashion week, I did enjoy it a lot, knowing the brands in Quebec, brands I did not know of before. There were designers who were very accessible and there were others who did not want to talk to you, but everything turned out all right. After the missions, I moved to Calgary, and I was called to work for that agency to do another fashion week. What I found very interesting about that change was the money that they offered me. As a trainee, logically, I wasn't paid, but when I was working for them in Montreal, they used to pay me \$11/hour. When I came here [in Calgary], they offered me \$25/hour. (Emilia / Interview 1 / p. 3).

Emilia thinks, although she cannot be entirely sure of this, that the salary was raised to match the amount that was already established for that position. In what follows I describe experiences of discrimination against participants as allophones.

Discrimination Against Foreign-Accented Speakers

As allophones, most participants have both an intermediate level of French upon arrival as well as a strong accent, which does not usually fade. They described overt aggressions related to discrimination based on language when trying to join the labour market and/or at the workplace. Participants felt discrimination based on their non-native French accent. Speaking French with a thick accent is generally viewed as a sign of incompetence, lack of credibility and effort from *Québécois* employers or potential employers to try to evaluate their knowledge of the language. For example, the following describes the experiences of three different interviewees:

I had problems related to “I don’t like your language, I do not like your accent” or “you don’t have the possibilities to apply for a job here” because I was told that [by a potential employer]. This happened in an interview. [The potential employer told me] “I have résumés from people from here and I do not have any reason to choose you” Ah!! My god! [He told me that] openly. Obviously, I left the room crying. (Katya / Interview 1 / p. 10).

Because of the way we [Latin Americans] speak, how our accents are. Or [because] we don’t speak well or don’t pronounce French well at first [during the first days in Quebec]. This happened to me a lot during that time. You hear them reply to you: “Ah?!!” That “Ah?!!” that thing that every *Québécois* would tell you, it is like saying “You don’t speak well [French]” like saying “Hey, you don’t speak well. Repeat it!” I think that can generate frustration for an immigrant. (Lucia / Interview 1 / p. 5) ... I have heard that in anglophone settings they don’t bother you much for your English. They give you the possibility to make a mistake, whether you pronounce a word well or not. But not here [in the francophone setting]: “Ah?! What did you say?” then it is like “say it again, you mispronounced” “no, [what you are doing] it is worthless” but they do know [emphatic tone] what I am saying. Then, why do they make things difficult for the person [the allophone]? [emphatic tone]. (Lucia / Interview 1 / p. 8).

Reflecting back on his job seeking experiences in Montreal as a mechanical engineer, Joaquin pointed out his initial lack of awareness of issues pertaining to systemic discrimination towards racialized immigrants and how its effects result in an impediment, even a stigma, for racialized newcomers to work. He mentioned:

Although I was not aware of it [systemic discrimination] as I am today back then, I did realize [emphatic tone] what had happened some time after that. This was really 100% discriminatory on the part of those who interviewed me, one of them was the chief of the engineering area of that company. I don't even remember the name of the company. I had passed two-three onsite interviews so one could say that I had started to convince them. I asked them how they saw me as a candidate, they told me that everything was all right, that the experience I had was very good, that even my French was very good. Yet, they told me that, the comment they made was what could not convince them was the accent. They told me "Your level of French is very good, we understand everything you said, we don't have any problem with that. Yet, it is noticeable that your accent is not from here" And I told them, "But you understand everything that I say, and I understand everything that you say" They said: "Yes, yes. It is just that you have a foreign accent." (Joaquin / Interview 1 / p. 3).

It was extremely interesting to have Leader 1's insights on systemic discrimination as a skilled immigrant who had several similar work experiences to those of interviewees, to have to take a temporary survival job to pay essential bills. He underlined discriminatory attitudes in the form of assumptions toward racialized newcomers who often need to start lower in the corporate ladder. He reflected on the negative work environment where he had to take a low-skilled work outside of his field of expertise in the first months after moving to Canada and described how representatives tend to assume that immigrants have low competencies in the official language which clearly indicates an underlying bias against them. He explained:

I also felt discriminated when I was working for a hotel. I mean I felt that there were some communications given [to all employees] that I did not receive because they thought I did not understand the language [French]. Or they simply did not assign me certain tasks, or I was just not given a higher responsibility because, I do not know, they might have thought that I did not speak French. Once, one of the coordinators told me "Oh! [surprised] you *do* speak French!" I told her: "Yes, I mean, this is Quebec". (Leader 2 / Interview 1 / p. 3).

Regarding the tensions between English and French speakers in Quebec, Katya discussed the impact of the strict Quebec language law in the workplace and its effects on allophone immigrants. She pointed out that when employers only “assess” job applicants’ knowledge of the official language as a hiring criterion and take no notice of their proficient knowledge of a language other than French, such as English, they forgo valuable human capital and as such, this damages immigrants’ job prospects, restricts their access to a decent standard of living and diminishes their capacity for contribution to the local economy. She shared the following image:



The photo was taken at the museum Beaux Arts, the permanent exhibition. The author is from Cuba, she traveled to New York. It represents immigration, it is in the hands of immigrants to work. The image is in Sign Language (for the deaf), and it means freedom. So, going beyond our different languages, we exert our freedom. Being in Montreal, the system can force you to speak only French from the beginning. Yet, in fact, if you are not a Francophone immigrant, you are not going to use it [French] 99% of the time at work. [But] allophones do not have the opportunity to work officially in another language ... For me that is liberty of work, the liberty to work although your French is not 100% good. (Katya / Interview 2 / p. 1).

It was also interesting to learn from participants that the different treatment Latin American immigrants receive because of their native language can not be reduced to an issue only against allophone immigrants. It was clear from Thiago's comment that immigrants from other racialized sources, such as African countries where French is the official language, are also judged and condemned as "unfit" for the job they apply to. He said:

It is hard for the society to accept that there is a systemic, systematic problem especially with some groups, and I would say especially Arabs here in Quebec. It is a given issue. Some of my friends from the Maghreb express their difficulty [to get a job in their field of expertise] more than I would face myself, even though they speak French as their mother tongue. (Thiago / Interview 1 / p. 3).

Ethnic Discrimination

Other participants such as Joaquin, Roberto and Agustin talked about the experiences of discrimination they faced at the workplace. Whether these events were overt or subtle displays of segregation, being denigrated on the basis of their ethnicity was an issue that they assume would continue to persist in time. They elaborated:

[A]t my job at the oil terminal there were [discriminatory] comments and things like that from people from Quebec towards people who were sort of immigrants. Some weird things happened there, things I was not aware of clearly at first. But then, in time, one can reflect on them... I mean I feel that back then those issues were not as known as they are now. Now, you can see people registering everything [discriminatory acts] on video. (Joaquin / Interview 1 / p. 4).

Sometimes I had problems because of my [skin] colour. It is like in Sao Paulo, it is not different than the problems [that people face] in there. It is not exclusive [of Quebec]. I think yes, there are problems [of discrimination] ... I prefer [to] admit that there are a lot. I think that tomorrow things will be like that and [it will be like that] during all my life here [in Quebec] but I prefer to choose not to think about it. It is a problem, but I can not change people's minds. (Roberto / Interview 1 / p. 3).

I think discrimination is very hidden. It is subtle, it is subtle... they welcome you, they do it, they make you feel well. But once they set the barrier you just can't cross it, to cross that wall?... forget it! You just can't. I think it is a factor that involves many things. (Agustin / Interview 1 / p. 6).

In addition, Lorena said she became aware of issues regarding discrimination in Quebec through understanding the experience of a close female friend. Lorena's friend is unfortunately subject to overt aggressions from a French Quebecer co-worker who expects her friend to act in ways associated with stereotypes about the Latin Americans. In this case, Lorena's friend speaks up against and confronts the aggressor.

Her co-worker is always giving her derogatory comments because she is Latin American and so is her friend [pause]. He tells her "I imagine that you should know this since you are a Latina". She tells him "It is the last time you tell me that. It doesn't mean that because I am a Latina, I know all of the Latino muddles here". I mean there are comments like that [at work], there certainly are [laughter] retrograde people. (Lorena / Interview 1 / p. 8).

Interviewees also claimed awareness of discriminatory behaviour towards racialized immigrants due to skin colour. Agustin shared an experience which occurred when he walked into a photography laboratory with his Francophone girlfriend enquiring about job vacancies. He stated:

When I was handing out my résumés in some photography labs, the guy [to whom I had handed in my résumé] said "ah? [surprised], *but* you are Colombian!" I was with my girlfriend on that day. She said "No, but he is francophone, he speaks it [French] very well" I told her "It is ok, take it easy" "what I need the least is to work in a place like this" This is a person living in his little job who is "making an analysis" of the context of the city. (Agustin / Interview 1 / p. 10).

Mindful of the great experience gained through years of work for an effective integration of this community, Leader 1 points out that the extent of the effects of systemic discrimination are far deeper than unequal income among immigrant and non-immigrant groups. In her view, prejudice against Latin Americans by, for instance, denying professional opportunities in positions of high responsibility because of their origin, is extended not only to those born in Latin American countries but also against all of those second and third-generation Latin Americans carrying the traits of this ethnic group, such as physical features, a last name, an

accent or language. In other words, structural discrimination goes beyond immigrants from racialized countries as it marginalizes individuals born in Canada to Latin American parents or with Latin American ancestry. She explained:

That is so intrinsic, so institutionalised, anchored, so fixed that we barely see it or we [just] accept it because it is like that and we believe that as immigrants that is how Canada works and that that is [just] the way it is supposed to be. When we start finding this out with cases, and testimonies, and not only from newcomers but for long-time immigrants [Canadian citizens]. I mean children of immigrants that were born here ... because their parents are immigrants, maintain their last name Perez, [for instance] and maintain their skin colour, and their Latino structure, their bodies or faces... Many of them do not even know the country of origin of their parents but they are Canadians! Prejudice goes against them, too. Discrimination goes against them, too. Not just against newcomers, it goes against the children of children of children. The fact that [a Latino] was born here, last names like Hernandez or Perez, our Latino last names will follow us. (Leader 1 / Interview 1 / p. 3) ... or when they are academics, university students of 1st and 2nd cycle, great entrepreneurs but when they reach certain status there, to have a better position, it becomes their roof. They can do all they can but if a higher position opens, someone else comes to fill it in. They could get a higher position [but] they are not permitted to do so. If there is a labour union, they can fight it much more but there will be a re-structuration and new people will be placed in those higher positions. That is what I call a systemic racism that is accepted and tolerated for a whole society which has only let this discrimination happen until today and such discrimination is not only against those new immigrants. (Leader 1 / Interview 1 / p. 4).

Fear of the *Other*

For interviewees, the messages sent from the Quebec government extending a warm welcome to newcomers from racialized countries is at odds with the fear many French Quebecers have of changing/altering their innate characteristics that could affect their idea of being a *Québécois*. Equally important is the reflection participants made on the social-capital exclusion of racialized immigrants. Interviewees distinguished a direct link between the legal protection of Quebec “homogeneous” culture and the root of the current struggles most newcomers face seeking employment. Participants elaborated:

I want to believe that it is a matter of people. For instance, the previous provincial government was not a nationalist one. I think this was a right-wing populist government.

The current government evidently has an ideology, a message that could make someone say that authorities do things [in favour of immigrants] but not because they really believe in them, they do it as a way to win votes. If one thinks about the current government, one can think that it discriminates systematically. (Rodrigo / Interview 1 / p. 9).

This sort of thing has to do with the political history as you know this province has suffered, the war with English men, they wanted to become independent. Then it is an algid topic ... There are many reasons, one of them is that I think that there are values of the *Québécois* society written on stone, not on paper but on stone. If you don't go through them, they will not give you opportunity. I mean, if you don't pass through wherever they want you to, you will not get any opportunities from them. That is my way to see things. If you reject working certain jobs, they will not give you the opportunity. If you don't want to do a certain job, they will not give you the job. That is why you don't get a cv [approved] easily. If you go to a company without having a résumé that shows the experience "needed" for the company ... If you haven't had the work experience in a place where they feel that you have been through their filters, they will not give you the work opportunity. (Dario / Interview 1 / p. 10).

I don't feel that they are so open and so flexible because behind all of that, discrimination is not only related to language but fear, the hidden fear to "you come to reduce a bit my work options" "you are taking away my options for a quality of life. It is a fear that someone is taking something from you. (Lucia / Interview 1 / p. 9).

I believe that discrimination is a matter of idiosyncrasy. I think it is the fear to lose the Quebec identity, which is something for which they have always been fighting for and tried to differentiate [Quebec] from the rest of the provinces. It seems to be that they thought that bringing [for instance] French immigrants here, they could reinforce that francophone idiosyncrasy... It is contradictory. (Agustin / Interview 1 / p. 6).

While most participants showed awareness of the struggles racialized educated immigrants face in the local labour market, they showed awareness that for some employers hiring a foreign-educated immigrant represented taking a "leap of faith". Having limited knowledge of the similarities or differences of the work field in other countries negatively affects job applicants from non-traditional sending countries of immigrants. Roberto claimed:

Sometimes it is difficult for people [employers and decision-makers] here to take an immigrant because hiring them is like a lottery for them... They are afraid to choose an immigrant. Sometimes they think that they [immigrants] cause problem because it takes time to understand [the system], to live here, to think like the people here. Sometimes

they do not have the intention to spend money or time [on immigrants]. (Roberto / Interview 1 / pp. 2-3).

It is important to note that the two participant leaders of the Latin American community in Quebec also believe that French Quebecers' need to protect their ethnonationalist identity has a negative effect on the integration of immigrants from other ethnic, cultural, and linguistic groups. They underline that although there are some few demonstrations from authorities of a battle against insidious forms of othering, the roots of systemic discrimination that normalize acts of segregation are long-lasting. They stated:

The history of Canadian migration is a history full of discrimination. Since the very beginning and that was until a little while ago. Now, it has a more humanitarian treatment, especially with [the welcoming] of asylum seekers. Yet, Canadian migration does not stop being discriminatory, for good or for bad, but that is the truth. (Leader 2 / Interview 1 / pp. 4-5).

I think discrimination is something based on language, a protection of their culture, mainly towards the language. *Québécois de souche* also have to protect their culture. But that it is not the way things should be done, the promotion of values, the promotion of culture. I know that the government of Quebec has indeed invested a lot in interculturalism, but it has been difficult for them to sit and work with enterprises and institutions where racism and discrimination has been anchored generation after generation. These are not written anywhere. In other words, this is happening in an automatic way and will continue in that way. Even if the government announces job openings, I think that they believe that placing someone of a certain "race" in a visible job position, *Québécois* may appear as not discriminatory. For instance, [hiring] someone who is Black, or an Arab wearing a veil would label employers as an "They are not discriminatory". Would just hiring one or two people with those [ethnic] characteristics, mean that they already achieved their share? they covered their image. It is not about that. It is not easy to change mentalities. (Leader 1 / Interview 1 / p. 5).

Similarly, during the photovoice interview, Ramiro discussed his perception of French Quebec society towards immigration. He stated that Quebec's authorities fear that threats to the French language today can only result in the rise of suspicion on every minority group of the other thus creating significant divisiveness in the province's politics, something certainly feared

by nationalists. He said:



Quebecers, in general, believe that they live in a separate country rather than in a province within a country. This is shown day by day by [for instance] flying the provincial flag much more often than the national day as they believe [Quebec] to be a country on their own. This locks their door for insiders and outsiders. What I mean with this is that they are closed to others as they believe to be a separate nation. And they are also closed to outsiders, to immigrants. Even though they need immigrants, they need the human capital, yet they welcome them a little reluctantly. They do it because they have no other choice, or they can do solve the situation differently. Then, it is more difficult for the foreigner to achieve integration in Quebec society as he is not perceived as a pure strain Quebecer. So, the [French] Quebecer has this thing of isolating himself, which is something that affects recent immigrants. I think this photo is very representative because the *fleur-de-lis* [on the lawn] takes an important part of the park, then they have this thing for demonstrating their independent or separatist intentions-as you want to call them- in a very evident form. (Ramiro / Interview 2 / p. 1).

Denial of Facing Discrimination

Despite a provincial consultation attempt in 2017, the Montreal consultation on systemic discrimination in 2018, and extensive media coverage on the slow integration of immigrants in the province, findings identified that participants had conflicting understandings about equality. Not all participants recognized that underemployment or unemployment, for instance, were issues that affected immigrants from racialized countries more greatly, educated immigrants included. Three interviewees felt that discrimination against racialized immigrant groups was an issue that was not exclusive to them. On the one hand, some pointed that the reason why some educated Latin American immigrants were not competitive in the Quebec labour market was due to their limited skills in French and English, as well as the likelihood of them making only low efforts to succeed in getting employment. They said:

I understand that there are some groups that do find more difficulty to find [job] positions, especially in Quebec compared to Canada. I think that it is because of their lack of knowledge of the French language. People who speak the language well will integrate in Quebec. In Montreal it is even harder because you need to speak French and English ... I think that the language barrier is the most important factor. (Thiago / Interview 1 / p. 3).

You have to look for opportunities... I think that the opportunities are really there [for everyone], it is just a matter of effort. (Katya / Interview 1 / p. 10).

I think that if they [immigrants] leave Quebec is because they really can't find a job here. Leaving for Ontario or other provinces can open other labour markets. So, it is not necessarily due to discrimination but to job opportunities. I would say they leave for places where they will be comfortable and get better job opportunities, they simply couldn't find job opportunities here and had to leave. (Pedro / Interview 1 / p. 8).

Rodrigo, on the other hand, suggested that because he believes he was not being perceived as someone from a visible minority by locals, he has lived in a fair and inclusive field in the province which, he assumes, should be case of every other Latin American immigrant. He pointed out:

I have never felt discriminated. I have never had a discriminatory episode. I do not know what would be if I had a darker skin [colour]. But I am comfortable, I see there is an openness as if it were normal to live together: immigrants and native French Quebecers. There are a lot of immigrants [in the city]. (Rodrigo / Interview 1 / p. 3).

Furthermore, relying exclusively on their positive personal experiences in Quebec rather than reflecting on the socio-economic context of the Latin American group and/or that of other racialized groups in the province, some participants such as Thiago, who studies in a doctorate program in sociology, minimized the capabilities of immigrants who have encountered barriers to their integration and underlined their lack of traits of adaptability. He elaborated:

I think that it is normal [not to get economically integrated to the province]. In data analysis, we call it the salmon effect: “just the strongest will stay”. So, we analyze the strongest, those that survived. I think that we see that happening, it is just normal because, as I said, adaptability is really endogenous and we can predict that coming from people, we cannot expect people with more languages to have more adaptability or expect people that have moved often in their lives to establish a new network fast. (Thiago / Interview 1 / p. 3).

In line with this, Leader 1 notes that the racial bias in Quebec institutions and society has impacted the ability of some immigrants to recognize the social exclusion of racialized groups. Instead, they have chosen, consciously or unconsciously, to find justification for it on the “weaknesses” of new immigrants to integrate. She elaborated:

The poor new immigrant even justifies [discrimination] saying that it is due to the language, to the accent, the equivalencies, or due to any reason. I am also talking about those individuals who were born in Canada. (Leader 1 / Interview 1 / p. 4).

In what follows I examine the experiences of four participants who left Quebec looking for better professional opportunities more than four years ago.

Theme Four: Outmigration

Looking for Better Opportunities

The higher rate of Quebecers leaving the province than people from other Canadian provinces settling in Quebec has been an overall issue for the province. Migration factors and retentions affect the vitality and well being of the Quebec population. All participants cited that leaving their home country for better professional growth was the main reason behind their migration to Canada. Therefore, given the barriers to integration in the local labour market, leaving Quebec for better opportunities in their professional fields was, without a doubt a choice for them. Furthermore, participants underlined the contradictory impression they have from comparing the immigrant-friendly discourse they were given during their pre-migration phase and the message built in Quebec when exposed to discrimination of their education, experience, language, and ethnicity. While only four interviewees actually left the province, all participants were very familiar with this important choice. They said:

I understand very well if the person does not feel well [in Quebec] and needs to find another option. That was not my case, it was not. But I do know cases of people that had to leave because they had felt language-based discriminated, for their French. (Lucia / Interview 1 / p. 8).

I think that the labour market is also an aspect [to be considered]. The opportunities here [in Quebec] might not be the same as those in Toronto. It depends on the sector you want to work... I understand that they need to leave. (Katya / Interview 1 / p. 10).

I think that it is completely understandable, and I know of cases of people who are very close to me, Colombians, that did that [left Quebec]. They felt discriminated, they did not feel recognized, all the [human capital] luggage they brought here, all of that professional baggage, and they felt discriminated for the language, for not speaking French as fluently [as French Quebecers]. They saw opportunities in the anglophone part and wanted to be able to continue their professional path. I understand it because one should feel happy with what one does. If you do not feel happy, then you need to look for other options. I understand that people who come here and see that things are not coming to an end and feel they should leave. Because I have heard that in the anglophone part there is less discrimination. People there are, and do not know how to explain it, they are more patient with allophone immigrants. (Lucia / Interview 1 / p. 8).

Another important aspect of outmigration was underlined by Lorena through her message on her photograph. She highlighted the courage and drive of immigrants who chose to re-start their process of adaptation to a new and different receiving society. She elaborated:



I think that [leaving the province] is starting from zero, that you have to build, to re-start. It could go well, or it could go bad. It does not mean that because you leave the province things will go bad, I have many friends who, because of the language, decided to leave Quebec for Toronto and are doing just fine. You start from zero. I took that picture in Toronto because it was a great project that was been built there. Things can go either way. I know many people in Ontario, they are doing much better, they are doing really well. (Lorena / Interview 2 / p. 1).

For some participants, such as Pedro, leaving Quebec was an idea they had strongly considered only at the initial stage of their lives in the province when having to confront many obstacles to work in their professions. Nevertheless, Rodrigo, by the time of the interview, five years after his arrival in Canada, was seriously considering leaving Quebec for another province once his wife finished her undergraduate program in education at an English university. For him, making such a decision would hinge on receiving a good job offer and exhausting all other job opportunities in the local labour market. They said:

At first, I had the idea to leave for Toronto because the company I worked for in Peru was there. I communicated in English much better than in French. Yet, we tried to access [the labour market] here and we found a job. If we hadn't, if we had had much more difficulties, we would have probably left, too. (Pedro / Interview 1 / p. 10).

I would leave, without any problem [if I find a good option]. At least, we have been here, we have seen how the system works. We are thankful to Quebec for letting us come. We have tried, we are still trying. My wife is studying, she wants to conclude her career and once she does, we will see. (Rodrigo / Interview 1 / p. 5).

While these four participants lacked integration in Quebec, they experienced the process of outmigration differently. In the case of Joaquin and Emilia leaving the province for Alberta a couple of years after having set in Montreal was not a plan they had had in mind. It resulted from an unrefusable job offer to Joaquin which represented not only the first work experience in his professional field in Canada but also the first one in an environment that he did not perceive as discriminatory. For Ramiro and Elsa, in contrast, looking for further professional growth while staying away from the constant acts of discrimination against newcomers or minorities was the main cause of their departure eight years after their arrival in Quebec. It was, indeed, a long-term plan they had embraced for years. Both couples stated:

Calgary was a sort of surprise. I had planned to keep working, get my diploma in technical drawing, and then get a job in that field. That was my plan, and then my cousin who lived in Calgary called me. She was working for a big company and by then they

had got a big project, so they needed [to hire more] people ... “If you want it, you need to come right now”. Two weeks after that, I quit my job, I left the program I was studying. We had bought a car and sold it, got my stuff ready, got my ticket and came here [to Alberta]. It was in an engineering firm ... That was a project of hydrocarbons, I did not have any experience and I did not know what it was about. Yet, my cousin and the company owner were teaching me little by little what was the job about... I was doing the engineering functions not exactly a position of an engineer. (Joaquin / Interview 1 / pp. 3-4).

I quit [my job in Montreal] because my partner had got a job in Toronto. It was a very good opportunity; it was part of our bigger plan which implied leaving Quebec for another Anglophone province. She was given a great opportunity, so I went with her to Toronto. We were planning this long before... we had been trying to sell our apartment. It had taken so long for the property to be sold that both of us got good jobs while waiting for it. By the time our property got sold and we got a job in another province, we had already earned experience in our domain [in Canada]. (Ramiro / Interview 1 / p. 6).

My husband, he did not really find any opportunities [to work in his field]. He really was not comfortable in Montreal while I [in contrast] adapted a bit more to it. He never adapted to the work life nor the culture nor the people [in Montreal]. He found a lot of discrimination, he never could [silence] he was never comfortable [there]. Then, he had a relative here [in Calgary]. She and my husband had studied the same thing. He was offered a job and he traveled here the next week. (Emilia / Interview 1 / p. 4).

After so many years living in Quebec, the aspect of work discrimination, not just at work but in society is pretty xenophobic. You can take examples from the day by day [events]. Not wanting to serve you in English, the high taxes we pay, the condition of the houses. I want to clarify that I [only] lived in the city of Montreal so I cannot speak about other cities in Quebec, their treatment, the neighbours, I had Quebecer neighbours, whenever I interacted with them, they used to talk about other immigrant neighbours and use it to make discriminatory and racist comments. (Elsa / Interview 1 / p. 12).

This finding was confirmed by Leader 2 who referred to the follow-up communications that immigrant-support centres have with new professional immigrants who participate, for instance, in their job seeking workshops so that they determine the level of effectiveness these planned activities have. He highlighted that such communications indicated that recent immigrants to Quebec left the province, they fled the province while looking for job opportunities in their professional field. Leader 1 added:

Once newcomers [in Quebec] get certain stability and gain “certain experience” in the local about market, they opt for settling in an English-dominant milieu [as they believe

that these are more immigrant-friendly] welcoming societies. That's right. They ran away (Leader 1 / Interview 1 / p. 8).

In the next section, participants living in the provinces of Ontario and Alberta shared their positive experiences of integration out of Quebec.

Finding a Welcoming Society

Adapting to a new job in the new province was a satisfactory aspect for participants who left Quebec because of discrimination and marginalization. All of them reported finding a society where they felt fully welcomed inside and outside the job setting. More importantly, participants living outside Quebec felt that having a strong accent, a different culture or just being a member of a minority group in the new society did not label them as visible minorities anymore but rather as a member of a pluricultural host society. The fact of not having to face obstacles of discriminatory nature also develop awareness in these participants of the value of living in a plural society. They said:

I noticed the change in an impressive way since the first day I stepped in Ontario ... What I mainly noticed was that people do not make differences between people speaking English with a native speaker and speaking English with someone with an Egyptian or Philippine accent. I did not perceive an ambience of discrimination and immigration or hear people making comments behind someone's back about their physical appearance. I say this because, sometimes, you do not have to orally say something to make the other person feel bad. You can do it with gestures, movements, tone of voice, way to say things. You can use a type of body language to express your feelings. (Elsa / Interview 1 / p. 9).

It is until now that I am able to tell the difference between how I felt in Quebec and how I feel here. For instance, here, I don't have any problems but in Quebec, I never felt "accepted", you always feel that sensation [thinking] I do not know... I feel that even when going to restaurants, when they start taking the order, if they see that you have difficulties with French or have a different accent, they just immediately switch from French to English. Then, that was particular as my French was very well then. I could have conversations in French and attend job interviews. (Joaquin / Interview 1 / p. 4). The tranquility and comfort I feel in this city is something that I have never felt in Quebec. (Joaquin / Interview 1 / pp. 5-6).

I think that there are two aspects regarding the welcoming of new immigrants in general, I believe that Alberta is more open to them, they are more ...[thinking]...they are kinder to people. In Quebec, you can see that there is more resistance about immigration. (Emilia / Interview 1 / p. 8).

Ramiro, who left Quebec in 2017 for Ontario, used a photograph he had taken of himself outside a Peruvian food restaurant in a small town far from the city of Toronto to express his satisfaction to live in a milieu where there is a more diverse and inclusive vision of society. For Ramiro, the additional asset that human capital qualities, such as language, education, technologies, and culture accumulate in more welcoming societies can greatly enrich them. He stated:



This photo was not even taken in Ottawa. It was taken in Markham near Toronto. It is curious since Markham is a locality of 60% of Chinese population, of Chinese origin, 60%, [smiles] so you have an idea of it. And in Markham you have a restaurant of Peruvian food. I found it very funny, and this part is more personal because when we refer to our close friends from Peru, we call them “Los Chicos”. Then, in a place with 60% of Chinese population, you have a restaurant of Peruvian food [laughter]. It [Markham] is located on the north [of Toronto]. It is not even considered part of the city of Toronto. This is something from what Quebecers could learn from: to accept a bit more the foreign culture matters, and the customs of people as well. I mean, I could open a restaurant, but it can’t be successful if no one buys in it, it wouldn’t succeed. (Ramiro / Interview 2 / p. 1).

Additionally, Joaquin notes that no longer living in Quebec is particularly advantageous for allophone immigrant parents regarding the education of their children. In contrast to being restricted to only accessing public French elementary and secondary schools in Quebec, immigrant parents in other Canadian provinces have the freedom of choice for the basic education of their children in the public sector. The discriminatory language legislation, (in Quebec) according to Joaquin, goes against bilingualism and thus discourages wider economic and professional opportunities of second-generation immigrants by hindering competitiveness in workplace settings. He claimed:

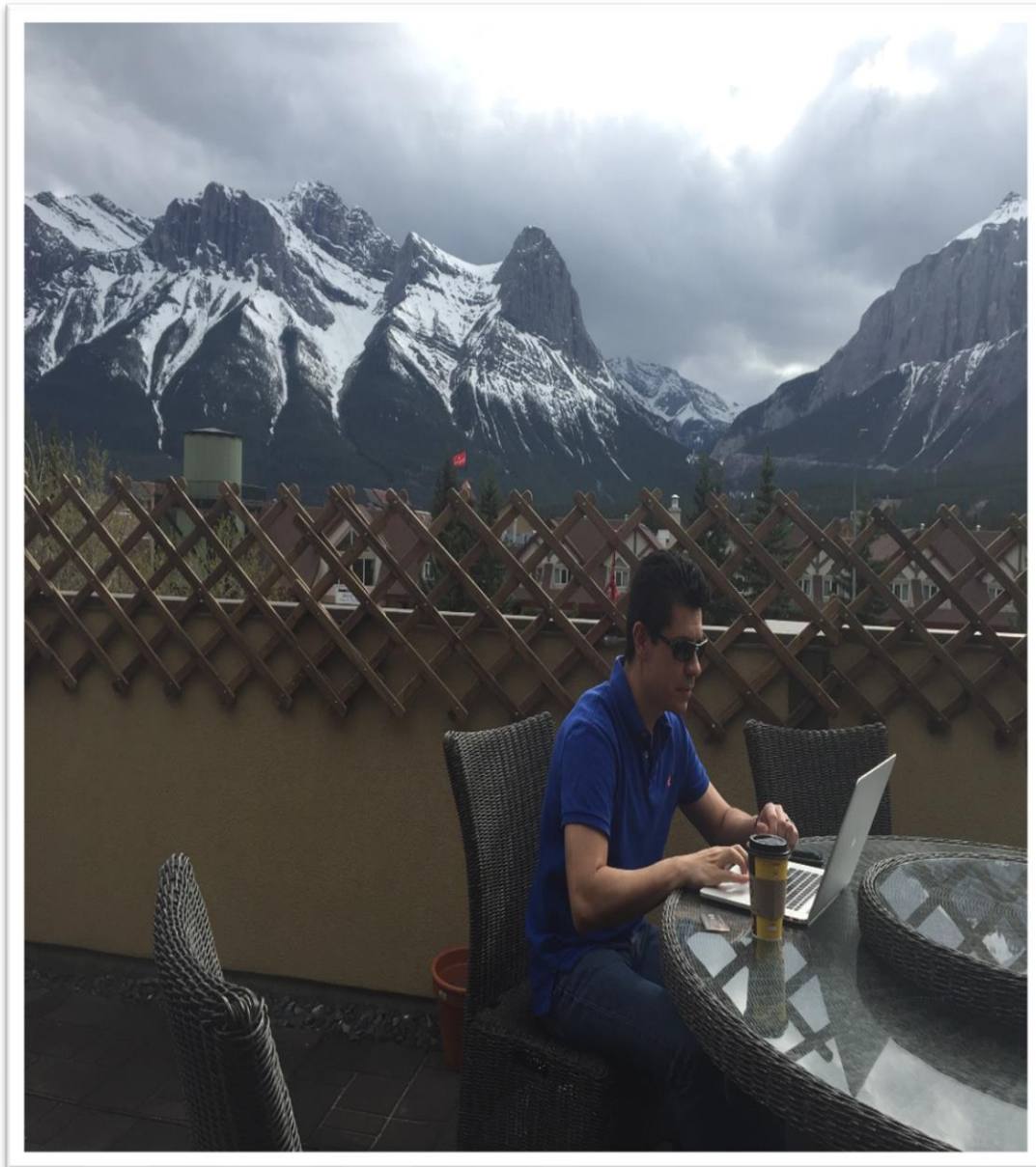
Living in Canada should mean to be able to choose. If I see that my child can have better opportunities or, for any reason, I like an Anglophobe school more, one should be able to make that decision “I would like my son to attend that Anglophone school” and not just being forced to register only at Francophone schools. The same thing happens at the work place, having to work in a place where you have to only speak “French French French”, I think it is too much. It is something that they tried to pass, or it is already passed, I feel that would be crossing the line of the rights of the people. One can choose what language to speak. In North America, they are the only French-speaking location. If they want to do business with the other [Canadian] provinces or the with the U.S., it could mean growth. Yet, if they focus only on speaking only French, things can become more and more difficult for the economic growth and things like that. And that is one of the reasons why Quebec is one of the worse provinces, economically speaking. (Joaquin / Interview 1 / p. 5).

It is worth noting that despite having had a negative experience of professional integration in Quebec, this group of four participants expressed their sincere and solid gratitude for the opportunities given to them in the province which helped them prove the validity of their foreign-obtained education and experiences. Far from any feeling of resentment towards Quebec society, participants hold with them only the positive aspects that living in Quebec has left in them. They commented:

If there is something I have to recognize is that Canada, not just Ontario but Quebec as well, is that we could make progress. It is not like we got stuck in the lowest [level] and we stayed there. With a lot of effort and sacrifice, we could always get some more and then some more experience to be really well, we can't complain in that sense. We are glad. (Ramiro / Interview 1 / p. 9).

They [other immigrants who also left Quebec] tell us "Well, things never went well for us in Montreal, or there is a lot of discrimination there." Or "Quebec is this" but my argument was "Well, yes. But Montreal was the city that opened the door for us to come to Canada. Quebec was the only one that accepted us" To date, I continue arguing the same thing. Yes, things did not go well there but I am always thankful for [opening the doors to us], right? I can say that my experience, yes, it was difficult. When I was working at the souvenir store, I used to come back home crying. And I could not sleep at night when I was working making appointments. But I really enjoyed the city [of Montreal]. I really enjoyed the cultural events, I enjoyed spending time with my friends very much. (Emilia / Interview 1 / pp. 5-6).

Similarly, during our Photovoice discussion, Emilia continued her argument and explained that the decision her husband and she made to leave Montreal for settling in the mountains in Calgary responded to the pursuit of the professional objectives she and her husband had set as a couple long before their arrival in Canada. She highlighted how the achievement of their professional objectives could occur only when *both* of them were successfully working in their professional fields. She shared an image of the city where she and her husband decided to re-settle:



In this image I thought about the professional level [of immigrants]. I think that it is faster to professionally integrate when you leave the province [Quebec]. In our case, work opportunities in my husband's field, he only got them when we left the province. Of course, it affected us because we had to move to the mountains. So, the opportunity for us, for him was here in Calgary. Maybe in Montreal we could have been ok. We would not have to starve because we could have got a survival job and got by. Yet, we did not come to Canada to have a survival job. We came to, and we had this in mind always, to get opportunities that the host country was giving us. We tried in Montreal. I liked Montreal very much. But, as a family, we had to move for his profession because he was not going to give up the good opportunity that was being offered to him here [in Calgary] and not in Montreal. (Emilia / Interview 2 / p. 1).

Chapter Summary

The themes “Discussing Discrimination” and “Outmigration” demonstrate that generally participants experienced several forms of discrimination while trying to find work in professions that match their areas of expertise. Specifically, I described the types of discrimination most participants faced while seeking employment. I also described how a few participants unacknowledged discriminatory attitudes towards the Latin American minority group in Quebec and placed the causes for unemployment or underemployment on natural causes rather than on structural ones. In addition, I explained the context that took two couples among the participants to turn to other Canadian provinces for career success. In the following chapter, I explore the last theme of this research that arose from the thematic analysis of participants’ interviews, photovoice and my own reflective memos.

Chapter Seven: Joining the Community

“We are all in the same ship, we are all suffering the same, we are all enjoying the same or learning the same” (Emilia)

Introduction

The fifth and last theme to emerge from the data is “This is Us!” which is comprised of four categories *building a broader identity, feeling integrated? friendship as a support system, and sharing for learning*. Each of these describes the changes in participants’ sense of identity and belonging while pursuing their economic integration into the Quebec society. In addition, it points out the significant role that self-motivation and participants’ friends of Latin American origin played in their adaptation to life in the province as well as in their psychological wellbeing. Lastly, this theme provides recommendations from participants that could improve the economic outcomes of skilled Latin American immigrants.

Theme Five: This is Us!

Identity and Profile

After approximately a decade of living in the province, participants have accumulated several professional, educational, and social experiences that have enriched their knowledge of Quebec and Canadian culture. For instance, entering a romantic relationship, having children, becoming members of a school community as parents, or adopting experiences related to civic engagement like volunteering, getting Canadian citizenship, voting, and completing the census have all strengthened the links with the adopted society. This is clear for participants who were able to explore and develop new sentiments of belonging and identity. Indeed, most participants added the larger context of Canada to their sense of belonging mainly because they felt that a Canadian is someone welcoming and respectful of the existent cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity of all its members. Besides self-identifying with being Canadian, all participants

maintained the name of their source country to describe themselves and included as well “Latin American” as a new trait of their broader sense of identity. Roberto and Katya stated:

I feel Canadian, Canadian and Brazilian because for me, being a Canadian means living [with] a lot of different people in one country and that is excellent (Roberto / Interview 1 / p. 6).

To feel that you belong somewhere, that feeling has to do with identity. That missing piece is in Mexico. Then my identity is Mexican, Mexican and I can be Latina, too (Katya / Interview 1 / p. 5).

Interestingly, the new plural view of their identity and/or sense of belonging of participants did not include “feeling as a Quebecer” to describe themselves. They explained that the reason for this exclusion was related “to culture, of course” (Elsa / Interview 1 / p. 11). Participants such as Roberto, Lorena and Katya shared their idea of a French Quebecer as someone against cultural diversity. They shared:

To feel as a French Quebecer? I do not think so. They are not so open to different cultures [pause]. We have the good people here [too]. Interesting people. [But] I cannot say that I am a Quebecer; I think it will never be like that for me (Roberto / Interview 1 / p. 6).

I won’t say that I adopted the *Québécois* nationality because it is not true. I do not have the *Québécois* nationality (Lorena / Interview 1 / p. 10).

Someone can never identify 100% with a *Québécois*. It is not your culture. You did not arrive in here [Quebec] when you were little for you to feel that there is an identity to have... For those who arrive here as adults [like me], you do not understand many things. There is a sort of gap, we just can not place the missing piece in the puzzle (Katya / Interview 1 / p. 5).

Participants learned through social interactions, whether in a new work environment or in their new study centre, about how different their cultural displays, such as the way of greeting or making short conversations, were from those of their Quebec peers. For Agustin, it is still difficult to get used to how labour relations are not extended to out of workplace. He was initially disgruntled to accept that saying hello to his coworkers around his workstation or talking

about popular events, such as the news, games or perhaps the recent emission on a TV show at the cafeteria or at the elevator, could be unappreciated. For Agustin, socializing only during a couple of hours every week seemed unnatural. He explained:

[French] Quebecers welcome you and then it just stops, they just stop. Once the door of work is closed, it is over. The need they have of not letting others break their [personal] bubble [surprises me greatly] ... It has happened to me a lot. In the 3D world, there is a 5-7 (happy hour). Our bosses put beer in the kitchen then you socialize and socialize, but then you leave work and then you do not know what happens. It is weird... they can greet you and continue walking when the two of you are leaving the office together (Agustin / Interview 1 / p. 8).

This was also very clear for Elsa who felt that she received a different treatment in her first job in the field of clinical trials field. She is convinced that her former French Quebecer co-workers were dissatisfied with the work of non-immigrant co-workers. She elaborated:

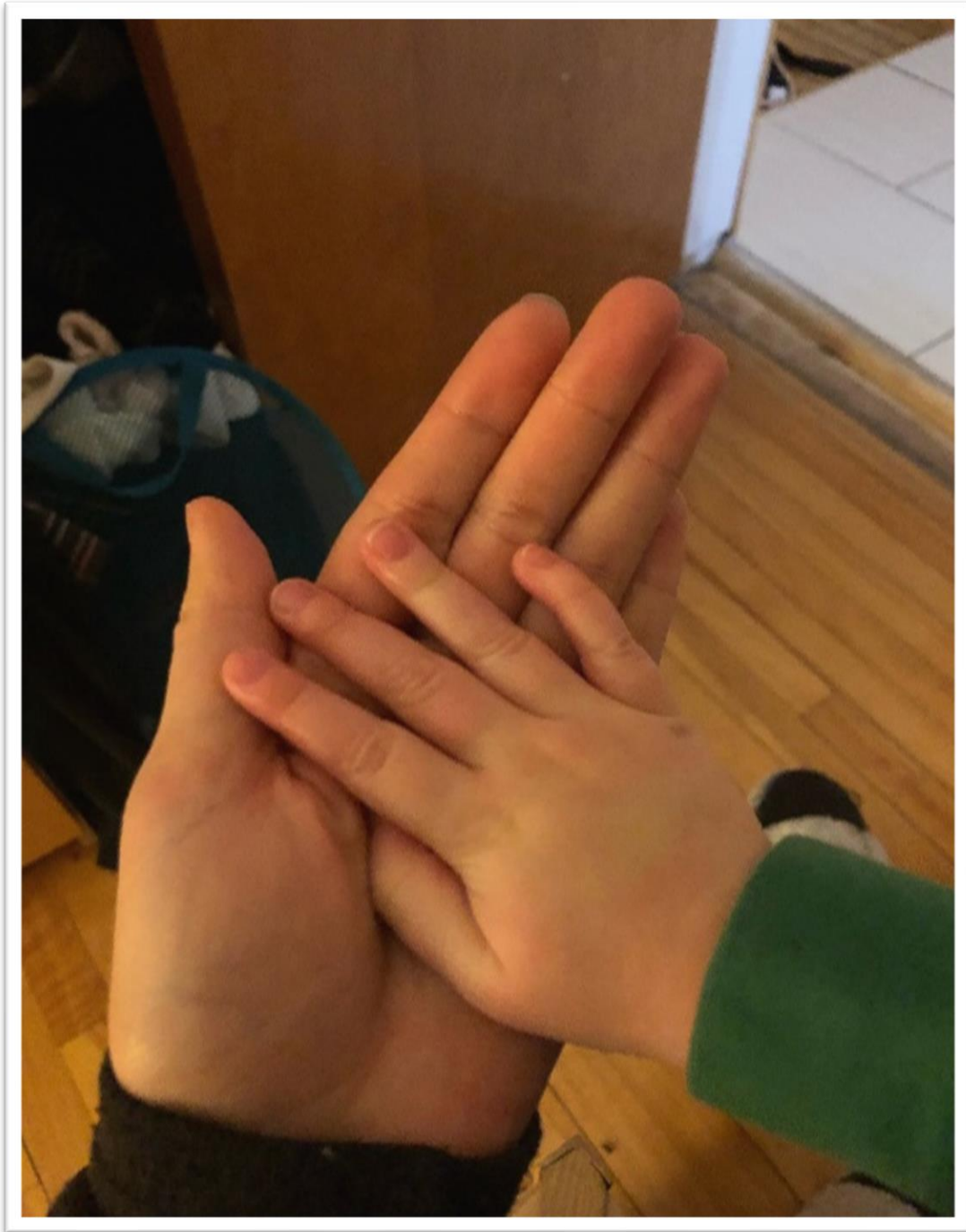
In the companies where I used to work, one of the persons with whom I needed to communicate frequently was a senior. He talked to me because he did not have a [different] choice, he had to do it as part of his job. I had to ask him for some products. Or else, he would have avoided to interact with me at all costs. He didn't care about working with me. [But] I wasn't there to be his friend, [I was there to] just work. However, the treatment he had with French Quebecers and that he had with immigrants was different [emphatic tone]. (Elsa / Interview 1 / p. 8).

Lucky for Elsa, she was given recommendations on how to “manage” her work relations with colleagues by a friendly lady during the training program. In Elsa's words, “she advised me that they [my coworkers] would not treat [me] the way they treat French Quebecers”. “She gave me a list of recommendations of how to “be” [emphatic tone] at work, so that they would not [bother me].” (Elsa / Interview 1 / p. 8). It is important to note that participants were clear that their negative perception towards some French Quebecers coworkers did not mean to include all French Quebecers. Yet, it was Elsa who reflecting on her years of work experience gained in an Anglophone work environment in Montreal pointed out that Anglophone Quebecers are a more welcoming and inclusive community. She claimed “there is certainly a difference, Anglophone

Quebecers do not discriminate. I ended having many Anglophone Quebecers friends. I don't have French Quebecer friends.” (Elsa / Interview 1 / pp. 10-11).

In accordance with the heterogeneity of the Latin American community in Quebec participant leaders agreed that the intersection of aspects like the recognition of educational experiences acquired outside Canada, the amount of educational/work experience acquired in Canada, the income they receive as well as environmental contributions, such as structural discrimination, build various profiles within the members of this community. Leader 2 emphasized that trying “to place them [all Latin Americans] in a single group” (Leader 2 / Interview 1 / p. 7) because of their ethnic commonality is counterproductive to the aim of learning the obstacles that Latin American immigrant groups face in Quebec as the “decisions people make are pretty complex.” (Leader 2 / Interview 1 / p. 7). Yet, they feel very clearly that there are some few specific traits that would describe this skilled immigrant migratory wave. Namely, people who are habitually committed to work with energy, who are proficient in French and English, and who hold high personal and professional aspirations for themselves and their families.

Lorena, mother of an adolescent and a little boy, is one of the participants who has worked only in her professional field in Quebec. She shared a photograph of her kid's hand over hers. As will be explained below, she indicates that Latin Americans have a strong drive to overcome obstacles to work and strive for success to achieve personal objectives. She stated:



Speaking as a Venezuelan, we [Latin American immigrants] are always working hard, and we are always looking forward. I do not know of a Venezuelan who has not had this attitude towards work. Nothing is easy as an immigrant. Let's start by saying that. I asked people, I looked up for information, and looking up for information since before migrating. (Lorena / Interview 2 / p. 1).

Equally important are the aspirations of participants who were parents towards the education and life quality of their children. The two participant leaders of this study agreed on the strong motivation of Latin American immigrant parents to see their children linguistically and educationally integrated to life in Quebec. Leaders highlighted the salient involvement of parents in the education of their children. They said:

Even the school success of children is very much related to the educational level of their parents: the parent is attentive to his son, and helps him with his homework, hires a private teacher, looks for French courses, he is often seeing his son's teacher, [visiting] the school. He is very present in the life of his son. (Leader 1 / Interview 1 / p. 3).

The aspirations of new immigrants of this profile [skilled immigrants] is to progress professionally, to buy a house, to be recognized at work. [For instance], if you are a businessman, you want your company to grow (Leader 2 / Interview 1 / p. 7).

It is worth mentioning that while the average skilled Latin American immigrant "is looking to prosper, to be trained, to integrate into the Canadian society" his/her culture is never left aside (Leader 2 / Interview 1 / p. 1). In effect, the way Latin American skilled immigrants constantly strengthen their connection with their country of origin is seen through the cultural cues that participants who were parents provide their children in their daily interactions. Firstly, they greatly encourage the use of the mother tongue, either Spanish or Portuguese, at home and with other Spanish-speaker relatives, friends, or colleagues. This can be seen in the cases of Patricio and Roberto:

We speak Portuguese at home. We talk our son about our culture and my son speaks Portuguese fluently. We only speak Portuguese at home. We try to go to Sao Paulo to see my family. Sometimes the family comes here. Sometimes we see family twice a year. It is good for my son to appreciate the language and to see the other children of my family (Roberto / Interview 1 / p. 6).

At home, French is prohibited. TV is watched in English and French is spoken at school. We only speak Spanish at home. It has not been an impediment for the development of skills in the three languages. For instance, my older child. I am surprised by the way she has learnt to switch languages. This is something a cousin told me, "She was talking to me

in French, speaking Spanish with her mom while speaking English with her friend, and she could do it all so smoothly, without hesitation” (Patricio / Interview 1 / p. 3).

Secondly, by teaching their children about their origin, celebrating traditions and attending cultural activities and celebrations, Pedro, Patricio, Lorena, Dario and Roberto maintain the connections with their heritage. Similarly, through frequent interactions with their grandparents, parents, or siblings abroad via voice calls, video calls etc. as well as visiting and/or welcoming them in Quebec, at least once a year, participants nurture meaningful connections with their families. Lorena said:

My oldest son is 18 and, of course, as an adolescent he spends a lot of time with his friends from here. Yet, we have always tried to maintain our [cultural] values. He speaks Spanish perfectly well. We try to celebrate and explain our holidays and we make celebrations the way we do them in Venezuela. (Lorena / Interview 1 / p. 10)

My mother-in-law came to visit us last year. It was good (Rodrigo / Interview 1 / p. 7).

Feeling Integrated?

When participants were asked about the process of building a new life in Quebec, their responses suggested that the process of initial adaptation and progressive integration was an individual process rather than one achieved collectively as a family, student cohort or immigration wave. This can be clearly seen in the experience of Lucia who arrived in Quebec with her husband. She argues that the way a newcomer lives the period of transition to a new country is personal “regardless of having a partner or a support system” to help you (Lucia / Interview 1 / p. 1). According to Lucia, the period of adaptation and later integration “to a new country, a new language, new habits, and leaving your whole life behind is hard and it does take time” (Lucia / Interview 1 / p. 1) to learn how to deal with the obstacles that are often encountered. Interestingly, participants such as Dario, Elsa and Joaquin agree that the obstacles to achieve a positive integration into the Quebec labour market are contentious and discriminatory. For them, their

limited access to the local labour market is linked to social and structural barriers which have made their experience of integration negative.

The immigration process is complex, I never imagined it was going to be that complex. For me, it has been a real challenge, so has it been for my wife... it takes a lot from a person, and this thing here, this is a barrier, but it can't be the other way. (Dario / Interview 1 / p. 7).

On the other hand, the positive perspective of integration of participants such as Lucia, Pedro, Patricio and Lorena suggest the idea of integration as a rather dynamic responsibility between newcomers and, in this case, the Quebec receiving society. They claimed to feel integrated to Quebec even though their notion of integration includes only their participation in the local labour market as recognized professionals and their role as respectful members of Quebec society. Hence, their perception of integration excludes maintaining social relations with *Québécois*. This is certainly a strong indicator of the limitations of immigrant interaction with the majority society and their exclusion in social and cultural circles of society, as the quote from Katya indicated:

[Integrated] to the society itself? I don't know [laughter] to Quebec yes, to its way of living, the seasons and all of that. I think that I am 100% integrated. Yet, to the Montreal society, I don't think I can say. As a worker, I am. I don't know if that integration even exists or if people just live their lives in that way. I don't have *Québécois* friends born here. (Katya / Interview 1 / p. 9).

Katya, who studied a master's program at a local English university and works in her field of study, explains that making friends with French Quebecers or being part of their social life would be unlikely to occur. This was also shared by other participants like Rodrigo for whom not only "studying in a Quebec environment has been difficult" (Rodrigo / Interview 1 / p. 6) but also "not being able to befriend someone from here" in his classes. In addition, although Pedro says to have a good *Québécois* friend, he believes that what creates difficulties for having more open and close social relationships with people from the majority group is mainly related to

“cultural reasons [that often makes us] lean towards our people [Latin Americans].” (Pedro / Interview 1 / p. 9).

In this context, the two participant leaders highlighted how the difficult process of adaptation and initial integration to Quebec society often affects the emotional, physical, and psychological well-being of some newcomers. In line with this, Agustin, who works as a 3D artist, points out that the negative aspects of living as an immigrant inevitably “come with the package”, referring specifically to “people who come to Quebec married and end up in divorce.” (Agustin / Interview 1 / p. 10). In effect, the relationships of many Latin American couples during the first months in Montreal quickly come to an end. In fact, two female participants commented how the everyday situations such as doing the groceries or attitudes towards looking for job opportunities in the professional field often resulted in constant arguments that rapidly ended their marriages. Interestingly, the effects of this personal break-up had different effects on them. They stated:

[Integration] was hard for me, individually but it was not as hard for my husband. But it was hard for both of us as a couple. It was an individual process, a couple’s process that was doubly difficult. (Lucia / Interview 1 / p. 1) ... I lived here for three months without speaking [French]. I had physical problems. I wanted to go back to my country. I had arguments with my former husband. Then, I started taking classes [of French], I had very good teachers I had to start from zero, but my husband was classified in the 3rd level ... I blocked myself, I just could not speak. My accent, my pronunciation, I could not. My husband, on the contrary, was very fluent, he used to speak with the teacher, he participated a lot. But then here, in *francisation* I didn’t do well in the [placement] test, I was classified in zero level (Lucia / Interview 1 / p. 3).

My ex-husband did not want us to buy [things] because he saved money. He was so cheap. That was one of the common fights we had here for this and that (Lorena / Interview 1 / p. 8) ... My ex-husband could not find a job as an engineer. I think it was not what he really wanted. He was full of fear and then the problems in our relationship ... I saw that he struggled with the language. He was afraid to speak, to have an interview. Sometimes, he skipped phone interviews, just like that. He got his first job at a toy store moving and lifting boxes. I had told him “If you do not start working, we are going to have problems” so he started working there. I wanted him to start working so

that I could leave the relationship. When I saw that he was working I told him “I separate” then he said, “I don’t have a job”. Maybe he did that to manipulate me, I do not know. I saw that he did not put interest or much interest in looking for a job in his field. He got a menial job, and it was ok for him (Lorena / Interview 1 / p. 9).

For the leader participant who manages a support centre for the Latin American community, part of the cause for the high divorce rate among Latin American couples in Quebec can be chalked up to the fact that interpersonal relations are inevitably affected when exposed to ongoing stress situations. She explained that common stressors in Latin American immigrant families are language barriers and accessing the local labour market. She highlighted, however, that a highly relevant cause “has a lot to do with the interpersonal / family relations” as Latin American couples “have a lot of problems often due to the work integration of the man”.

I think that one of the main things that is related to [divorces] relies on our behaviour towards labour integration ... Mothers, fathers, marriage is experienced differently. The stress generated with the immigration, the economic stress generated in the marriage has negative effects on the couple, very negative effects. The stress can result in violent moments (Leader 1 / Interview 1 / p. 3).

Adding to this, the empowerment of immigrant and refugee women, particularly mothers, in accessing income assistance and learning about their rights and entitlements, she says, presupposes an inner motivation to move on with their lives without a spouse and, more importantly, without losing the sense of self. She explained:

We have to remember that laws here are much different [to those in our countries of origin]. Many laws here favour women and children a lot. Then, that change of roles that often happens in the families causes a prejudice on the family unity, it causes a great prejudice ... Women do not have so much big freedom in some of our countries or there is not much defense in their favour or so much assistance for a single mother. For instance, in the economic aspect, one could say “well, I am going to have more economic support staying [alone] with my kids than staying with someone who does not even work and is only causing me problems at home” (Leader 1 / Interview 1 / p. 3).

As a result of the aforementioned obstacles to integration, both leader participants state that the “self esteem of the Latino diminishes when they arrive here [because] [t]here is a lot of

prejudice against us.” (Leader 1/ Interview 1 / p. 3) and inevitably “one feels with a low morale and make the question one always makes to oneself when you see you are not making progress “why did I come?” (Leader 2/ Interview 1 / p. 4). Such barriers also have implications for their physical health as well as the sense of their own value as professionals and individuals. Lucia’s experience speaks directly to this:

I think that psychologically I was not well. It reflected on me physically. My immune system was not well either. I needed to visit the doctor and that was hard for me because I could not explain to the doctor what hurt, the way I felt and the help I needed... That isolated me from everything, avoiding contact. I did not understand, I felt as if I couldn’t speak well, I really couldn’t understand what I was told. It was in shock. Perhaps it was something that I provoked. I knew some vocabulary but here I had a block as if it was a new language. It lasted a year... It was very hard for me. It was a psychological block for me. And I think that I got sick because of that, physically, and think that my psychology did not work very well, and it showed physically (Lucia / Interview 1 / p. 1).

Yet, many participants agreed on the positive effects of building a positive mindset as a strategy to manage obstacles that highly affect their personal wellbeing and reduce the psychological obstacles to achieve their desired levels of professional success in Quebec.

Roberto explains about the benefits of keeping a positive attitude throughout his six years in Montreal. He shared:

Forget the racism, forget the problems, it would be better for you. I thought about all these things [because] they were on my mind all the time. It helped me to have patience. At the very beginning this was a problem for me because I sometimes said “perhaps I didn’t make a good choice, perhaps it was not a good choice to come here, because I have my university [degree], I have my life in my country and here people are not warm with me, they are not cool with me. Perhaps I will never work in my domain.” Things like that were always in [my mind] in many moments. But I started to see that they do not help me. For this reason, whenever I see that there is a problem with difficult people or a difficult person, I try to forget (Roberto / Interview 1 / p. 5).

Such a mindset is equally adopted by Lucia who suffered a severe cultural / linguistic shock that not only affected her willingness to leave her apartment alone and meet, or even talk, to others but her physical health. Since immigrants selected by Quebec can get health coverage

only after the third month living in the province, Lucia had to spend a lot of money in private health services, thus reducing her savings greatly. Of great importance, as well, is the impact of such changes in her marital relationship which led to a quick divorce and the loss of her only chance of emotional and economic support. She said:



At first, I thought about photographing myself then I changed. I opted to photograph nature that allows me to express, somehow, certain sentiments and experiences I have felt here. The colours also imply many things for me: life, joy, and illusions one brings here [to Canada]. Those kind of pictures of nature allow to express my experiences, which probably, are not the average experience here. I know people face and go through much more difficult experiences than I did. Then, I couldn't show a picture of something very negative because my process happened differently. Then, what I wanted to show is that there was always hope, despite there were doubts, despite there was uncertainty and despite there was restlessness, there was always some colour in my process [of integration to Quebec]. (Lucia / Interview 2 / p. 1).

For Agustin, who quit his job in TV broadcasting office to go back to be a student for three years fully convinced of the personal and professional satisfaction that decision would bring, believes that having a positive mindset is key for every immigrant. It is his belief that whether immigrants in Quebec or those who left the province, everybody should have the attitude to switch negative experiences to ones from which they can learn about the system in the new society and use it to benefit their integration journeys. He said:



It is up to one's attitude: it is not a matter of provinces but a matter of attitude, a matter of mentality. I have seen that because of difficulties people decide to go back to their countries. I have seen that: 'I rather go back to the stability I had before' I think that is because they didn't have a clear idea of what they wanted or didn't know how to recognize the opportunities in front of them or they were just not patient. It is a total conviction of why you come here, why you immigrated, you need to be fully convinced of that. After that, it is just a matter of attitude, 'whether I decide to keep working at a McDonalds for 20 years to see what happens and wait for someone to help me, or I work for McDonalds and then look for another possibility and jump the obstacle'... In my case, it was hard, but I got it and now things are starting to settle down. I set back my life plan 3-4 years, but it doesn't matter. I am happy, content, satisfied and a little surprised at myself of my achievements. Back in 2012, when I was home, I did not think that by 2019 I was going to be working at a studio doing 3D-animation. It is hard to believe. (Agustin / Interview 2 / p. 1).

Relying on the Friendship of Latin American Peers.

Adding to the positive mindset participants claimed to maintain in difficult situations, most of them emphasized the relevant role that friendship has played in their psychological wellbeing. Participants observed the benefits of friendship on their health, education, migration journey, economic behaviour, interpersonal relations, among other fields. Specifically, establishing friendship networks with individuals of Latin American origin, whether skilled immigrants or not. Rodrigo commented about the Latin American collectivism and underlined “[the] tendency to make groups, to tell each other things and to avoid being so lonely. Basically, to always make groups.” (Rodrigo / Interview 1 / p. 5). Katya put it succinctly when she explained that “it is incumbent for someone who immigrates to Canada to build bonds, a connection, a sort of family, although they are not, to feel that you belong somewhere, and that feeling has to do with identity” (Interview 1 / p. 5). In line with this, the fundamental support participants spontaneously receive from their close circle of friends, also immigrants from Latin American countries, have greatly helped the betterment of their newly arrived lives. Examples of such support can be identified in quotidian experiences like navigating through a different higher education system as well as from demonstrations of empathy and understanding of discouraging events like failing at a job interview or experiencing discrimination at work. They said:

The important thing is to be healthy and have money to live and eat, and family and friends who love you by your side. That is important as personal support. The rest? That’s just something else. (Lorena / Interview 1 / p. 13).

I mean, about registration and the way universities do things. One as an adult doesn’t have the skills that younger [students] have [laughter] to do all of the required paperwork ... It was good, I remember it with sympathy. After all, I made a group of friends there: Colombian engineers, also from Mexico who helped me do that (Dario / Interview 1 / pp. 4-5).

[Having friends] was a support for me because you are in a country about which you know nothing and you suddenly have friends that are in the same ship you are, right?

Friends who support each other, and well it is all useful... [My husband and I] made strong friendships... It was something that helped us a lot in the process of moving from a country to the other and all that this implies. It does help, helps a lot. It did help me a lot. For me, it really was that what kept me going, yes ... I remember being very open to knowing what the characteristics of my friends' countries were and to learning and adapting to the Quebec culture and all of that. That was important for me, but it was mainly the group of friends. We are all in the same ship, we are all suffering the same, we are all enjoying the same or learning the same (Emilia/ Interview 1 / p. 1).

Even more fundamental is the social importance of friendship for well-being. This was the specific case of Lucia who suffered a severe decline in her physical and psychological health for about a year. Added to this, her personal disorientation due to culture shock, her inability to communicate in French and not being able to count on the support of her spouse anymore affected her access to medical resources. The support of a new friend from francization prevented Lucia of a negative health outcome. She elaborated:

It was a year battling with my health. During that time, I used a lot of the health services here. After the three months, I needed to visit doctors, get medications, antibiotics, mainly for the immune system. Because of my physical issues, I had many frustrations. I was detected with myomas in the uterus. I mean there was a moment where I lost control of myself (Lucia / Interview 1 / p. 6) ... [The person who helped me] was someone I had met in the francization course. She was Mexican and spoke French very well, much better than me and I asked her [to help me] as a woman ... Whenever I had to go to urgency or for a follow up consult, I went with her. She came with me, and she translated for me [expressions like] "how do you feel?". The doctor talked to her, and she translated to me" (Lucia / Interview 1 / p. 5).

Equally important is the special relevance given to long-lasting friendships made since initial migration journeys in Quebec by Joaquin and Emilia. They left Quebec in 2011 and have lived in the province of Alberta since then. They stated that building a strong friends' network while studying the francization program was a supportive way to start their process of integration. Sharing experiences as newcomers, such as the challenges to adapting to the use of both official languages in Montreal and developing skills to socially integrate in the workplace were the main factors to developing close friendships. Interestingly, moving out from Quebec

has not been an impediment for Joaquin and Emilia and all of their close friends in Montreal to gracefully handle distance. They elaborated:

We had friends at francization, they were from Colombia and Venezuela, not from Mexico exactly. This other group of friends we had, they were Brazilians, too. It was interesting because we were speaking French all the time. We also had a circle of Mexican friends, so we had two main circles of friends... For me that was the most important thing back then. The survival job was not important, “Ok, I’ll do it [the job I am overqualified to do]. Let’s see what happens later” ... being well, having a group of friends, having things to do, all of that is more important or, was more important for me back then. To date, we keep talking to our friends from there [Montreal]. It is very good (Emilia / Interview 1 / p. 5).

“I do [emphatic tone] miss the friends we have there [in Montreal], they are many” (Joaquin / Interview 1 / p. 6).

Clearly, sharing similar objectives, values, life circumstances, and certain barriers to their integration, are factors identified by participants as contributing to develop quality connections and a support system solid enough to foster their overall wellbeing.

Sharing Some Recommendations for Future Newcomers

Participants of this study were happy to reflect on their experiences to give some advice to new Latin American skilled immigrants to Quebec so that they could have a faster landing on the job they have in mind. Firstly, because volunteering in Latin America is not appreciated, or as appreciated by employers as they are in Canada, participants suggested newcomers looking at its benefits for job applicants. Participants explained that doing voluntary service does not only support a charity movement, as it is believed in Latin American countries. It also provides benefits to the résumés of new immigrants who are eager to get their first Canadian workplace experience. Although there is criticism of the increasing prevalence of unpaid *voluntary* service as a form of (neoliberal) exploitation, it is also one way of advancing their careers in Canada. Critics think it is misleading to characterize this as a benign “cultural difference” between Latin

America and Canada, but as new immigrants it is a strategically necessary means of gaining employment. Indeed, according to Leader participant 1, educated immigrants need to take unpaid jobs only in “an area related to their academic background” (Leader 1 / Interview 1 / p. 2) so that it becomes their first direct experience in the professional field. Dario, who worked voluntarily in remodeling the property of a non-governmental organization that hosted children whose parents were dealing with aggressive divorces, is fully convinced that “the gateways [of the next job] will be open for new immigrants who volunteer” (Dario / Interview 1 / p. 11). For him, this experience allows the newcomer to learn new skills and, more importantly, build a professional network which otherwise is challenging enough for minority group immigrants, as mentioned in Chapter Five. In addition to giving back to the local society, taking an unpaid job allows the newcomer to learn about the local target labour market and practice the language skills.

Furthermore, participants recommended newcomers to step out of their linguistic comfort zone and have a more open social circle that also includes the French language. According to Lorena, this does not only reflect congruence with the decision of migrating to Quebec but, at the same time, improves their communication skills. As Lorena suggested:

When you arrive here and you cluster yourself in your friends, in only your culture, making a circle of those within your own culture...[then] you won't improve your French skills...I have many friends who do not have contact with Quebecers outside their jobs. I can tell you the difference [in their skills] ... It is noticeable (Lorena / Interview 1 / p. 4).

Regarding the persistent barriers that many Latin American immigrants encounter to enter the labour market, which pushed some of them to take survival jobs and gradually give up on their professions, Leader 1 emphatically recommended them to set specific goals and, more importantly, specific time limits to achieve them. Reflecting on her own experience as an immigrant and, mainly, as the director of a community organization that promotes the integration of the Latin American ethnic community into Quebec society, she stated:

I know that we have to do it [take survival jobs] at the beginning [of our journey in Quebec]. We all have to do it, I did it, too. But we have to set goals for ourselves. Goals, goals, we have to tell ourselves: 'ok, I am doing this now and that's it because I have to pay the apartment, support my son, anything, but I will make an effort to learn the language, [or] to take a training course... Set a goal, short, medium, long term one. If you don't start escalating to get to that goal you will never get there [and] find a meaningful job in my field (Leader 1 / Interview 1 / p. 2).

Additionally, Leader 1 recommends new immigrants to Quebec meet other skilled immigrants from Latin America with extended workplace experience in Quebec to help them navigate the structural challenges to immigrant employment. For this, attending cultural events and/or meetings that strengthen ties between Latin American residents of Montreal, such as the Latin American Chamber of Commerce, so that they can build a strong network with the people able to make a difference in their career:

I feel that orientation they receive, that networking they can build, the good assessment they can have is very important. But not the assessment of someone who is going through the same experience. I think you need to reach people who already lived that experience. If it is someone from your community, this person will better understand what you might be going through (Leader 1 / Interview 1 / p. 6).

A last recommendation to new immigrants to Quebec was given by participant Leader 2 whose focus is on supporting the Latin American community by helping newcomers in their adjustment to life in Montreal (or Quebec). He elaborated: "[we should] give ourselves a hand...collaborate with the integration of others. If you learnt something regarding integration, share it with someone. You are a Latino, and you are going to help build this great guild "pass what you learnt to your coming partner." (Leader 2 / Interview 1 / p. 3). A great example of profound solidarity and support of community is given by Roberto. He has offered orientation to a couple of recently arrived immigrants who came from Brazil with their two children. It is noteworthy to highlight the lasting happiness Roberto finds in helping others. He described:

The lady is a chemist, and he is an engineer of food science. I contacted them from the internet. I offered help: got a contact for them to find lodgement, to find a job and in the

future, to learn the language. To give [them] a little bit more direction. In the future, I will try to do that for them, what I think is necessary: help others to find a first job, give some information to work and to have the good experience as if I would be doing it for me. It is my way [to help] because it makes me happy... I do my best (Roberto / Interview 1 / p. 7).

Sharing some Recommendations for Quebec Authorities and Policy Makers

As an answer to the question of how Quebec authorities could improve the integration of skilled immigrants, participants made five specific recommendations. Firstly, increasing the funding of Quebec government's main linguistic integration program: part- and full-time francization courses. As Thiago believes, the francization programs must be re-designed so that allophone students acquire a higher fluency “to integrate like they should.” (Thiago / Interview 1 / p. 5) into the labour market. An additional strategy was given by Katya who strongly believes that employers and decision makers fail to take advantage of the complete linguistic human capital skilled immigrants bring to the local labour market, that is newcomers’ skills in languages other than French. She is of the opinion that strengthening French language laws in Quebec make many immigrants move to a new province to settle. She elaborated:

If Quebec really wants to help its qualified immigrants, it needs to improve the system of integration [for newcomers]. Not [just] improving the *francisation* program. I mean allowing people who do not speak French well to work in another language: in English. I think most immigrants [in Quebec] speak English and I know many companies do it, but I know they must not, according to [the provincial] law. In that aspect I think that Quebec should allow it because it is losing a lot of qualified human capital for not knowing the language, for not being able to express in liberty. Immigrants are leaving. That is why many people leave. (Katya / Interview 2 / p. 1).

Secondly, Leader 1 thinks that Quebec authorities can also seriously prevent employment-related prejudice and discrimination against racialized immigrants by strengthening the anti-discriminatory regulations and codes for companies. This way, employers become liable if they do not “penalize those who don’t obey clear rules”, regardless of intentions to

discriminate or not, so that “people start educating themselves” by raising awareness of the issue and thinking of ways to contend it (Leader 2 / Interview 1 / p. 7).

Third, Emilia requested authorities to design and promote communication campaigns addressed to public in general that could reduce the misconceptions of immigrants as a liability to the employment of Quebec-born peers. Such strategy could also raise awareness of the benefits that they bring to human capital, not to mention cultural diversity, which increase the domestic and international economy of the province and the country. She commented:

I think that a sort of campaign of awareness to say: yes we come from other countries and have other traditions, but we can bring many things too and we can learn things and improve many things, processes, how to do things, or bring many cultures ... To learn and well to open your mind and we also come here to bring good things, and not just to take jobs from you [unequivocal tone], it's not that we want to bring down your culture nor language [unequivocal tone] Or try to accept me the way I am and at the end of the day, I will adapt to your culture if I came here is to improve nor to try to make your life difficult or to make of Quebec another Mexico, I mean, no (Emilia / Interview 1 / p. 9).

Similarly, Katya believed that the creation of professional internships programs specifically addressed to skilled immigrants, instead of to students, where they could learn about the different ways specific professional sectors work in Quebec. According to Katya, learning such crucial information can facilitate the insertion of newcomers to the local labour market. She explained:

[Although] There already are programs for students then perhaps only for professionals, for skilled professionals. I think that being a skilled immigrant is not guarantee for anything, it does only guarantee that you are going to be accepted by the government. There is no guarantee that you are going to get a job. You have to study here. I think there should be a more valid guide of what you need to do once here and that is not what is done (Katya / Interview 1 / p. 10).

Lastly, Agustin claimed the need for government authorities to go beyond their funding to immigrant-support cultural associations and extend their support to their strategies and campaigns addressing the wellbeing and health of new immigrants who often suffer emotional

problems or stress-related struggles during the initial years after arrival. He noted with the close contact that these organizations have with newcomers they can not only help them adapt and nurture their culture but also prevent and protect their psychological and mental health by providing resources. Agustin explained:

I think the government needs to do much more than just offering immigration programs (Agustin / Interview 1 / p. 9). Authorities must create organizations for supporting immigrants in a cultural way, where immigrants could go, gather and talk about their things. Especially during the first years when it is harder (Agustin / Interview 1 / pp. 9-10) ... What I mean to say is that living in a routine, that duality: missing one's country and being surrounded by a new culture, getting up every day to work and studying to try to integrate into society. If there were an organization that could attend to the human part, the psychological part, especially for people like us who come from tropical countries and [struggle] with days at -40 and days of brief sun light exposure (Agustin / Interview 1 / p. 10) ... If immigration programs could include organizations that could promote the integration [of newcomers] by providing psychological support, which is not everything they need, and looking after their mental health. That's what I mean, that if they could look after the mental health of newcomers, it would be great (Agustin / Interview 1 / p. 10).

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I engaged in the discussion of the last theme of this research, "This is Us!", which emerged from the findings exploring the integration experiences of educated immigrants of Latin American origin. Findings pointed out participants' reflections on their sense of belonging and identity as well as their personal evaluation of their process of integration in the French province. Data showed the role that self-motivation and friendship play as a support system for participants dealing with common problems in the hiring process. I concluded with some recommendations from participants to future new immigrants in Quebec as well as to decision makers to promote a more efficient adaptation of recent skilled immigrants. In the following chapter, I engage with and discuss the findings that emerged from the themes and categories presented in Chapters Five, Six and Seven. Also, I present the conclusions and recommendations of the study, and end with directions for future research.

Chapter Eight: Discussion, Conclusions, and Implications

Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss and theorize the themes that emerged from the data presented in Chapters Five, Six and Seven, obtained to answer the three research questions that guided this study on participants' experiences in finding employment given their education levels. Drawing on the theoretical framework, I present the perspectives of 14 Latin American skilled immigrants on their integration experiences in Quebec given their education levels and employment opportunities. Importantly, additional data obtained from two leaders of the Latin American community corroborated participants' narratives. I conclude that provincial authorities are not doing enough to ensure proper transition into society. Each chapter in this thesis outlines the processes involved in arriving at these conclusions.

I also explain how the perceived systemic discrimination influences their attitudes towards interprovincial migration. The chapter ends with recommendations as well as the directions for future research.

Review of Chapters

Chapter One, introduces my research topic, provides the objectives, the context and significance of the study, and my positionality as a researcher as I started the research process and reflected on the implications of the study. Chapter Two, provides a review of literature on the Quebec factors that impact on immigrants such as Migration into the Province, the Special Case of Quebec and Latin American Community in Canada in order to build familiarity with the existing research on migration from those racialized countries in Quebec. Chapter Three, reviews the existing theories and concepts that are pertinent to my study. I explain how the notion of whiteness as privilege and power helped me conceptualize the normative prejudice against ethnocultural groups in Quebec. I discuss how unequal distribution of resources such as jobs,

education and social services which place racialized groups, skilled immigrants included, in disadvantaged positions in the province of Quebec are active factors in systemic discrimination. I review Critical Race Theory, Post/Colonial Theory and Global Neoliberal Capitalism perspectives to demonstrate how and to what extent existing power structures perpetuate the ethnic discrimination of skilled Latin American immigrants in Quebec's job market. This theoretical context provides a better understanding of the findings of this study. Chapter Four, describes why Narrative Inquiry as a decolonising methodology was the most appropriate approach for this study as it helps start "a process of correction" of belief systems (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, p. 5) that have historically tended to deny the marginalization of the Latin American ethnic group in Canada. I describe the methodological approaches that contributed to addressing my research questions. I provide the rationale for the research design along with the procedures for data collection, management, and analysis. Chapter Four, discusses as well how ethical considerations were addressed in the present study. Chapters Five, Six and Seven present the data of this qualitative study divided in five themes that emerged from interviews with participants, the photovoice method as well as from my own reflective memos.

In Chapter Five, I introduce the study participants and present their experiences prior to and after migrating to Canada. Also, I describe the two themes that emerged in this chapter: 1) Welcome to Quebec? and 2) Labour Market. The "Welcome to Quebec?" theme highlights participants' positive and negative experiences while navigating the different centres supporting the integration of immigrants into the local workforce during their initial phase of adaptation in Montreal. Under the theme "Labour Market", interviewees discussed the problems they faced accessing employment despite their educational credentials and professional experience. Chapter Six focuses on the third and fourth themes that emerged from the data: 3) Discussing

Discrimination; and 4) Outmigration. The “Discussing Discrimination” theme highlights the different circumstances in which participants faced subtle or direct acts of discrimination while trying to get integrated in Quebec society. In addition, this theme points out participants’ different reflections towards systemic discrimination in the province. In the theme “Outmigration”, four participants discuss their motivation for moving to other provinces in Canada for job opportunities and a better life. Chapter Seven focuses on the fifth theme in this study: 5) This is Us! In this theme, having accumulated significant professional, educational, and social experiences in Montreal, participants reflect on the changes in their sentiments of belonging and identity as well as their assessment of their social and economic integration into life in Quebec. In addition, findings highlight the relevant role that self-motivation and friendship played in the psychological wellbeing of participants. Furthermore, this theme provides participants’ recommendations aimed to new immigrants to have a smooth adjustment to the labour market in Montreal as well as for an improvement in economic outcomes with specific focus on skilled Latin American immigrants. Lastly, Chapter Eight, draws conclusions and makes recommendations based on the findings to facilitate integration of highly skilled immigrants to Quebec.

Addressing the Research Questions

The three guiding research questions that framed this study and enhanced my understanding of fourteen Latin American skilled immigrants’ integration experiences are the following:

- 1.- (a) In what ways and to what extent do skilled Latin American immigrants to Quebec perceive that they confront situations of marginalization and exclusion in the labour

market? and (b) how have these influenced their decisions towards remaining in the province of Quebec?

2.-Are the integration experiences of skilled Latin American immigrants who have left Quebec for another Canadian province different from those immigrants who have not left the province?

3.- (a) What are their suggestions to provide fair opportunities to newcomers that could prevent the demographic and economic consequences of interprovincial migration? and (b) what are their suggestions for immigrants still to come to Quebec that could help them accelerate their process of integration?

In the following sections, I engage with and discuss the major themes that emerged from the participants' narrative accounts presented in Chapters Five, Six and Seven. I integrate the major themes with the theories and concepts that proved relevant to exploring the three guiding research questions.

Significant Findings

Accessing Integration Services for Newcomers

My interpretations revealed that participants had a positive impression of the different tools that were available to them to find jobs that were relevant to their experience. This certainly played a role in their adaptation and integration. For most participants, getting established in their professional fields implied the adoption of a necessary passive role when entering the job market after arriving in Quebec. While participants had migrated with the clear idea that this short period of adjustment, of weeks or months, was necessary to get familiar with the different characteristics of the local labour market as well as with the language and accent of French as spoken in Quebec, findings indicate the limited effectiveness of current integration services

available for newly arrived immigrants. This study raises questions about the public resources and tools available to prepare immigrants to successfully integrate into Quebec. Participating on frequent meetings with job agents, attending several labour-related workshops, joining French courses offered by the Quebec government and/or attending job fairs did not respond, except at a limited level, to the initial challenges participants faced during their adaptation. Put differently, the support and services offered to newcomers to boost their settlement and integration did not match the needs of most participants.

Furthermore, echoing findings noted in Chapter Two, Context and Literature Review, enrollment in the francization courses did not guarantee learners the necessary language autonomy to compete with other French native speaker job applicants, immigrants and French Quebecers included (Ghosh et al., 2021). Findings of this study report that the design of the Quebec government's main linguistic integration program appeared inadequate to help participants compete in the labour market of Montreal. While participants appreciated the important subsidy that they received as full-time students which helped them cover living costs, the functional linguistic and communicational levels acquired after a mere average six months of study together with the slow pace of the class sessions did not adequately support their requirements to raise their proficiency in the language. In this sense, findings strongly suggest the pressing need to re-design the effectiveness of part- and full-time francization courses so that these could better ensure a more adequate instruction of the French language among new allophone immigrants. Moreover, participants clearly stated their interest in becoming not only proficient enough to work in the official language but to demonstrate appropriate knowledge of it in order to practice their profession, regulated or not, in Quebec. Importantly, adjustments to the

francization program can help tackle the racial divisions among majority and minority groups in employment in the province.

Discrimination of Latin American Human Capital

The Context and Literature Review of the study has shown the critical need of Quebec for skilled and non-skilled immigrant workers in all the regions of the province to join the labour force and help address the current labour shortage and boost demographic growth. Although the current provincial administration opted to reduce the flow of newcomers to the province in the name of securing an adequate integration of newcomers to the province, authorities re-evaluated and announced the increase of immigration thresholds of immigrant workers, specifically temporary foreign workers. Yet, findings of this study echoed other ones carried out in Canada (Galabuzzi, 2006; Henry et al., 2010; Lowe, 2007; Niyubahwe et al., 2013; Paz, 2008; Satzewich, 2011) and in Quebec (Allen, 2006; Armony, 2014; Armony, 2015a; Ghosh & Abdi, 2013; Potvin, 2010) underlining the need for greater work on the part of decision makers to support the integration of immigrants, particularly that of visible minority immigrants. In this study, I build on postcolonial concepts and report that marginalization has not only been an inherent part of the Canadian and Quebec history but also of the large social order that relegated and continues to relegate its members from ethnic groups. Specifically, Bhabha's postcolonial perspectives helped me understand the forces behind immigration administration in Quebec as well as of the role that the marginalized Latin American immigrant group have played. This is noteworthy especially regarding the fact that many participants, who were selected by Quebec according to its own immigration criteria, had to occupy underqualified and low-paid jobs that resulted in their socio-economic marginalization or *othering*. This is most clearly demonstrated

in a number of reports by DesRoches (2014); Djuikom (2019); Gyulai (2019); Haider (2013); *Institut du Québec* (2017); Lacroix, et al. (2017), and Paquet (2012).

In addition, whiteness as privilege and power helped me conceptualize the normative prejudice against educated Latin American immigrants in Quebec. More precisely, how and to what extent existing power structures perpetuate the ethnic discrimination of this immigrant group in the province's job market. Indeed, most interviewees pointed out prejudice, which was not necessarily intentional or overt, and lack of knowledge among employers as the main reasons for their reluctance and refusal to appreciate the foreign education, professional experience, and language skills of recent immigrant professionals from minority groups. These findings demonstrate how the unequal distribution of professional jobs in Quebec, which places skilled immigrants from racialized groups in disadvantaged positions, is an active practice in systemic discrimination.

Consistent with Sharma's conceptualization of the "Postcolonial New World Order", the findings of this study imply that the practices and protectionist rhetoric of Quebec authorities have privileged nationals (or natives) over immigrants from minority populations. Lacking a Canadian experience in their résumés was the initial systemic barrier participants found to successfully transition within their respective professional fields. Mindful of this discrimination and weary of applying for employment at their level of qualification without receiving a positive response and living on a tight budget, participants had adjusted their pre-migration expectations to life in Quebec and decided to take different paths to promote their social mobility. The first group of seven participants felt forced to take survival jobs mainly through placement agencies offering precarious and unstable temporary contracts. It is important to clarify that while most of these participants worked in essential service jobs for few months during the first year in

Quebec, others had to do survival jobs for extended periods of time or periodically, mainly filling maternity and employee sick leaves and work overflow. Interestingly, these job sites, as reported by three participants of this group, were a meeting point for many other skilled immigrants from Latin American, African, and Asian countries who were going through the same daunting economic circumstances while searching for a job deserving of their education and experience, as consistent with previous studies (Austin, 2013; DesRoches, 2014; Paquet, 2012).

A second group of ten participants opted for post-migration education as a sound strategy to “better” match the local labour market needs and thus secure their employability. Finding that their credentials were negatively evaluated, participants were convinced that only a degree from a Canadian institution could portray them as educated. Some of these participants went back to school, at either French or English institutions, to obtain a master or a PhD degree in their professional fields. Other participants reoriented their career goals and pursued studies at the *CÉGEP*/college or university level, even if they already had a similar degree from their native country. A third group of four participants aimed to work within their original professional fields but targeted positions where they were overqualified as a strategy to gain Canadian experience and subsequently applied for the positions that matched their qualifications. Some participants even re-worked their résumés to appear as less qualified, and in the process, also settled for lower starting salaries. This certainly sheds light on findings of the barriers to equal employment opportunity for visible minorities (Gyulai, 2019; Haider, 2013; Loewen, 2020).

While there were five participants who denied that discriminatory barriers existed against Latin American immigrants, nine (of the fourteen) participants did not. This group of participants believed that the unemployment, overqualification and underutilization of their foreign acquired credentials were linked to the assumptions, prejudices, and discrimination from employers in

large companies, human resource managers and possibly small business owners who tended to systemically overlook racialized immigrants. The non-recognition of immigrants' credentials, compared to those of native-born Quebecers, portrays labour market decision-makers as agents of oppression that create inequalities in the Latin American community. In line with the global neoliberal capitalism, Sharma's work points out the treatment of the abilities of racialized immigrants as a cheap commodity (2020) that is always available in the workforce and that helps maintain the capitalist system. Furthermore, Razack (2008) exposes the effects of capitalism in the abstraction of the racial character of labour to create value. In other words, the emphasis of "economic" over the "human" attributes of skilled immigrants from Latin America in Quebec indicate the neoliberal capital notion of individual enterprise in which they are no longer appreciated as a qualified form of human capital but as a form of capital itself. Thus, this objectification and racialization of their abilities expose the way a rejected form of capital is neutralized by Whiteness. Consequently, the Quebec society "appears" to be built on a subjective or false meritocracy in which many of its educated members from the Latin American community lack the necessary knowledge and skills to find jobs in their areas of expertise and therefore are mainly underemployed or unemployed.

As previously mentioned, there is a difference among participants' perspectives regarding the treatment Latin American immigrants receive in Montreal. As will be described below, there are nuances in the findings that indicate that some light-skinned participants as well as dark-skinned participants deny acts of structural racism in the province.

Denial of Facing Discrimination

It is important to underline that all participants come from capital cities or important urban centres of Latin America where marginalization practices are socially and historically

pervasive. Physical appearance, such as skin pigmentation, is directly associated with social and economic mobility in Latin American countries. Nevertheless, while only five participants had a light skin complexion, all 14 participants had established positions of social privilege in their home countries that allowed them to obtain bachelor's degrees, postgraduate degrees, foreign languages skills and long professional experience in their respective fields before migration. Not less important are the pre-migration financial resources participants needed to have to support their new lives in the high-income economy of Canada. Consideration also should be given to these traits that are not common for the average Latin American citizen given the historical and excessive inequality in the region.

The most important finding that emerged from the stories of these five participants is the normalization of discriminatory acts towards minority group immigrants. Three participants of darker shades together with other two (of the five) participants who had light complexions contradicted the claim of the rest of participants on the marginalization that university-educated recent immigrants from Latin America experience in the city of Montreal. In effect, this small group of participants appeared doubtful of the fact that French Quebec dominant group perpetuates marginalization against immigrants from racialized countries like theirs. Consistent with the heterogeneity of the Latin American community in Quebec, I suggest that there is some evidence that some light-skinned Latin American skilled immigrants tend to normalize the effects of systemic racism which they witnessed in their home countries. But these findings mask the internalized beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours that stem from living in oppressive societies. Hence, a link can be established between the normalization of issues related to racism and exclusion against poor and dark-skinned citizens in Latin American societies and the act of

dismissing the obstacles hindering professional integration of their Latin American peers in the Quebec labour market.

The view in this heterogeneous group of participants is explained by the CRT analytical tool of intersectionality. It illustrates how different conditions and complexities of life cannot be understood by the analysis of a specific focus-lens but by the analysis of several factors that are intertwined and influence each other (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2016). With this in mind, skin colour is not the only mechanism of social division that helps explain the different perspectives within the five members of this subgroup of the Latin American immigrant community in Montreal. Instead, other factors, such as pre and postmigration socioeconomic status, the amount of educational/work experience acquired in Quebec, ability to establish a network of connections intersect. Findings indicate that Lorena, Pedro, Patricio, and Thiago succeeded in their professions in Quebec, with two of them working in their respective fields and two in their new chosen fields. Further, two of them obtained diplomas or completed graduate degree programs in local institutions and two of them are registered in their respective professional orders in Quebec. In this sense, socioeconomic status in Quebec is likely to be the underlying factor that positions their different views on structural discrimination, compared to those of the other nine participants. This contrasts starkly with the case for Rodrigo, who experienced an education–occupation mismatch. Building on Bhabha’s concepts of mimicry, my analysis suggests that the new Quebec order could gradually adjust their ideas of being *skilled* through a process of negotiation that make themselves appear as more like skilled French Quebecers, a finding also identified by Thomson and Jones (2015) in their study of immigrant accountants in Canada. Interestingly, the new plural view of identity of *all* participants did not include “feeling a Quebecer” to describe themselves, as Chapter Seven reveals.

Be as it may, Lorena, Pedro, Patricio, Thiago, and Rodrigo tended to place the causes for inequality among skilled Latin American immigrants in Montreal exclusively on their voluntary inability to professionally integrate into the local labour market rather than on structural ones (Haque & Patrick, 2015). For them, only having professional tools (acquired pre and/or migration), such as education credentials, French (and English) language skills and networking skills are sufficient requirements to compete in Montreal's labour market. Such a perspective is explained by neoliberalism, as underlined by Zamudio et al., (2011) in their description of the idea of meritocracy as inseparable from the neoliberal framework. I therefore argue that the adoption of the concept of the *ideal immigrant* on the part of some participants shows how the concept of equality holds conflicting meanings within the group of Latin American skilled immigrants. Another possible explanation of this perspective is that two of them are light-skinned individuals who cannot be explicitly identified or labelled as immigrants from an ethnocultural group in Montreal. They are, instead, likely to be labelled as individuals possessing some national membership status therefore it can be assumed that they felt treated as citizens from the majority group of white French-speaking *Québécois*. In other words, building on the acquisition of this informal citizenship or *nationalism*, as described in Sharma's analysis, I may point out that the possible adoption of a civic nationalism, in accordance with Barrington (2009), reflects this as an element to reach psychological stability and coexist in the ethnocultural nationalist order of Quebec, although their identity nationalism did not reflect such change, as Chapter Seven indicates.

This division on the perception of the causes of socioeconomic inequality within participants, as eloquently put by Thobani (2007), is also consistent with neoliberal concepts of citizenship. Indeed, the resistance of some participants to acknowledge themselves as privileged

members in the Quebec society explains their tendency to not empathize with their marginalized peers but to embrace a more comfortable new “sense of membership” of ethnicity and social class in Montreal. While it is important to say that having a limited exposure to unfair or unequal treatment in the city gives this small group of participants a rather arguable legitimacy to their personal stance on this matter, it is curious, however, that the experiences of discrimination of their Latin American peers in the province did not exacerbate any criticism on them.

Part of the problem can be chalked up to the possibility that those participants simply avoid acknowledging and/or knowing racial inequality and discrimination against their ethnic peers, as it is being constructed in Canada. This is clearly explained in Bhabha’s idea of mimicry in which subordinated minority groups adopt colonial values and behaviours. More specifically, Bhabha’s analysis of nation helps explain how some members of the Latin American minority group, which is subjected to racism and marginalization in Quebec, play an important role, either consciously or unconsciously, in the reproduction of the post-colonial narrative of difference and *otherness* in the province. In this case, *otherness* towards their own ethnic peers maintains the relations between the state and its alienated members (Butt, 2012).

Recognizing that, it is noteworthy to mention that it is natural to develop an initial fear to see their old social statuses of privilege switched to that of unprivileged *othered* residents in the French Quebec dominant society. Certainly, since the time of application for permanent residence to Quebec, Latin American immigrants start building the idea that a colour-blind and merit-based host society will become the centre of their success where professional opportunities will allow them to have a much higher standard of living than the one, they used to have, or used to see, in Latin America. For some immigrants, no matter what their shade, such status is undoubtedly not only worth maintaining but also defending from any criticism related to unequal

public relations pointed out in academic and press publications (DesRoches, 2014; Djuikom, 2019; Gyulai, 2019; Haider, 2013; Hira-Friesen, 2018; Lacroix et al., 2017; Paquet, 2012; Valiante, 2016). It can be inferred from this that recognition of systemic racism by immigrants can result in a natural fear to be stigmatized and subsequent anguish related to feelings of being classified as *othered*.

The Path of Outmigration

As results show, participants of the study took different paths to accomplish their career goals in Montreal's labour market. Yet, for four participants, specifically a married couple and a common-law couple without any children, outmigration became their foremost choice in their search for quality of life. In effect, congruent with different studies on interprovincial migration (Hira-Friesen, 2018; *Institut du Québec*, 2018; IRIS, 2016), four interviewees opted to leave Quebec for the provinces of Alberta and Ontario, respectively, where their education and experience could be evaluated on a level playing field and reasonably result in, at least, equal earnings to those of their counterparts with similar qualifications. Importantly, although there are instances of discrimination in all Canadian provinces, CRT helps me understand how the intersectionality between the constant language issue in Quebec and race, ethnicity, skin colour, and accent aggravate issues of discrimination and marginalization against newcomers in the province.

It should be mentioned that the decision of settling in other Canadian provinces was not an impulsive decision. The married couple left after one of them received a job in his professional field for the first time after two years. The second couple, however, left after eight years following their plan to settle out of the province because the conditions in Montreal had not been conducive for their career aspirations. Indeed, after exhausting means of integration through

the three paths mentioned before, this group of four participants felt that leaving Montreal was their only viable option.

The crucial aspect here then is not the inability, limited experience, unwillingness to adapt to a different Quebec work system, or their negative attitude to accept Quebec's structural problems, which are also largely found in Latin American societies. Aspects like speaking the two official languages (in effect being trilingual), utilizing government-funded settlement services, studying francization, being proactive job seekers, getting a graduate diploma from a local university, and doing paid internships are some of the traits on this group of participants. Leaving Quebec, due to marginalization and discrimination in the labour market, for new provinces which participants distinctively described as more immigrant-friendly outlines their struggles to integrate in the province. What strikes the researcher is the fact that at least three of the four participants had a job in the chosen professional field and met the "Quebec experience requirements" (student internships jobs, Canadian work experience, knowledge of the official languages) at the moment of leaving Quebec. One of the couples even owned an apartment and the two of them had a car, which not only points out their good Canadian credit history but also their initial commitment to living *in* the province.

In this context, through the helpful use of narrative inquiry, the present study reflects the way Latin American immigrants made sense of their experiences of adaptation and eventual integration in Quebec. The narratives of experiences of participants during the initial stage of their settlement, their economic integration trajectories as well as their tools to get professionally integrated aim to help grasp (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017) what it is to be a skilled allophone in Quebec.

Indeed, this study intends to defend the narratives of the ignored racialized Latin American group and challenge the “double consciousness” of the Quebec settler colonialism. Data analysis indicates that the historic defensive stance of Quebec provincial authorities against allegation of systemic discrimination, their dismissal of the claims from numerous community leaders, immigration scholars and experts flagging the need to act against the disproportionately negative economic and social outcomes of ethnic minority groups in the province indicate practices of settler colonialism in Quebec. As consistent with Haque and Patrick (2015) and Day (2016), findings demonstrate that the effects of systemic racism in hiring results in Quebec’s losing out on the international talent of skilled individuals from visible minority groups. Indeed, the findings of this study imply that the limited political action addressing systemic issues that prevent educated individuals who have a darker skin colour, speak French with a thick accent or simply are not of Quebec origin from playing a role in contributing to alleviate Quebec’s economic and financial situation only responds to the “flaws” of neoliberal political strategies that ignore the multicultural, multi-ethnic, multilingual world in which we live. Accordingly, the job vacancies that are “expected to be filled” by newcomers, skilled and non-skilled ones, will continue being a critical limitation for the province’s economic growth. Further complicating matters, the ongoing labour shortages that directly affect every citizen through, for instance, a decrease of benefits from social services and the decline of standard of living, have become more severe due to the ongoing historic economic and public health crisis in the province. Sectors such as construction, accommodation and food services, arts, entertainment and recreation, and mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction have been negatively impacted by the world pandemic. This study, therefore, raises questions on the ability of Quebec authorities to

adequately combat the economic divisions between highly educated immigrants from racialized countries and French Quebecers to address the post pandemic demographic pressures.

Taken jointly, to the first guiding question, (a) what ways and to what extent do skilled Latin American immigrants to Quebec perceive that they confront situations of marginalization and exclusion in the labour market? and (b) how have these influenced their decisions towards remaining in the province of Quebec? It has become apparent that, at least for most participants, the persistent forms of discrimination towards them have pushed them to rely on their own motivation and, to a lesser degree, on the social network of their own community members to get professionally integrated in the unwelcome Quebec labour market. In the case of four participants, the dissatisfaction in facing enormous obstacles led them to give up on Quebec and turn to societies that have traditionally been more welcoming to non-francophones.

Integration into Quebec

My interpretations revealed that most participants who were living in Quebec at the time of the interview had a positive impression of their experiences in Quebec. While most participants are critical of the systemic barriers that have kept them from filling labour shortages, data suggests that their process of integration is positive. Findings indicate that the issues behind the obstacles to validate participants credentials detailed in this research, such as the need to evaluate the efficacy of government-funded programs and services supporting new immigrants, did not damage their positive perspective of their transition from outsiders to insiders in Quebec society. It became apparent that, at least for these participants, personal responsibility was directly correlated with their perception of integration, rather than a consequence of the effective support from provincial authorities. In other words, skilled Latin American immigrants did not perceive that the different steps that needed to be taken for getting integrated was a two-way

process but the result of only immigrant individual efforts regardless of the obstacles encountered.

The first aspect refers to making a living from working (or not working) in their professional field which allowed them, in general terms, to match the earnings of their Quebec-born peers. Moreover, feeling comfortable speaking the official language in Quebec was another critical factor for participants' positive perception of their integration. Data highlight that workplaces, or study centres became the most important sites for learning and or improving French communicational skills as participants credited them for the real-life practice acquired daily. While all participants required a period of adaptation to the French language and accent in Montreal, half of the participants of the study benefitted from having some proficiency of the French language acquired prior to migration, which allowed them an easier time once they had begun their new job opportunity. Less significance was given to the skills developed in the publicly funded francization program, the foundation of Quebec's integration policy, where the average participant spent months as full-time students. Importantly, the period of adjustment to the official language that led participants to achieve a sense of linguistic integration was not linear as it depended on the varied levels of French with which they arrived in the province as well as on the postmigration types of communication (written, oral) and level of exposure to regular activities (such as frequency of job meetings, teamwork/individual work, part/full time status as students, etc.) they accumulated.

Added to this, because nine participants of the study were also skilled in English, being able to work in the *de facto* bilingual, if not trilingual, city of Montreal greatly added to their sense of integration to the local labour force. Particularly significant is the fact that participants' perception of successful integration did not imply a linguistic or cultural assimilation to Quebec,

that is the adoption of the official language while reducing the maintenance of their first language and their Latin American and national cultural identity. Quite the contrary, an additional factor that constructs the perception of feeling integrated to Quebec is participants' strong identification with their own ethnic culture. This was clearly demonstrated through the use of their first language at home, Spanish or Portuguese, the celebration of social and cultural gatherings, which maintains their traditions and cultures, and the strengthening of family ties with direct relatives living abroad through social media and frequent visits or welcoming them in Quebec. It should be noted that in the case of parent participant, Latin American cultural cues are particularly appreciated in their daily encouragement of the use of their mother tongues with their children not only as an essential trait of their identity but as a practice towards the construction of trilingualism (French, English and their first language) from which they could benefit in their future educational or work careers. Nurturing meaningful connections to their families living abroad, as they did not have Spanish/Portuguese speaking relatives in the city, was an additional identity cue participant parents highlighted.

The last factor describing this argument refers to the high satisfaction of participant parents for the education and life quality their children receive in Quebec. Knowing that their children were building a future with better socioeconomic prospects has a great relevance to their perception of integration. Equally important is their full participation in Quebec society despite their identification of critical barriers to the successful integration of minority group members, and the cultural difference and distance they find with the *Québécois* broader community which results in their identification with Canada rather than with Quebec.

In line with the discussed findings, I address the second guiding question: Are the integration experiences of skilled Latin American immigrants who have left Quebec for another

Canadian province different from those immigrants who have not left the province? by arguing that the contentious and discriminatory obstacles to the professional success of most participants indicate that there are less favourable conditions to achieve a positive integration in Quebec than in the two provinces where four participants re-settled. The literature corroborates the finding (Gyulai, 2019; Lacroix et al., 2017; Valiante, 2019). These participants, however, made clear that despite the hurdles they faced upon arrival in Quebec, they were proud of building a positive mindset as a strategy to manage obstacles. This certainly broadens general knowledge about the distinctiveness of the Latin American immigrant integration experience in Quebec.

Impact of Post Migration Changes in Couples. In discussing the way Latin American immigrants become integrated to society, the findings in this study imply that the various changes that rapidly occurred during the settlement phase emotionally and physically impacted the lives of some individuals, couples and families. Two female participants had divorced before the first year in Canada as a result of changes directly associated with gender roles, gender relations and marital conflict. In the case of Lorena, such conflict is linked to the increase in her economic role of woman and the decline of the status of her husband as “the breadwinner”, as acknowledged by Hyman et al. (2008) in their study of Ethiopian Immigrants in Toronto. Indeed, the shift in power dynamics in the marital status of Lorena led to her empowerment to make the sharp decision of divorcing the father of her school-aged child. On the other hand, the end of the marriage of Lucia is related to the cultural shock, social isolation, and inability to communicate in French. Her complete dependency on her husband who, unlike his wife, was highly comfortable studying the francization program and working (Morrison et al., 1999) seems to be a critical factor to be considered in this finding. Except for the work by Ataca and Berry (2002), little research has examined the impact of post-migration change on the couple unit.

Building a Strong Attitude

While navigating the Quebec society and experiencing and/or witnessing the preferences of Quebec's majority Francophone society, participants started to question the provincial immigrant-friendly rhetoric of authorities as they appeared to be highly incongruent with the ineffective support available to them. As described in the theme "This is Us!", attitude and resilience has played a central role for all participants. Having in mind that interviewees chose to migrate to Canada and settle in Quebec fully convinced that their human capital acquired abroad would rapidly fit the egalitarian welcoming society, it is therefore understandable that being exposed to systemic racist practices could potentially have a negative impact on mental wellbeing. Findings suggest, however, that such practices were positively confronted with participants' construction of a healthy attitude as a tool for defense mechanism and survival. This is also true for interviewees who left Quebec. From this perspective, relativizing the ongoing effects of systemic discrimination in their integration and embracing the benefits of migration appeared to be the attitude chosen to deal with difficult situations. This finding also revealed that the celebration of social gatherings and cultural community events, their strong connection with their countries of origin through the use of their first language or the constant interaction with relatives living abroad allowed participants to ignore entrenched issues of marginalization against cultural groups in the hope of living in a society that would eventually recognize them as equal members of Quebec society.

Recommendations

The data suggest the strong drive of participants to provide support to future newcomers through recommendations. In the hope of helping skip, or at least diminish, the effects of the barriers to successfully use their skills, education and professional experience in Montreal's

labour force, participants suggested that Latin American newcomers develop individual strategies to accelerate their process of integration and not only relying on government-funded immigrant support services. The following are some recommendations that come out of the study and include some suggestions made during their conversations.

1. New immigrants should try to do volunteer work in areas related to their professional field while studying the francization course to quickly improve their language skills and accelerate learning of the local target market and building a professional network.
2. Pay attention to the knowledge, extended workplace experience and advice from other Latin American skilled immigrants who have been in Montreal longer so as to better navigate the structural challenges to immigrant employment.
3. Immigrants need to build a positive mindset in approaching the possible challenges to get professionally integrated in a more productive way.

Perhaps most important, participants reflected on the critical role of the Quebec government to provide better opportunities to immigrants from minority groups and prevent the demographic and economic consequences of interprovincial migration. Predictably, they declared that recognizing that systemic barriers to equal opportunities in Quebec exist is of considerable importance. Below are some recommendations for immigration policymakers:

1. Reduce the screening out of visible minority immigrants by strengthening anti-discriminatory regulations and codes for companies that would penalize decision makers who show employment-related prejudice and discrimination.
2. Initiate a solid campaign of intercultural awareness among different groups, such as professional orders and economic groups, explaining the contribution of immigrants to receiving societies.

3. Raise consciousness of decision makers, such as business owners, employers groups, and/or human resource managers on the concept and effects of systemic racism through in-service- workshops.
4. Promote understanding of the value of international experience of immigrant professionals in helping companies reach and develop new markets and cross-cultural communication skills among their employees.
5. Expand employment equity programs that, for instance, mandate all employers to hire a more representative percentage of skilled visible minority immigrants in their companies.
6. Award subsidies to enterprises offering internships to minority group immigrants as a strategy to reduce employers' fear of the costs of having to train newcomers.
7. Increase the availability of the francization courses and making them more accessible (at workplaces, schools, etc.) to university-educated recent immigrants so that they increase their exposure to real-life conversations.
8. Offer specialized courses adapted to the communication requirements of those learners holding regulated professions, such as engineering, architecture, health care (medicine) and teaching.
9. Increase financial assistance for francization learners based on changing personal situations (income, eligible expenses, family situation) as a strategy to reduce the number of students leaving the program early to find full-time jobs.

Hearing their Voices

Understanding the double discourses from the Quebec government which selects Latin American professionals and yet prevents them (and other racialized immigrant groups) from

economically integrating is the motivation behind this study. It is precisely the manner in which historic experiences of exclusion and exploitation of immigrants of colour in Quebec (and Canada) inform patriarchal political values of the Quebec nation that I argue that the ongoing presence of a settler colonial society has built the imaginary of a homogenous Quebec citizenship (or cultural belonging) and misrecognizes the long-time heterogeneity of its society. What I mainly draw from critical race, post/colonial theories and neoliberal concepts is the substantial need for maintaining the Quebec ethnonationalism over their need for highly educated immigrants to contribute with the enhancement of the local economy. It becomes apparent that the objective of accelerating the growth of the economy, which has been deepened through unmet labor demand, underemployment, or even outmigration, does not have an effect in the assimilation of racialized groups in Quebec. The most compelling evidence is seen through the Quebec ethno-nationalist discourses identified in capitalist immigration policies that normalize and reinforce the marginalization and exclusion of Latin American immigrants, temporary farm workers and skilled immigrants included. Other examples of this are seen in the political power against consultation on systemic discrimination, and immigration control strategies that, for instance, measure potential immigrants' ability to match French Quebecers' culture and identity through a values test (Calderon Moya, 2021, pp. 51-52).

This research has highlighted the critical need for policymakers to turn their focus on the review of strategies for better integrating newcomers to Quebec. To this end, recognizing and addressing the roots of racism and systemic discrimination in the workforce are undoubtedly central. Importantly, such recognition involves dismantling the negative impact of policies such as Bill 101 and Bill 21 that protect the values of the Quebec national culture against the economic prospects of immigrants from racialized countries (Calderon Moya, 2021, p. 52).

Hearing the *voices* of Latin American immigrants using narrative inquiry helped this study contribute to the limited scholarly work that acknowledges systemic practices against this cultural group in Canada. Furthermore, having participants use photographs and share their stories to represent the strengths and concerns of their community in Montreal not only enabled them to critically reflect and decolonize discriminatory attitudes against them, it could also raise awareness of policymakers. Lastly, through creating a safe space for the members of this important group in Quebec, it is my hope that this study results in the creation of an initial platform for the empowerment of ethnic groups in the province.

Directions For Future Research

Given the growing number of Latin American immigrants in Quebec, particularly in the city of Montreal, in addition to the critical importance of skilled migration for the economic growth of Quebec, more research focused on the lived experiences of adult immigrants is needed. Investigating the specific contexts of the different minority groups during pre-migration and post-migration phases is necessary to gain a deeper perspective of the specific needs that could be overseen and require immediate support from authorities. In this sense, it would be highly important to learn about the specific effects of systemic discrimination against racialized skilled immigrants on the emotional and mental wellbeing and the stability in the lives of newly arrived couples, with and without children. While findings of this study suggest that the change of gender roles and gender relations that occurred postmigration are exacerbated during the adaptation phase, which is the first year in the new receiving society, more research is needed to illustrate the causes for ongoing marital conflicts that led two of the female participants to get a divorce few months after their arrival.

In addition, considering that most participants had trouble finding a job commensurate with their qualifications and experience and yet some of them downplayed clear acts of

discrimination and exploitation against immigrants from their own ethnic group, I strongly suggest the need for a follow up study on these contradictory perceptions. I believe that an exhaustive analysis of the lived experiences of qualified Latin American immigrants in Montreal can further illustrate the additional nuances of their statements. More specifically, an investigation to learn how much the internalization of the bases of discrimination in immigrants of Latin American origin acquired, consciously or unconsciously, when growing up is related with their attitudes towards issues of marginalization found in the receiving society.

Lastly, it would be very important to learn about the perspectives of business owners, employers' groups, and/or human resource managers, from the main industries of employment in Montreal about the profile of job candidates and workers from visible minority groups, specifically skilled immigrants from Latin American countries. Analyzing the insights of recruiters on systemic discrimination in the local labour force and comparing these to those of participants of this study would contribute to better understanding the contentious issues in which labour shortages and discrimination play part in the province.

Conclusion

The goal of my study was to explore the integration experiences of 14 skilled Latin American immigrants related to their education and employment in Quebec to understand how perceived systemic discrimination could influence their attitudes towards out-migration. Through the use of narrative inquiry, I was able to answer my research questions and reach an understanding of factors that affect immigrant integration in Quebec in terms of employment as well as the policies and strategies to improve the relations between new immigrants and the Quebec society at large. The richness in the descriptions of the participants' perspectives adds qualitative and empirical insights to the existing body of literature on skilled Latin American

immigrants in Quebec, racialized minority groups, integration services for immigrants, the labour market on Montreal and sense of belonging and identity. This research study provides policy makers, academics, sociologists, and other immigration specialists with information coming from important stakeholders regarding the utilization or underutilization of their human capital. I hope that this study facilitates the economic integration of foreign educated Latin Americans and ensures the stronger economic growth of the province. Lastly, I believe that findings from this study can provide up-to-date information that might be applicable to different racialized groups in the province.

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APPENDIX A
RECRUITMENT SCRIPT FOR CONTACTING REFERRALS

1. Hello _____ (name).

2. I am about to start doing a research on skilled Latin American immigrants in Quebec.

I needed to talk with you about it. Do you have a minute?

I am currently looking for participants and I thought that maybe you can help me on my search.

Will you be interested in knowing about it?

(If yes)

3. I am currently looking for participants who are engaged with local Latin American communities, cultural community groups and/or community associations as leaders, participants who live in cities of Quebec.

4. I would very much appreciate if you could let people meeting the described background of my research project know of it in case they become interested in it.

(If yes)

5. I could send you the flier/invitation to participate on it via email if you would like. This includes my personal email address and phone number to be contacted by potential candidates.

(If no)

6. I completely understand. I'm just trying to network with as many people as possible right now.

I wonder if you would happen to know of someone who will be willing to disseminate the invitation for voluntary participation in my research regarding the Latin American minority group in Quebec? / Who do you know who fits that profile?

APPENDIX B: INVITATION FOR VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Are you:

- a Quebec-selected skilled worker from any Latin American country?
- have you arrived in Quebec within the last 10 years?
- interested in sharing your integration experiences related to your education and employment in Quebec?

Share stories about your professional experiences in Quebec with a researcher from McGill University! I am conducting a study about the Issues related to Interprovincial Migration in Quebec: A Latin American Perspective Issues related to the integration of skilled Immigrants in Quebec: A Latin American perspective and I would like to talk to you about your work experiences in order to identify and situate the factors that could affect the integration of Latin American immigrant professionals in Quebec.

We are looking for 18 participants, men or women, over 30 years of age.

If you are interested and would like to participate, you will be asked to complete a survey questionnaire to determine your eligibility. If eligible, there are two main components of the study:

- 1) A 60-90-minute interview and
- 2) a photo-voice project (45 minutes)

If you know of anyone else who fits the criteria above and might be interested, please feel free to pass along this information!

With your support, a broader understanding of the specific challenges faced by the Latin American group can be made as well as an assessment of the different ways of effectively meeting their professional needs. Additionally, you may benefit from this experience by reflecting about your attitudes towards the process of integration of skilled immigrants in Quebec.

To thank you for your participation, you will receive up to \$20 in the form of cash.

Would you like to know more?

Please feel free to email milagros.calderonmoya@mail.mcgill.ca
or call (514) 546-7579

I look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,

Milagros Calderón Moya

PhD candidate

Department of Integrated Studies in Education

McGill University

Supervisor: Professor Ratna Ghosh

ratna.ghosh@mcgill.ca

REB file # 440-0419

APPENDIX C: CONSENT FORM TO PARTICIPATE IN A SURVEY

Date: 2019 03 12

Study Name: Issues related to Interprovincial Migration in Quebec: A Latin American Perspective

Researcher: Milagros Calderón Moya, PhD candidate,
milagros.calderonmoya@mail.mcgill.ca
Campus Address: 3700 McTavish Street, Montreal, Quebec, H3A 1Y2
McGill - University, Faculty of Education, Department of Integrated
Studies in Education

Supervisor: Professor Ratna Ghosh, ratna.ghosh@mcgill.ca (514-398-4527)

This research is being undertaken as part of a dissertation to fulfill the requirements of the Doctorate in Educational Studies from McGill University. I am conducting a qualitative research study on the integration of Latin American skilled immigrants into the Quebec labour market. The study design entails, firstly, to hold a demographic survey form with individuals (over 30 years of age) in order to select participants and determine their eligibility.

You were selected as a potential participant because you have identified yourself as a Quebec-selected skilled worker of Latin American origin; are over 30 years of age; and have responded to calls for participants needed for this study. I would like to invite you to participate in this study. You will be asked to complete a brief demographic survey form electronically. Surveys will verify eligibility for participation as well as provide an overview of the pertinent demographic and contextual information such as age, sex, and, nationality, length of work experience in Quebec. Data from the completed surveys will be summarized and used to determine the participants who meet the criteria of the study. Data of those people who are not deemed of interest for the interviews will not be included in the study and thus they will be destroyed.

All data generated for this study will remain confidential to the fullest extent possible. Other than myself, my supervisor, Professor Ratna Ghosh, will have access to the data for ongoing supervisory meetings. There will be no information that identifies you personally appearing in the dissertation.

You will benefit from the research by reflecting about your attitudes towards the process of integration of skilled immigrants in Quebec. In addition, it will allow you as a member of the Latin American community to show how you view your community.

Your participation in the study is completely voluntary, and you are under no obligation to agree to complete the survey form. A decision not to volunteer will not influence the nature of the ongoing relationship the participant has with the researcher and/or the nature of their relationship with McGill University either now, or in the future.

You can withdraw from the study at any time or decline to answer questions for any reason. The decision to terminate participation on any grounds will not affect any relationships with the researcher or McGill University. If you decide to withdraw from the study, all data generated as a consequence of your participation shall be destroyed immediately.

If you have any questions about my research in general or about your role in the study, please contact me or my supervisor:

Principal Researcher: Milagros Calderón Moya
milagros.calderonmoya@mail.mcgill.ca / (514) 546-7579

Supervisor: Professor Ratna Ghosh
ratna.ghosh@mcgill.ca / (514) 398-4527

This research study has been reviewed and approved for compliance to research ethics protocols by the Research Ethics Board (REB-II) of McGill University. Should you have any general questions, please contact the Department of Integrated Studies in Education office at (514) 398-4525. Should you have any ethical concerns regarding the research, you may contact Lynda McNeil, the Manager of the REB-II for McGill University, at (514) 398-6831.

Thank-you for agreeing to take part in this study.

CONSENT

Please sign below if you have read the above information and consent to participate in this study. Agreeing to participate in this study does not waive any of your rights or release the researchers from their responsibilities. A copy of this consent form will be given to you and the researcher will keep a copy.

I agree that the data resulted from my participation in this study to be used in related future studies.
Y or N

Participant's name: (please print) _____

Participant's signature: _____

Date : _____

REB file # 440-0419

APPENDIX D: SURVEY

This survey is part of the research project entitled: “Issues related to Interprovincial Migration in Quebec: A Latin American Perspective”.

Name: first name last name

Date of birth: month/day/year

Place of birth:

Nationality:

Arrival date in Quebec: month/day/year

Did you arrive in Canada as a skilled worker selected by the province of Quebec? Yes / No

Did you come to Canada with your family? Yes / No

If so, who did you come with?

Profession acquired in country of origin:

Length of professional experience acquired in country of origin:

Language proficiency	Read	Write	Speak	Comprehend aurally
English	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
French	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Other	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Have you initiated the process of recognition of your foreign obtained professional credentials? Yes / No

Have you completed the process of recognition of your foreign obtained professional credentials? Yes / No

If any of your two previous answers is negative, please specify the reasons for this:

Current occupation:

Length of experience acquired in Quebec:

Did / Do you pursue any formal higher education or training in Quebec?

Yes / No

If yes, please specify the institution attended, program/specialization, years attended, and the designation received or to be received:

Have you ever lived anywhere in Canada before or after arriving in Quebec?

Yes / No

If yes, please specify where and the reasons for it:

Do you intend to stay in Quebec?

Yes / No

If not, please specify the reasons for this:

How would you rate your professional achievement in Quebec?

Very good

good

okay

not very good

How would rate your general feelings of satisfaction with being in Quebec?

☐ Very good ☐ good ☐ okay ☐ not very good

How would rate your general feelings of satisfaction with being in Canada?

☐ Very good ☐ good ☐ okay ☐ not very good

APPENDIX E
CONSENT FORM TO PARTICIPATE IN AN INTERVIEW AND PHOTOVOICE
PROJECT

Date: 2019 03 12

Study Name: Issues related to Interprovincial Migration in Quebec: A Latin American Perspective

Researcher: Milagros Calderón Moya, PhD candidate,
milagros.calderonmoya@mail.mcgill.ca
Campus Address: 3700 McTavish Street, Montreal, Quebec, H3A 1Y2
McGill - University, Faculty of Education, Department of Integrated
Studies in Education

Supervisor: Professor Ratna Ghosh, ratna.ghosh@mcgill.ca (514-398-4527)

This research is being undertaken as part of a dissertation to fulfill the requirements of the Doctorate in Educational Studies from McGill University. I am conducting a qualitative research study on the integration of Latin American skilled immigrants into the Quebec labour market. In order to address the factors underlying their economic and professional integration into the Quebec society at large, the study design entails an interview with individuals (over 30 years of age) and a participatory photographic research method called Photovoice. Photovoice combines participants' photography with storytelling by which community members can tell stories and inform policy makers about issues of concern at the grassroots level. Photovoice supports the self-empowerment of participants by providing them with the opportunity to express their experiences and "speak" through photographs about issues that bother them, connect with others in their community, and advocate for change.

I would like to invite you to participate in this study. You will be asked to participate in an individual audio-recorded interview that focuses on your work experiences in Quebec, the process of socioeconomic integration as well as community experiences. The interview will last about 60-90 minutes. Also, you will be invited to review your interview transcriptions to verify accuracy of answers in a brief follow-up conversation of 15-20 minutes via Skype. You will be sent a copy of your transcribed interview electronically so that specific follow-up questions will be asked during the online conversation.

In addition, you will be asked to capture 3-4 photographs of individuals and/or objects that you feel answer the research questions relating both to your personal experience and aspects of Latin American community's strengths, struggles and collective experiences on your own time. It is important to mention that all faces and other identifying characteristics will be blurred prior to the dissemination of findings. Next, you will be asked to send those images electronically to me so

that I have them printed. Then, we will meet for an audio-recorded discussion for approximately 60 minutes. The purpose of this discussion is to know about the narrative or story behind each photograph. You can answer in either Spanish, English or French. Before carrying out this project, I will give you some instructions on photographic ethics and power dynamics. These will include discussions on, for instance, the reasons why minors cannot be photographed and the situations that should not be photographed. Since photographs taken of people without their explicit consent cannot be submitted nor be used, we will discuss the reasons for this instruction and you will also learn how to obtain consent to take pictures of other people. You will find attached to this document a *Photographic Release Form* to be completed by individuals who wish to have their photographs taken.

Considering that the photovoice technique is highly flexible, as it can be adapted to the needs of its users, you will not need to receive intensive training in photographic concepts due to the widespread coverage of digital photography via cameras, cellphones, and other devices including tablets. You will then be asked to use your own devices. However, if you do not own such a device, I will provide one to you. With your consent, selected photographs will be disseminated in my dissertation. Photographs could also be published in academic journals and presentations, in print and digital form, and/or in media.

To thank you for participation, you will receive \$20 in the form of cash.

All data generated for this study will remain confidential to the fullest extent possible. Confidentiality and anonymity of participants will be maintained when results are shared with broader audiences. Other than myself, only my supervisor, Professor Ratna Ghosh, will have access to the data for ongoing supervisory meetings. Discussions will be transcribed and translated by me and anonymity will be assured by using a pseudonym in place of your real name and of any person (or location) to whom you may refer to during the interview. I will keep an electronic version of the transcription and photographs on my personal computer, which is password protected. Also, I will keep a hard copy of the transcription and photographs in a locked filing cabinet at my personal residence. The digital audio recording will also be stored in a locked cabinet at my personal residence. A summary of the results, as well as my final dissertation will be made available to you after the completion of the dissertation.

You will benefit from the research by reflecting about your attitudes towards the process of integration of skilled immigrants in Quebec. In addition, it will allow you as a member of the Latin American community to show how you view your community.

Participation in the study is completely voluntary. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time. If you choose to be in the study, I would be pleased to share a summary of the results with you. The decision to terminate participation on any grounds will not affect any relationships with the researcher or McGill University. If you decide to withdraw from the study, all data generated

as a consequence of your participation shall be destroyed immediately unless you specify otherwise.

If you have any questions about my research in general or about your role in the study, please contact me or my supervisor:

Principal Researcher: Milagros Calderón Moya
milagros.calderonmoya@mail.mcgill.ca / (514) 546-7579

Supervisor: Professor Ratna Ghosh
ratna.ghosh@mcgill.ca / (514) 398-4527

This research study has been reviewed and approved for compliance to research ethics protocols by the Research Ethics Board (REB-II) of McGill University. Should you have any ethical concerns regarding the research, you may contact Lynda McNeil, the Manager of the REB-II for McGill University, at (514) 398-6831.

Thank-you for agreeing to take part in this study.

CONSENT

Please sign below if you have read the above information and consent to participate in this study. Agreeing to participate in this study does not waive any of your rights or release the researchers from their responsibilities. A copy of this consent form will be given to you and the researcher will keep a copy.

Participant's name: (please print) _____

Participant's signature : _____

Date : _____

REB file # 440-0419

APPENDIX F:
FORMULARIO DE CONSENTIMIENTO PARA PARTICIPAR EN UNA ENTREVISTA

Fecha: 2020 05 14

Nombre del estudio: Temas relacionados con la migración interprovincial en Quebec: una perspectiva Latino Americana.

Investigadora: Milagros Calderón Moya, candidata al doctorado,
milagros.calderonmoya@mail.mcgill.ca
Dirección del campus: 3700 McTavish Street, Montreal, Quebec, H3A 1Y2
McGill - Universidad, Facultad de Educación, Departamento de Integración
Estudios en educación

Supervisora: Profesora Ratna Ghosh, ratna.ghosh@mcgill.ca (514-398-4527)

Esta investigación se está realizando como parte de una disertación para cumplir con los requisitos del Doctorado en Estudios Educativos de la Universidad McGill. Estoy realizando un estudio de investigación cualitativo sobre la integración de inmigrantes calificados latinoamericanos en el mercado laboral de Quebec. Para abordar los factores que subyacen a su integración económica y profesional en la sociedad de Quebec en general, el diseño del estudio implica una entrevista con personas (mayores de 30 años) y un método de investigación fotográfica participativa llamado Photovoice. Photovoice combina la fotografía de los participantes con la narración de cuentos mediante la cual los miembros de la comunidad pueden contar historias e informar a los responsables políticos sobre temas de interés a nivel de base. Photovoice apoya el empoderamiento de los participantes al brindarles la oportunidad de expresar sus experiencias y "hablar" a través de fotografías sobre los problemas que los molestan, conectarse con otros en su comunidad y abogar por el cambio. El estudio es financiado por el *Fonds de recherche société et culture* (FRQSC).

Me gustaría invitarle a participar en este estudio. Se le pedirá que participe en una entrevista telefónica individual grabada en audio que se centra en sus experiencias de trabajo en Quebec, el proceso de integración socioeconómica y las experiencias de la comunidad. La entrevista durará unos 30 minutos. Se le enviará una copia de su entrevista transcrita electrónicamente para que se le hagan preguntas de seguimiento específicas de ser necesario.

Para agradecer su participación, recibirá \$ 20 en efectivo.

Todos los datos generados para este estudio serán confidenciales en la mayor medida posible. La confidencialidad y el anonimato de los participantes se mantendrán cuando los resultados se compartan con audiencias más amplias. Aparte de mí, solo mi supervisora, la profesora Ratna Ghosh, tendrá acceso a los datos para las reuniones de supervisión en curso. Las transcripciones serán traducidas y traducidas por mí, y el anonimato se asegurará mediante el uso de un seudónimo en lugar de su nombre real y de cualquier persona (o ubicación) a la que pueda referirse durante la entrevista. Mantendré una versión electrónica de la transcripción en mi

computadora personal, que está protegida por contraseña. Además, mantendré una copia impresa de la transcripción en un archivador cerrado con llave en mi residencia personal. La grabación de audio digital también se almacenará en un gabinete cerrado en mi residencia personal. Un resumen de los resultados, así como mi disertación final se pondrá a su disposición una vez finalizada la disertación.

Se beneficiará de la investigación al reflexionar sobre sus actitudes hacia el proceso de integración de inmigrantes calificados en Quebec. Además, le permitirá como miembro de la comunidad latinoamericana mostrar cómo ve a su comunidad.

La participación en el estudio es completamente voluntaria. Usted es libre de retirarse del estudio en cualquier momento. Si elige participar en el estudio, me complacería compartir un resumen de los resultados con usted. La decisión de terminar la participación por cualquier motivo no afectará ninguna relación con el investigador o la Universidad de McGill. Si decide retirarse del estudio, todos los datos generados como consecuencia de su participación se destruirán inmediatamente a menos que especifique lo contrario.

Si tiene alguna pregunta sobre mi investigación en general o sobre su papel en el estudio, comuníquese conmigo o con mi supervisora:

Investigadora Principal: Milagros Calderón Moya

milagros.calderonmoya@mail.mcgill.ca / (514) 546-7579

Supervisora: Profesora Ratna Ghosh

ratna.ghosh@mcgill.ca / (514) 398-4527

Este estudio de investigación ha sido revisado y aprobado por la Junta de Ética de Investigación (REB-II) de la Universidad de McGill para su cumplimiento con los protocolos de ética de la investigación. Si tiene alguna preocupación ética con respecto a la investigación, puede comunicarse con Lynda McNeil, la Gerente de REB-II para McGill University, al (514) 398-6831.

Gracias por aceptar participar en este estudio.

CONSENTIMIENTO

Firme a continuación si ha leído la información anterior y ha dado su consentimiento para participar en este estudio. Aceptar participar en este estudio no renuncia a ninguno de sus derechos ni libera a los investigadores de sus responsabilidades. Se le entregará una copia de este formulario de consentimiento y el investigador conservará una copia.

Nombre del participante: (en letra de imprenta) _____

Firma del participante: _____

Fecha: _____

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APPENDIX G

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- Tell me about you and where you come from? (For example: *Where were you born? When did you move to Quebec? What brought you to Canada?*)
- Describe your first days in Quebec? Was Quebec as you were told it was?
- Did you need to obtain the Quebec certification for your skills? If so, what was this process like?
- Were you somewhat familiarized with the accreditation procedures for your profession in Quebec? Were you aware of the entry requirements in professional associations?
- Tell me what it was like for you when trying to access the labour market? What was this process like? How would describe this professional transition?
- Did you require any kind of assistance or coaching service to help with your integration into the Quebec labour market?
- Describe what it was like for you to adapt to the new sociocultural environment of Quebec?
- Were there any adjustment strategies you used to help you access the labour market more easily?
- You must have gone through many changes as you adapt to life in Quebec, getting accustomed to new ways of behaviors in the Quebec culture, getting used to new types of social interactions. Please share some of the experiences of adapting your life to Quebec.
- What do you think about multiculturalism in Canada?
- You may have heard the word “multiculturalism” used a lot in Canadian society. What do you think the term multiculturalism means? What does it mean for Canada as a society?
- How do you feel the Quebec society supports diversity?
- Describe your view of the valorization of foreign obtained credentials in Quebec?

APPENDIX H**Cuestionario, líderes comunidad latinoamericana en Quebec**

1. ¿Podría presentarse y presentar su función y responsabilidades en sus labores profesionales?
2. ¿Tiene experiencia de trabajo con inmigrantes calificados de origen latinoamericano?
3. ¿Cuál diría que es el perfil del inmigrante latinoamericano en Quebec?
4. ¿Cuál es el perfil de los inmigrantes calificados latinoamericanos con los que ha podido trabajar?
5. ¿Qué tipo de apoyo, normalmente, se les brinda a inmigrantes latinos? ¿Cuál es su nivel de satisfacción acerca de esto? ¿Por qué?
6. ¿Diría usted que existe un perfil del inmigrante latinoamericano de quienes no acceden al apoyo de asociaciones o comunidades de ayuda al inmigrante?
7. Las revisiones de la literatura indican que las personas que forman minorías visibles tienen más dificultades para integrarse en el mercado laboral local. ¿Diría usted que los inmigrantes de minorías visibles, en este caso, inmigrantes latinoamericanos calificados, son y han sido víctimas de discriminación?
8. ¿Cree que existe una discriminación directa o indirecta hacia las minorías visibles?
9. ¿Sabe usted de proyectos enfocados en la mejora de la integración de inmigrantes latinoamericanos calificados en Quebec?
10. Diría usted que organizaciones interculturales, comunitarias y organizaciones no-gubernamentales prestan ayuda específica para inmigrantes de minorías no visibles como en el caso de latinoamericanos. De ser así, ¿por qué son necesarias?

APPENDIX I: Formulario de liberación fotográfica del participante**“Temas Relacionados con la Migración Interprovincial en Quebec: Una Perspectiva Latinoamericana”**

Estoy de acuerdo en que mis fotografías, mi entorno y mi propiedad se utilicen de las siguientes maneras (marque todas las que correspondan):

En artículos académicos ☐ Sí ☐ No

En forma impresa y digital y en forma de diapositiva ☐ Sí ☐ No

En presentaciones académicas ☐ Sí ☐ No

En los medios de comunicación ☐ Sí ☐ No

En los materiales de tesis ☐ Sí ☐ No

Nombre del participante (en letra de imprenta): _____

Firma del Participante: _____

Fecha: _____

Persona que obtiene el consentimiento: _____ (imprima)

Firma de la persona que obtiene el consentimiento: _____

Fecha: _____

Archivo REB # 440-0419