

WORKING PAPER SERIES

**An overview of discourses of skilled immigrants and
“Canadian experience”:
An English-language print media analysis**

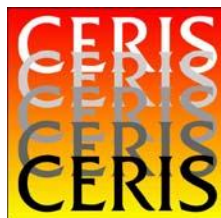
**Izumi Sakamoto
Daphne Jeyapal
Rupaleem Bhuyan
Jane Ku
Lin Fang
Heidi Zhang
Flavia Genovese**

CERIS Working Paper No. 98

March 2013

Series Editor

Kenise Murphy Kilbride
Graduate Programs of
Early Childhood Studies and
Immigration and Settlement Studies
Ryerson University
350 Victoria Street
Toronto, Ontario M5B 2K3
kilbride@ryerson.ca



CERIS – The Ontario Metropolis Centre

The CERIS Working Paper Series

Manuscripts on topics related to immigration, settlement, and cultural diversity in urban centres are welcome. Preference may be given to the publication of manuscripts that are the result of research projects funded through CERIS - The Ontario Metropolis Centre.

All manuscripts must be submitted in both digital and hard-copy form, and should include an Abstract of 100-200 words and a list of keywords.

**If you have comments or proposals regarding the CERIS Working Paper Series please contact the Editor at:
(416) 736-5223 or e-mail at <ceris@yorku.ca>.**

Copyright of the papers in the CERIS Working Paper Series is retained by the author(s).

The views expressed in these Working Papers are those of the author(s), and opinions on the content of the Working Papers should be communicated directly to the author(s) themselves.

**CERIS – The Ontario Metropolis Centre
8th Floor, York Research Tower, 4700 Keele St.
Toronto, Ontario, Canada M3J 1P3
Telephone (416) 736-5223 Facsimile: (416) 736-5688**

**An overview of discourses of skilled immigrants and
“Canadian experience”: An English-language print media analysis**

**An overview of discourses of
skilled immigrants and “Canadian experience”:
An English-language print media analysis**

Izumi Sakamoto, PhD (Principal Investigator)

Associate Professor, Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto

Izumi.sakamoto@utoronto.ca

Daphne Jeyapal, PhD Candidate (Research Coordinator)

Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto

daphne.jeyapal@utoronto.ca

Rupaleem Bhuyan, PhD (Co-Investigator)

Assistant Professor, Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto

r.bhuyan@utoronto.ca

Jane Ku, PhD (Co-Investigator)

Associate Professor, Sociology and Anthropology/Women’s Studies,
University of Windsor

janeku@uwindsor.ca

Lin Fang, PhD (Co-Investigator)

Assistant Professor, Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto

lin.fang@utoronto.ca

Heidi Zhang, B.A. (Research Assistant)

Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto

heidzhng@gmail.com

Flavia Genovese, M.S.W. (Former Research Assistant)

Formerly with: Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
<i>KEYWORDS</i>	1
<i>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</i>	1
1. INTRODUCTION	2
2. CONTEXT	5
2.1 <i>Media Representations of Immigrants in Canada</i>	5
2.2 <i>“Canadian Experience” as Tacit Knowledge</i>	6
2.3. <i>“Canadian Experience” as Exclusionary</i>	7
3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS.....	8
3.1 <i>Data Analysis Methodology & Method</i>	8
4. FINDINGS	10
4.1 <i>Exploring “Canadian Experience”</i>	10
4.1.1. <i>“Canadian Experience” has been in circulation for decades</i>	10
4.1.2. <i>Institutionalization of “Canadian Experience” as a Popular Taken-For-Granted Discourse</i>	11
4.1.3. <i>“Canadian Experience” as Tacit Knowledge</i>	11
4.1.4. <i>Media accommodates critiques of “Canadian Experience”</i>	12
4.1.5. <i>“Canadian Experience” as Representative of “Canadian-ness”</i>	13
4.2. <i>Discourses about Immigrants</i>	14
4.2.1. <i>Sorting “Desirable” Immigrants</i>	14
4.2.2. <i>Recurring Stereotypes: The “Successful”, “Humble” or “Unlucky” Immigrant</i>	16
4.2.3. <i>Skilled Immigrants as a Labour Market Problem</i>	17
4.3 <i>Framing the Legal and Social Policy Context of Immigration</i>	18
4.3.1. <i>Multiculturalism and the Construction of Difference</i>	19
5. DISCUSSION	20
5.1 <i>Is it Democratic Racism?</i>	21
5.2. <i>Policy Implications: Institutionalization and Entrenchment of “Canadian Experience”</i> 22	
5.3 <i>“Canadian Experience” in Neoliberal Multiculturalism</i>	23
5.4 <i>Limitations</i>	23
5.5 <i>Next Steps</i>	23
6. RECOMMENDATIONS	24
7. CONCLUSION	25
APPENDIX: Major Themes Used for Initial Coding of the Data	26
REFERENCES & REFERENCES FOR NEWS ARTICLES CITED	27

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

“Canadian experience” is an elusive but influential factor in immigrants’ unsuccessful attempts to obtain gainful employment. It may constitute “hard skills” (*e.g.*, credentials) and, more importantly, “soft skills”, an ability to operate within “Canadian workplace culture”, a concept that is tacitly understood within a given context and difficult to articulate (Sakamoto *et al.*, 2010). We examined public discourses on “Canadian experience” through English-language print media in Toronto, Ontario, to identify and unpack the tacit dimension of this popular concept. We found that recurring discourses construct “desirable” immigrants, often through archetypes of “successful”, “humble” and “unlucky” immigrants. While print media may involve multiple voices, it represents immigrants largely as a problem to be solved within the legal and social policy context. Finally, we link our analysis of “Canadian experience” to ideological investments and tensions on Canadian immigration and the role immigrants are perceived to play in Canadian nation-building.

KEYWORDS

Canadian experience, skilled immigrants, print media, discourse, social exclusion

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project was generously supported by CERIS – The Ontario Metropolis Centre (2010-2012) and is part of a larger project funded by Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), titled, “Discourse of skilled immigrants and Canadian experience: An intertextual analysis of English, Chinese, and ‘South Asian’ media” (2010-2014). We would like to thank those who participated in our expert advisory board and consultation sessions and gave us valuable feedback on our preliminary results. We are thankful for the contributions made by research assistants in the earlier phase of this project: Elena Chou, Fritz Pino, Willa Liu, Anuppriya Sriskandarajah, Nina Rongavilla, Judee Duran, and Yufei (Fiona) Wang.

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, a large proportion of immigrants to Canada has entered as skilled immigrants through the Federal Skilled Worker Program (also known as the points system) and granted permanent residency upon entering Canada. Over the past ten years, Canada as a whole has maintained an even flow of permanent residents entering Canada, while the number of temporary foreign workers has grown (Toronto Immigrant Employment Data Initiative <TIEDI>, 2012b). In Toronto, however, entries of permanent residents still outnumber temporary residents; in 2010 approximately 50,000 temporary foreign workers entered Canada as compared to over 90,000 permanent residents (TIEDI, 2012b). While interior provinces have successfully recruited more immigrants to settle outside the ‘traditional’ urban zones of Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver, Ontario continues to receive 52% of all skilled immigrants entering Canada - making Toronto the most common destination for new immigrants (Citizenship and Immigration Canada [CIC], 2011). The profile of immigrants continues to evolve in Toronto: the most notable shifts include the increasing proportion of immigrants arriving in refugee classes and a significant expansion within the economic classes such as the live-in caregiver program and away from the skilled worker category (TIEDI, 2012a).

It is widely reported that once in Canada, immigrants, especially those with higher education or professional skills, face barriers to employment in their intended occupations (Dlamini *et al.*, 2012; Ku, Doyle & Mooney, 2011; Gilmore & Le Petit, 2008; Luk, 2011; Reitz, 2005; Sakamoto, 2007; Sakamoto, Ku & Wei, 2008; Sakamoto & Zhou, 2005; Statistics Canada, 2005, 2012). In 2012, Statistics Canada reported that landed immigrants with a university degree have a 7.9% unemployment rate, in comparison to the Canadian-born populations with the same education who experience a 3.1% unemployment rate (Statistics Canada, 2012). Moreover, the unemployment rate has increased to 12.4% for immigrants who have landed five years or earlier with university degrees (Statistics Canada, 2012). In recent years, Ontario has gone through many policy changes and new government and voluntary initiatives, for example, the establishment of the Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act, the Office of the Fairness Commissioner, and the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (*e.g.*, Sakamoto, Wei & Truong,

2008), to address immigrants' employment challenges. However, some argue that these programs are only available to a small fraction of immigrants and are not self-sustaining beyond the initial funding period (McIssac & Alboim, 2007). With the global economic crisis and increasing unemployment rates especially in Ontario (where 55% of all Canadian employment losses have been observed (Pitts, 2009), it is unclear how skilled immigrants will fare in the long run.

Among multiple employment barriers, "Canadian experience" has been identified as a major obstacle for newcomers entering the labour market (Sakamoto *et al.*, 2010). Research has consistently revealed that immigrants new to Canada - who are unlikely to have Canadian work experience - face employment barriers despite the international education, credentials or work experience that earned them permanent residency (Li, 2003b; Reitz, 2005; Picot & Hou 2003). Despite the established critique of a lack of "Canadian experience" as an exclusionary practice, immigration policy embraced "Canadian experience" as a criterion to identify immigrants who will have more success in the Canadian labour force. In 2008, the Federal government introduced the "Canadian Experience Class" as a new path to permanent residence for international students or temporary foreign workers with work experience in desirable occupations. More recently, in August 2012, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) introduced an overhaul of the Federal Skilled Worker Program (FSWP) which further institutionalizes "Canadian experience" as one of its requirements (CIC News Release, 2012). While the new FSWP targets a younger and more "flexible" workforce that is presumably able to adapt to Canadian society, these changes also effectively disguise how the government is simultaneously admitting more and more foreign workers into Canada through temporary visa programs. In addition, the Ontario Office of Fairness Commissioner has raised concerns that this change "validate sthe discriminatory practice of devaluing work experience obtained outside of Canada" and "unintentionally encourage employers to violate the Ontario's Human Rights Code" (The Office of Fairness Commissioner website, September 2012). The Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) has recently launched a survey directed at newcomers who have encountered the need for Canadian experience, to try to measure its effects on them and on the Ontario job market, acknowledging that "[newcomers] often talk about the requirement for 'Canadian experience' as a big barrier

to their entry into the workforce” (Barbara Hall, Chief Commissioner, OHRC, October 5, 2012, cited in

http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/news_centre/ohrc-launches-survey-canadian-experience-requirement).

In this report, we traced representations of “Canadian experience” in English print media in Toronto, Ontario, from 2006-2012, and examined how it is related to our assumptions about the skills and knowledge new immigrants have. In what follows, we contextualize the challenges skilled immigrants face within the labour market. We examine existing literature on media representations of immigrants in Canada, paying attention to contradictory constructions of immigrants’ undesirability and desirability within the nation and the labour market. We draw upon these constructions to review research on “Canadian experience” as “tacit knowledge” and as an exclusionary practice.

In the Findings section (Section 4), we first explore how “Canadian experience” functions as a popular, taken-for-granted discourse. Through the historical and ongoing exchange on “Canadian Experience”, the media appear to accommodate objections and critiques of the usage of “Canadian experience”. What continues to persist is that “Canadian Experience” is representative of “Canadianness” beyond the labour market and in the larger society. In Section 4.2, we go on to review dominant discourses of immigrants, attending to the framing of “desirable” or “undesirable” immigrants. In Section 4.3, we review the relationship between “Canadian Experience” and the legal and policy context of immigration and the Canadian economy. These findings are further examined in the Discussion (Section 5); we draw upon these findings of the tacit, slippery nature of “Canadian Experience” and suggest that the imprecision perhaps lies in highly contradictory and ambivalent attitudes towards racialized newcomers, where the media suggest that while we want to welcome “them”, we also to maintain the privilege of the existing population. Scholars such as Henry and Tator (1994) bluntly refer to such ambivalence as “democratic racism”. We conclude by offering preliminary recommendations for re-examining the concept of “Canadian experience” and improving social policy and service delivery systems currently in place for skilled immigrants. The virtual impossibility of obtaining appropriate “Canadian Experience” without having had any is at least exclusionary if not constitutive of democratic racism, especially in light of

the further entrenchment and institutionalization of “Canadian Experience” in immigration policies when this has never been established either academically or experientially as a valid concept for categorizing immigrants.

2. CONTEXT

In order to contextualize the multiple, and at times contradictory, discourses framing the function and requirement of “Canadian experience”, the following sections explore three major issues: 2.1. Media representations of immigrants in Canada; 2.2. “Canadian experience” as tacit knowledge; and 2.3. “Canadian experience” as exclusionary.

2.1 Media Representations of Immigrants in Canada

Through a study of media coverage of immigration in “mainstream” Canadian English-language newsprint media between January 1, 1996, and December 31, 2004, Bauder (2008) suggests that while themes of humanitarian, political, economic, and cultural aspects are connected to the representation of immigrants, the construction of danger (generally deployed to argue against immigration) is the primary discourse associated with immigration in Canada. Through the construction of danger, immigrants are effectively depicted as criminalized and *deviant*, representing a threat to the political, military, social, environmental, and economic context (Buzan *et al.*, 1998). These discourses of danger construct threatening out-groups against which bias can be justified (Henry & Tator, 2002). Collectively, scholarship on the representation of immigrants in public media and public opinion surveys emphasize the production of an “immigrant threat” ideology and other forms of overt social undesirability attached specifically to immigrants and people of colour (Bauder, 2008; Chavaz, 2008; Henry & Tator, 2002; Hier & Greenberg, 2002; Jiwani, 2006; Li, 2003a; Wilkes *et al.*, 2008).

These narratives of immigrants as threats are complicated, however, as some media coverage and research reports seem to suggest that immigrants are also desirable (*e.g.*, Grant, 2009; Keung, 2007; Tamburri, 2005; Taylor, 2008; Toronto Star, 2010). For example, skilled immigrants’ successful integration into Canadian society is sometimes portrayed as significantly impacting the country’s economic well-being. Coinciding with a

general neoliberal trend within social policy, these discourses have emphasized the “self-sufficiency” and “economic worth” of immigrants (Abu-Laban, 1998), arguing that the utility and productivity of immigrants will ultimately benefit the national economy (Bauder, 2006). The desirability of immigrants also relates to an important dimension of Canadian national identity - as a “compassionate and caring” nation (Dauvergne, 2005, p. 75) with a history of (selectively) enabling humanitarian immigration.

These conflicting representations of immigrants as both a potential threat and a source of economic security and nationalism are also reflected in the discerning manner in which the immigration system selects foreign nationals for permanent immigration. The recent introduction of the *Canadian Experience Class* is one such indication of the federal government’s policy of preferring individuals with a proven record of “fitting in” to Canadian society *via* Canadian post-secondary education or previous employment in Canada as skilled workers. Yet, skilled immigrants are still not obtaining gainful employment in their respective fields, the purpose for which they were originally admitted to Canada. Idealized portrayals of skilled immigrants in certain texts are in sharp contrast to the vast underemployment and high poverty rates among immigrants in Canada.

2.2 “Canadian Experience” as Tacit Knowledge

In a previous study conducted by the first author, immigrants and service providers reported that “Canadian experience” played a significant role in immigrants’ often-unsuccessful attempts to obtain gainful employment. There is no unified understanding of what “Canadian experience” constitutes, however; thus it remains subjectively understood. Sakamoto and her colleagues documented various types of *tacit knowledge* (Polanyi, 1966) that are deemed important in accessing jobs, and how immigrants experience this requirement of “Canadian experience” (Sakamoto *et al.*, 2010; 2011¹). Nonaka and Takeuchi explain that tacit knowledge is “personal, context-specific and therefore hard to formalize and communicate” (1995, p. 59). They distinguish tacit knowledge from explicit knowledge (“transmittable in formal, systematic language”, 1995, p. 59). Service providers often categorize “Canadian experience” into “hard skills” and “soft skills” as two components immigrants require for employment (Sakamoto *et al.*,

¹ See www.beyondcanadianexperience.com for more information and other knowledge mobilization products such as a research-based theatre video.

2010; 2011). “Hard skills” refer to documented or recognized training and knowledge that can be written down in the resume and is therefore easier to share, such as educational credentials or recognized certificates or licenses. “Soft skills”, on the other hand, consist of an elusive concept which refers to unspoken, tacit, and taken-for granted cultural knowledge that is neither easy to acquire or demonstrate on one’s resume. This type of tacit knowledge deemed necessary to operate successfully in the so-called “Canadian workplace culture”, is discursively intertwined with technical knowledge in a way that legitimates “Canadian experience” as a prerequisite for successful employment in Canada.

The tacit knowledge in particular workplaces can be obtained by “learning by doing”, when a nurturing environment supports the newcomer professional. However, unless newcomers are allowed to be in a workplace to begin with, tacit knowledge is difficult to obtain. The need for tangible technical skills in a given work environment cannot be separated from nefarious expectations around what types of people belong in the Canadian workplace and what values, behaviors, identities and forms of communication are sought out in desirable employees. Aside from the conflation of legitimate and illegitimate skills and expectations required of immigrants, “Canadian Experience” effectively devalues the skills immigrants bring from their countries of origin.

2.3. “Canadian Experience” as Exclusionary

“Canadian experience” as an employment barrier is linked to high levels of underemployment and disproportionate poverty levels that racialized immigrants face in Canada. The social undesirability of racialized people cannot be overtly and directly articulated in a society which espouses multiculturalism. When such attitudes exist, they are indirectly or covertly justified; conveniently, the tacit dimension of “Canadian experience” renders its function and effect difficult to pinpoint. Since immigrants are constructed as deficient at the onset without any reference to their racial and social undesirability but due to their lack of “Canadian experience”, the focus on an acquisition of skills effectively reframes these unsavory aspects of Canadian society as an acceptable part of a meritocratic and democratic society. Skilled immigrants are acknowledged as possessing “technical” skills, yet what confounds them is “tacit” knowledge (Sakamoto). While the federal government has embraced “Canadian experience” as a criterion for permanent residency (Sakamoto, Bhuyan, Ku, Fang, Jeyapal & Zhang, 2013), “Canadian

experience” – seen as a “soft skill” with an unclear, subjective concept, often unspoken, tacit or taken for granted – is often beyond the reach of newcomers to obtain to the satisfaction of employers. The murkiness of “tacit” knowledge effectively masks Canadian anxieties about newcomers. As a result, the existence of racism is difficult to acknowledge, much less remedy, when the problems lie within immigrants themselves. It therefore becomes easy to blame those individuals who experience discrimination for their state of “otherness” (Henry & Tator 1994; Henry *et al.*, 2002).

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

This project employs critical discourse analysis to examine representations of “Canadian experience” and “skilled immigrants” in leading English-language newspapers in the Greater Toronto Area (Toronto Star, Globe & Mail and National Post). We recognize the multi-lingual context of Toronto, and thus approach English as one of the official languages in Canada and the principal language of communication in Toronto. “Mainstream” English-language media—distinct from English-language media produced by smaller community organizations—shape public opinion on immigration and influence policy development on citizenship and immigration (Bauder, 2008). “Mainstream” English-language media also strongly influence media produced by significantly smaller news outlets that are geared towards specific ethnic, cultural, or linguistic communities (Lindgren, April 2011).

3.1 Data Analysis Methodology & Method

In the tradition of Critical Discourse Analysis, our use of media texts as the principal corpus of data builds on Fairclough’s (1995) analysis of media as playing a vital role in constituting, changing, and reproducing social identities and social relations, including forms of exclusion such as discrimination and racism. Further, our analysis draws from van Dijk’s (1993) work which examines how discursive strategies within media discourse (*e.g.*, denial, disclaimers, euphemisms, victim-blaming, positive self-presentation in negative discourse about minorities) favour the elite such that representations of immigrants serve to maintain white group dominance. We also draw

upon semiotic and post-structural theories of language to examine language-in-use, empirical details of language and social action, as well as the politics of the social activity of language (Gee, 2005). This discursive approach focuses on the effects and consequences of these representations in relation to their social context. Bakhtin (1981) theorized meaning as produced in dialogue with another. This suggests that when we read a written text, read across texts, or even when we speak to ourselves (*i.e.* think), we remain in the realm of the social, such that interpretation involves an engaged dialogue with an imagined audience (or speaker).

This paper reviews news reporting on “*Canadian experience*” and “*skilled immigrants*” since January 1, 2006 to December 31, 2012 from three leading English-language newspapers in the Greater Toronto Area: *Globe and Mail*, *National Post* and *Toronto Star*. This five-year period captures reporting from one year prior to the first announcement of the Canadian Experience Class (CEC) on Oct. 31, 2007 by the Immigration Minister Diane Finley, the implementation of this immigration option in September 2008, and four subsequent years of reporting on immigration and immigration policy. A Google News search shows that there was a peak in reporting on CEC from Aug-Oct 2008, around the time that the CEC was implemented. We assume that the surge of interest in CEC may also elucidate the discussion regarding immigrants and “Canadian experience” in general.

Using the keywords “skilled immigrant” and “Canadian experience” we retrieved 584 relevant articles through the *Canadian Newsstand Database* from the *Globe and Mail* (n = 310), *National Post* (n = 189) and *Toronto Star* (n = 374) for the period between January 1, 2006 and December 31, 2012. For our analysis, we engaged in a systematic coding of text (*e.g.*, Strauss & Corbin, 1990). We drew upon MacQueen *et al.*’s (1998) explicit guidelines for creating a structured codebook to provide a stable reference point for the analysis of text and improve inter-coder agreement within the research team. Theoretical and data-driven codes were generated by all members of the research team during the early part of data analysis. The team of four Research Investigators, four Research Assistants and the Research Coordinator reviewed and revised these codes on an ongoing basis. The data were coded and cross-coded by two Research Assistants at various stages of the data analysis process to ensure consistency. Primary areas of analysis were

identified and defined (Appendix). These themes are explored in further detail in the following section.

4. FINDINGS

Major findings from the newspaper articles reviewed are summarized here. In Section 4.1, we illustrate that the discourse of “Canadian Experience” has been in circulation for decades and has become part of normative discourse, thus tacitly exchanged, and to some extent critiqued yet normalized through the media. In Section 4.2 media discourses on immigrants reveal which immigrants are “desirable” and what their place is in Canada, presenting this as a problem to be solved and immigrants as people who must present neoliberal traits to become desirable. In Section 4.3, the racialization of immigrants through discourses of difference and multiculturalism is examined to show how the policy contexts of immigration and the labour market are being constructed.

4.1 Exploring “Canadian Experience”

4.1.1. “Canadian Experience” has been in circulation for decades

Based on a complete search through the Canadian Newsstand Database, which retrieves Canadian news articles from the 1970s onwards, it appears that one of the first mentions of “Canadian experience” in newsprint appears in a Letter to the Editor published in the *Globe and Mail* in Toronto on June 2, 1978. The author writes:

I am a recent immigrant to this country who is undergoing the pain of obtaining permanent employment here. I have applied for and called in response to many job advertisements, but I am confronted with only one question, "What is your Canadian experience?" I wish someone would be kind enough to tell me what this Canadian experience is, and how I get it without being given the chance. Is this a subtle form of discrimination?

Shear, N. (1978, Jun 2). Canadian Experience. *The Globe and Mail*, Toronto, p.7

“Canadian experience” and its consequences are now acknowledged as a Canadian reality as in this case:

You can open the door if you have a key; if you do not have a key, the only

way you can get one is to open the door. That is the Law of Canadian Experience. The corollary: if you get a key, we will change the locks.

Fiorito, Joe. (2009, March 2). The crying shame of the taxi. *Toronto Star*

4.1.2. Institutionalization of “Canadian Experience” as a Popular Taken-For-Granted Discourse

Understood as vital to employment for immigrants; “Canadian experience” is taken for granted; it appears to be used with a shared understanding that does not require any definition:

An employer might tell an immigrant job seeker: "I understand that you were a chef at a high-end Dubai restaurant, but the way we prepare food is very different from the way they prepare it over there." So they offer a perfectly viable candidate a position as a dishwasher, to help them gain some "Canadian experience." As ridiculous as that sounds, those of us working with immigrants in government-funded employment agencies hear stories like this every day. Alavi, Najia. (2008, July 31). A waste of talent.

National Post

Despite the critique inherent in this quote, “Canadian experience” needs no explanation from the speaker.

4.1.3. “Canadian Experience” as Tacit Knowledge

Echoing previous research, this discourse analysis suggests that a component of “Canadian experience” is tacit. “Canadian experience” as immigrant deficiency is constructed as lack of tacit knowledge. This can be obtained when immigrants and newcomers adopt specific Canadian workplace behaviours through attending workshops and programs geared towards instructing in work-related terminologies, and the utilization of English improvement and interview skills programs to account for cultural differences. It is suggested that acquiring this tacit knowledge will boost immigrants’ confidence levels, improve their understanding of hierarchy within a company, and teach them how to interact within a professional setting. Canadian workplace culture is assumed to be implicitly different from those of other countries, that is, in the knowledge and cultural practices necessary to function within a Canadian workplace:

“It tends not only to be language training, but also has a large cultural

element,” she said. "Many immigrants entering the Canadian business world either come across as too aggressive, or, if they are from a part of the world where people are more restrained in their interaction, they can appear to be wimps." Simpson, John Worsley. (2006, September 26). Educated immigrants get start. *National Post*

Repeatedly it is suggested that immigrant employment challenges are due to their *lack* of “Canadian experience”. Immigrant experiential narratives challenge this perspective to a certain extent by showing how they are forced to accept lower-wage jobs, resulting in significant health, financial, and social consequences:

It kills self-confidence, inducing an inner feeling of worthlessness. A petroleum chemist ends up working at a gas station instead of an oil refinery. A child is embarrassed when asked about what his parents do for a living. How do we measure the pressure exerted on this young developing mind? Editorial. (2007, October 30). No medical cure for this disability. *Toronto Star*

4.1.4. Media accommodates critiques of “Canadian Experience”

As part of the public sphere where diverse people communicate with each other, media accommodate the misuses of “Canadian experience” and acknowledge that “Canadian experience” functions as a barrier to immigrants’ employment. Although media may represent a hegemonic reality, it is also subject to evolving critiques and opinion. As Bauder (2008) points out, reporting is a dialectic process to allow for critiques. Thus the media also include criticisms of employers, the job market, and the Canadian immigration system but simultaneously uphold Canada as a superior nation which may require tinkering in order to improve its efficiency:

Michael Vishenchuk has all the right stuff - talent, education, motivation, accreditation and years of professional know-how. There's one thing missing from his impressive resume: "the all-important Canadian work experience” employers want. It's a barrier that's preventing him from landing a job in his area of expertise. Ferenc, Leslie. (2008, October 7). Providing cue cards for Canada so talented immigrants can fit in. *Toronto Star*

Canada's immigration system isn't perfect. If it were, highly educated immigrants wouldn't be waiting years to get into the country or, once here, floundering in low-wage jobs while struggling to get their credentials recognized or the "Canadian experience" employers demand. Editorial (2008, May 19). PM unconvincing on immigration. *Toronto Star*

4.1.5. "Canadian Experience" as Representative of "Canadian-ness"

The concept of "Canadian experience" was used in contexts other than employment. From 2006-2012, an average of one-third of the articles that mentioned "Canadian experience" were related to non-employment topics.

The use of the term in non-employment contexts may offer different insights. It is used in areas such as agriculture, technology, finance, advertising, politics, health care, and the military, as well as regarding economic, cultural, and social justice initiatives. Overall, they suggest a unified national experience of "Canadian-ness". In several instances, the concept of "Canadian experience" is used to highlight difference in comparison to other nations. The following quotations suggest ways "Canadian experience" is connected to a unique national identity and imaginary:

Hotel associations, convention centres, cities, theme parks, national monuments and parks -- these bodies would be stronger if they had a united voice working to sell the exciting, dynamic brand that Canada has become. New initiatives are now required that far surpass advertising in magazines and may include specially themed U.S. television shows, cross-referenced promotional opportunities, or blog sites where the Canadian experience is played up. An interesting sidebar here is that many immigrants to Canada lament at how overly modest Canadians are, almost seeming to view promotion as a vulgar activity perfected by our southern neighbours. "Why are Canadians so shy about bragging?" they ask in a perplexed tone. "So much of what Canada has to offer is second to none, and in fact far superior to the American experience." McIvor, Gordon K. (2007 December 4). Time to brag. *National Post*

4.2. Discourses about Immigrants

Most articles reference immigrants through discourses of difference. Difference is constructed through gender, immigration classes such as skilled vs unskilled or family class immigrants, or through differences between immigrant and Canadian-born groups. Group distinctions between employment practices, hiring processes and job market experiences identify preferences of employers and the Canadian government. Discourses of immigrants sort “desirable” immigrants from the rest, while encouraging individual immigrants to assume responsibility for their own success. Aside from treating immigrants as both a labour market problem and a group who are inferior to “Canadians”, such discourses reinforce neoliberal ideas of labour force flexibility and privatization of responsibility.

4.2.1. Sorting “Desirable” Immigrants

Rhetoric around immigrant class focuses on the desirability of immigrants through their ability to contribute to, rather than drain, the labour market

While I understand immigrants play an important role in the growth of Canada, I do agree that skilled immigrants should be given priority. We have to look at what is best for Canada and that would be to accept skilled immigrant workers who will contribute immediately rather than unskilled newcomers who will need years of training before they can contribute.

Yenovkian, Vsem. (2008, March 28). Turning down immigrants. *Toronto Star*.

In the past, Canada typically brought in the lion's share of its immigrants under the Federal Skilled Worker program... Last year, the Conservative government decided to limit the processing of applications under that category to 38 job descriptions. But research shows those with better overall qualifications do better in the long run than those chosen to quickly fill a job - because they adapt better to economic changes, and find new work faster if they lose a job, Prof. Alboim said. Clark, Campbell. (2009, July 22). Skilled immigrants being squeezed out as temporary workers flock to Canada. *Globe and Mail*

Immigrant desirability is tied to their poor economic performance as demonstrated through

the earning and unemployment gap between immigrants and Canadians. Economic differences and disparities between Canadian-born and immigrants are often emphasized:

For most new Canadians, however, that dream remains elusive. A study released yesterday by Statistics Canada shows immigrants earned \$2.28 per hour less, a difference of 9.6 per cent, on average in 2008 than their Canadian-born counterparts, despite having typically higher levels of education. The gap for immigrants who arrived in the past five years is much greater, as it is for those with university degrees. An immigrant with a university degree earned 16.4 per cent less than his or her Canadian-born equivalent, a gap reduced by only half among immigrants who have lived in Canada 10 years or longer. "This is very troubling, and affects the incomes of all Canadians," said Don Drummond, chief economist at Toronto-Dominion Bank. Friesen, Joe and Grant, Tavia. (2009, November 24). Earning gap a 'troubling' trend. *Globe & Mail*.

Even as their otherness is emphasized, immigrants are generally depicted as good, hard-working workers who could be useful to Canada, dedicated people who have the ambition to succeed. Also, they are seen as willing to accept low-paying jobs, are often underemployed and unemployed:

"No question I'm seeing more immigrants," he said. "The reality is, I meet with these individuals, and they have less knowledge of what their rights and entitlements are - on severance pay or notice periods. And if they do, they're reluctant to pursue them. And employers know this." Grant, Tavia. (2009, July 25). The recovery gap. *Globe and Mail*

Immigrant otherness is also emphasized through constructing immigrants as threats, as a drain to the Canadian economy, as potential fraudulent beneficiaries of Canadian "generous" social systems. Such immigrant otherness justifies the common recommendation that Canada be selective in identifying the desirability of the individual immigrants:

The days of people coming to Canada to help build a great country are over. Nowadays people come here for opportunity, but many also come because they know they'll be given a place to live and money each month without

having to lift a finger. Most unskilled workers are a drain on our economy. We're in a position where we can be picky about whom we allow into our country and I believe we should be. Ramsey, Jason. (2008, March 28).

Turning down immigrants. *Toronto Star*,

4.2.2. Recurring Stereotypes: The “Successful”, “Humble” or “Unlucky” Immigrant

There are several prevalent recurring stereotypes of immigrants: the “successful immigrant”, the “humble immigrant”, and the “unlucky immigrant”. Based on the data, the “successful immigrant” is constructed as the immigrant who migrated to Canada with little, but through hard work and perseverance was able to integrate financially, economically, and/or socially. Also, a successful immigrant was often an immigrant who, although faced with various challenges, was able to secure employment in their field, and therefore “success”. The variety and repetition of such stories help ritualize and normalize the path to “success” that immigrants must undertake. Arguably, they are useful in managing immigrant frustration and helping immigrants delay their gratification if not to a later date in their life, then to the next generation.

Filip Terlecki was born in Warsaw, Poland, and immigrated to Canada as a child. He is a graduate of Ryerson University and is currently employed as a head researcher by a major television broadcasting company in Toronto. He believes Toronto "is often plagued by an extremely conservative civic approach." Editorial. (2008, October 28). New faces join community board. *Toronto Star*

The humble immigrant is constructed as the immigrant who appreciates Canada for the numerous opportunities it offers, regardless of the challenges they face. The “humble immigrant” tends to accept obstacles graciously:

If we work hard, applied ourselves, we can be successful here. Look at me today. I am the very lucky recipient of the very hard work my parents undertook when they came to Canada," Mr. Louie said. Matas, Robert. (2008, April 11). Councilor’s story backs unskilled immigrants. *Globe and Mail*

At the other end of the spectrum, is the “unlucky immigrant”. This immigrant experiences what is generally portrayed as a disproportionate amount of challenges, and does not find

“success” through integration into the job market in their field of expertise. Their challenges are constructed as unfortunate, yet individualized:

Claudia Quiroga and Leo Ospina are the poster children for Canada's immigration nightmare. Engineers with several degrees, languages, and experience, they told the Star in 2004 they were considering a lawsuit against the federal government to get back some of the \$20,000 spent trying to land decent jobs, a credit rating, and health care... "We are not working in our professions. My husband is not in a survival job, but he is not working in his field. His salary is very low," she said recently. "I don't think Canadians want to give us an opportunity when they hear our accents."

Taylor, Lesley Ciarula. (2008, August 7). Immigration dream or nightmare. *Toronto Star*

4.2.3. Skilled Immigrants as a Labour Market Problem

As this study is primarily interested in the portrayal of skilled immigrants, we specifically explored the ways in which they were constructed in comparison to other immigrant groups. In the articles reviewed, portrayals of skilled immigrants were largely related to employment challenges. Again, many articles discussed how overqualified skilled workers accept, or have no choice but to accept, survival/low-paying jobs, in addition to the fact that most employers do not recognize their foreign credentials. Regularly discussed are the need to upgrade skilled immigrants' credentials before they can find employment in their fields, and how the lack of “Canadian experience” plays as an obstacle when finding employment. In addition, most articles provide statistical evidence of the underemployment and unemployment of skilled immigrants. Employment-related challenges linked to insufficient language skills, the non-recognition of foreign credentials, and the lack of “Canadian experience” are often immersed in individual immigrants' narratives. Many of the representations include policy makers and service providers talking about the problem of skilled immigrants. Such portrayals construct the common narrative we have of immigrants – as a labour market problem to solve:

What percentage of skilled immigrants secured jobs in their own fields?

What kind of economic situation do they face on arrival? Do we have any measure of poverty among new immigrants? If a doctor delivers pizza, the

government considers him employed; in fact, he does not work to his potential and is unable to earn wages in keeping with his education and skills. Most newly arrived professionals are forced to accept survival jobs.

Editorial. (2008, March 25). New Immigrants need good jobs. *Toronto Star*

Representations of skilled immigrants are primarily embedded within trends and statistical data of the migration of skilled immigrants in Canada for the past years, as well discourses of how the Canadian economy benefits from their labor and expertise. The term “skilled immigrants” was most often used when discussing new immigration laws, the importance of attracting them to Canada, as well as government initiatives to assist skilled immigrants find employment in their fields.

4.3 Framing the Legal and Social Policy Context of Immigration

The immigration and social policy context through which “Canadian experience” is presented is referenced and constructed by media articles on immigrant integration into the labour market. Articles present various changes made to the immigration policy, such as the changes to the Federal Skilled worker program which further institutionalize “Canadian experience”, the implementation of language tests for those applying for Canadian citizenship, an emphasis on reducing the backlog, and the priority of processing skilled immigrants’ applications through the immigration system. In articulating the problem and solution of the immigrant worker, a policy context and framework is also being constructed:

As Adams notes, recent evidence suggests that highly skilled immigrants are having more difficulties in the labour market than family-class immigrants and refugees. This suggests that Canada's increasing emphasis on skilled immigrants might be misplaced. Rather than cherry-picking the most talented immigrants - and thereby contributing to a brain-drain from developing countries – perhaps we should accept a broader range of immigrants and refugees. A one-track obsession with skilled immigrants is, arguably, both short-sighted and a betrayal of our international responsibilities. Kymlicka, Will. (2007, December 7). Well done, Canada.

Globe & Mail

The complex relationship between skilled immigrants (and immigrants in general)

and the Canadian economy is realized through the construction of the function or characteristics of immigrant workers. This article conceptualizes immigrants as the “shock absorbers” of the economy, where immigration levels are synchronized with the business cycle:

Throughout Canadian history, immigrants have been the shock absorbers of cyclical swings of the economy. Until the early 1990s, Canada's immigration levels were synchronized with the business cycle, increasing during boom periods and scaling back during recessions. Although immigration levels are no longer co-ordinated with the business cycle, immigrants continue to be the last to be hired and the first to be fired. Bauder, Harald. (2009, March 9). Economic crisis bears down on vulnerable immigrants. *Toronto Star*.

4.3.1. Multiculturalism and the Construction of Difference

The dialectics of reporting (Bauder, 2008) facilitates the positive construction of Canadian multiculturalism as accommodating, progressive and key to nation building and economy and simultaneously recognizes the inherent problems:

For the most part, Canada has maintained a reasonable equilibrium. We are a welcoming country, but we expect immigrants to play by the rules. We have a sense of shared citizenship, but we're willing to expand it to include newcomers. Goar, Carol. (2007, February 19). Coasting on past achievements. *Toronto Star*

Counteracting this point of view is this:

Immigration is the cornerstone of our national lore - we are a land built by immigrants, the story goes. To turn our national narrative, no matter how flawed, from seeking nation-builders to recruiting insecure, unprotected, and exploitable temp workers is a sign of our collective descent into intolerance and a systematic suspension of humanitarian principles. Shakir, Uzma. (2009, June 27). Immigration's tough new face. *Toronto Star*

Despite counteracting voices, immigrant workers' relation to the labour market is further calibrated through discourses of difference (racialization). Immigrants are often distinguished based on country of origin and, at times, through religion. These narratives

conflate with preferences established through immigration policy and discriminating practices. While acknowledging that immigrants face employment discrimination, articles suggest that the racialized characteristics of immigrants, such as their accents, create these barriers. Immigrants are encouraged to participate in “accent-reduction classes” so that they can integrate into Canadian workplace culture and boost their own confidence when speaking English in the “Canadian English accent”. Immigrants thus continue to experience their otherness:

Canadian racism has always been subtle, unlike American racism, which slaps you in your face. Canadians who are racists truly believe that they are open and welcoming - until a person of colour or immigrant points out the racism. Then they cry reverse racism or point the finger right back at you because, in this great land, there is no racism . . . only overly sensitive immigrants. Drakes, Shellene. (2009, May 16). Discussing role of racism in Canada. *Toronto Star*

5. DISCUSSION

The findings described above suggest that “Canadian experience” has a fairly long history (at least since the 1970’s) of being tacitly exchanged and taken for granted in the print media. It accomplishes the task of relegating skilled immigrants to a marginalized position in the labour market as they confront the difficulty of establishing their worthiness through “Canadian experience”. While the media may be a site of contestation, it accommodates critiques while still maintaining the normalized status of “Canadian experience”. This normalization is even more evident when we consider the direction that Canadian immigration policies have been taking recently. The marginalization of people, in this case skilled immigrants, helps perpetuate the inequalities required to reserve benefits to the elite few while maintaining a multicultural face in the global world. Given that Canada actively espouses multiculturalism, we have to raise the question of why “Canadian experience”, despite numerous critiques and after more than four decades of “universal” immigration selection criteria, retains such a stranglehold over skilled immigrants and discourses about them. The first paradox is that while we desire

immigration, immigrants face immense difficulties entering the labour market because of their lack of “Canadian experience”. Their difficulties arise from another paradox: immigrants cannot obtain “Canadian experience” if they are not allowed to fully apply their skills in the labour market. We postulate that “Canadian experience” discriminates against and marginalizes skilled immigrants in our discussion about whether this discourse constitutes “Democratic Racism” (Section 5.1).

5.1 Is it Democratic Racism?

Since “Canadian experience” maintains the ambivalent racialized status of immigrants in Canada as desired worker but also as lacking in “Canadian experience”, we postulate that this could be a phenomenon described by Henry and Tator (1994) as “Democratic Racism”. Democratic racism refers to the dissonance between our racist beliefs about people of colour and our sense of democratic self; as such the expectation of “Canadian experience” is justified by a liberal democratic belief in meritocracy and multiculturalism. Racial beliefs, which are embedded in the liberal democratic order, including the dominance of whiteness, maintain the status quo without calling attention to inequality.

Democratic racism is a set of discursive tactics that masks the dominance of whiteness including “explanations, accounts, rationalizations, justifications, and hidden codes of meaning about the “other”” (Tator, n.d. p. 2). For example, immigrants are told that they just have to gain “Canadian experience” to enter the labour market; this dismisses and justifies the underlying issues that create the need for “Canadian experience” in the first place. Some of these reasons could be society’s attempt to maintain white cultural values of Canadian society or perpetuate the privilege of people already here. Democratic racism rejects the possibility of racism in society; likewise, “Canadian experience” dismisses any challenge that there may be racial bias in how we evaluate immigrants and their skills; any reference to race or ethnicity is dismissed by the argument that we live in a multicultural and democratic society. “Canadian experience” becomes a neutral arbiter of what we expect of newcomers. Although the impact is racist in that it is mostly visible minorities who face the problem of “Canadian experience”, democratic racism as an ideology limits our ability to discuss or recognize this requirement as a form of racism. We have very little recourse to address the politics and inequalities engendered through

“Canadian experience” as we are not able to distinguish between genuine work requirements from racialized elements.

5.2. Policy Implications: Institutionalization and Entrenchment of “Canadian Experience”²

In August 2012, CIC quietly unveiled a [major overhaul of the Federal Skilled Worker Program](#) (FSWP), the main economic immigration program commonly known as the “points system” (CIC, 2012). While some terms, such as “adaptability” were used in the previous immigration criteria, this new policy specifies “Canadian experience” as a key criterion for the FSWP. This announcement seemed to solidify the changes to the immigration system CIC has been releasing for the several months prior. In a recent report for the Maytree Foundation, Naomi Alboim and Karen Cohl (2012) argue that one of the most important cumulative impacts of recent changes to immigration policy is that more people will have to arrive in Canada first as temporary foreign workers or international students before being eligible for permanent residence; Alboim and Cohl refer to this as a “two-step process”. While their report does not focus on “Canadian experience”, we argue that many people who enter Canada as temporary foreign workers may never be able to qualify as permanent residents because of increased immigration fees, increased documentation requirements for English or French proficiency (*i.e.*, high test scores), and the ambiguous requirement of “Canadian experience” in both the Canadian Experience Class and the Federal Skilled Worker Program.

The new changes to the Federal Skilled Workers Program solidify a growing trend in Canada to provide employers easy access to “flexible” labour, through temporary foreign worker programs, while limiting the immigrants’ rights and barring most from establishing themselves in Canada. Through strategic and questionable emphasis on “Canadian experience”, the recent immigration policy may have unintended consequences of being highly prejudicial towards immigrants from English- or French-speaking countries, while producing a deportable labour force with a message that only a select few can become full members of Canadian society. Here, “Canadian experience” functions as a

² A fuller version of this section is presented in the inaugural CERIS blog entry. Please see: Sakamoto, Bhuyan, Ku, Jeyapal, & Fang (2012).

criterion against which many temporary foreign workers and other prospective candidates to the skilled workers program will be denied permanent residency.

5.3 “Canadian Experience” in Neoliberal Multiculturalism

The discourse of skilled immigrants is deeply entwined with notions of “Canadian experience” and the production of self-reliant immigrants. Canada eagerly accepts immigrants who are well resourced and require very little public intervention. Even though there is some sympathy for newly arrived skilled immigrants who have problems entering the labour market, the media also suggests that this should not be a burden to Canadian society. Immigrants are “advised” through the media of the several steps they can take to ensure successful labour market entry or to perhaps lower their expectations. They are told that it is essentially their own problem if they do not succeed. Thus we have to be much more selective in who arrives in Canada. This gives clear justification for the recent directions taken in Canadian immigration policies, as discussed above.

5.4 Limitations

The current project focused on newspapers in print format only. Examination of other media formats and outlets could certainly enrich our analysis. Further, the project presented herein sampled three “mainstream” newspapers that circulate in Toronto, Ontario, *Toronto Star*, *National Post* and *Globe and Mail*. While the *National Post* and *Globe and Mail* are national in their reach, the *Toronto Star*, despite having the largest circulation in Canada, is a regional newspaper. Thus, our analysis may reflect regional perspectives of immigrants in Ontario, which may differ from perspectives in other regions of Canada.

5.5 Next Steps

Through the larger “Canadian Experience Media Project”, researchers have used multiple methods to collect data on the concept of “Canadian experience”. In addition to the English-language “mainstream” print media, the larger project has included a study of Chinese-language newspapers (*Ming Pao*, *Sing Tao* and *World Journal*) and South-Asian English-language publications (*Can-India*, *Weekly Voice*, *South Asian Focus* and *South Asian Generation Next*). Another component of the larger project has included an analysis

of policy documents (legislation; ministry reports and official press releases by Citizenship and Immigration of Canada), and “grey literature” or non-peer reviewed materials (*e.g.* studies from *Maytree Foundation, Ontario Coalition of Agencies Service Immigrants, Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council*) to understand public policy interpretation and incorporation of the Canadian Experience Class.

Each of these three groups of media (*i.e.*, the “mainstream” English-language, Chinese-language and “South Asian” English-language print media) as well as policy documents and “grey literature” involves different audiences and contexts and therefore cannot be unproblematically compared. However, each media outlet can be seen as shaping the opinions of its audience. In order to contextualize the overall findings, as well as the role and function of the different forms and languages of print media in this study, the larger project has contacted key informants from the media, immigration sector, academia, and agencies serving immigrants to provide insight into media interpretations of “Canadian experience”. Community Forums have also been conducted to dialogue with the representatives from media and social service agencies.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Since “Canadian Experience” is used differently across groups and media outlets with different publics, policy makers and community organizations should:

- Be critical of media coverage with an understanding that the representations of “Canadian experience” are partial and possibly biased by the perspective of these outlets as influenced by the publics they serve;
- See various media outlets as providing alternative and varied interpretations of it;
- Be reflexive about how they use and understand “Canadian experience” in light of the highly elastic and fluid meanings it holds;
- Demand a more concrete and clear meaning of “Canadian experience” from those who use the term, such as employers, recruiters, and service providers.

The “Canadian Experience” Media Project Team will continue exploring this issue in light of unprecedented changes being brought to immigration policies.

7. CONCLUSION

“Canadian experience” remains highly contested and elusive to newcomers. Its meanings also elude academics researching it to advocate on behalf of skilled immigrants. What we have established is that “Canadian experience” needs to be challenged and questioned every time it is used and assumed. Its taken-for-granted and institutionalized status gives us pause especially when it is a criterion legitimized by the federal immigration policies. We must search for ways to articulate the assumptions made through its taciturn nature.

APPENDIX: MAJOR THEMES USED FOR INITIAL CODING OF THE DATA

THEME	DEFINITION
“Canadian experience”	The descriptions, expectations, and assumptions of, or about, “Canadian experience” and its related concepts. This includes the immigrant and employment-related as well as non-immigrant/non-employment related, a review of the consequences of the lack of “Canadian experience”, and the construction of tacit knowledge in the workplace
Legal and social policy	References to all aspects of legal and social policy, including trends, critiques, tensions, and comparisons related to immigration policies or processes
System and structure	The bureaucratic and institutional environment immigrants enter and negotiate, such as the Canadian economy, job sectors/industries, and regulatory bodies
Discourse of system and structural issues	The discursive environment / context which includes dominant constructions of multiculturalism, as well as racialization, whiteness, and racism.
Representation of skilled immigrants	Construction of immigrants who immigrated under the skilled immigrant class or the immigration policy or process of skilled immigrants. Includes references to employment challenges.
Strategies to address immigrant unemployment/ underemployment	References to strategies which immigrants and those who work with immigrants suggest to address immigrants’ employment, unemployment, or underemployment challenges
Narratives of immigrants	Prevalent narratives on immigrants, such as “the successful immigrant”, “the unlucky immigrant”, and “the humble immigrant
Discourses of immigrants	Ideologies, expectations, stereotypes and assumptions of/about immigrants, including categorizations of immigrant differences (<i>e.g.</i> Family class vs. economic class)
Recommendations	References to recommendations for social policy, practice, employment, and research sectors

REFERENCES

- Abu-Laban, Y. (1998). Welcome/STAY OUT: The contradictions of Canadian integration and immigration policies at the millennium. *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 30 (3), 191–211.
- Alboim, N & Cohl, K. (2012). Shaping the future: Canada's rapidly changing immigration policies. Toronto: Maytree Foundation.
- Bakhtin, M. M. (1981). Discourse in the novel (C. Emerson & M. Holquist, Trans.). In M. Holquist (Ed.), *The dialogic imagination: Four essays by M.M. Bakhtin* (pp. 259-242). Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Bauder, H. (2006). *Labor movement: How migration regulates labor markets*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Bauder, H. (2008). Immigration debate in Canada: How newspapers reported, 1996-2004. *International Migration and Integration*, 9, 289-310.
- Buzan, B., O. Waever, & J. de Wilde. (1998). *Security: A new framework for analysis*. Boulder: Lynne Reinner.
- Chavez, L. R. (2008). *The Latino threat: Constructing immigrants, citizens, and the nation*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2007). *Facts and Figures 2007 – Immigration Overview: Permanent and Temporary Residents*. Ottawa: Author.
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada. (2011). *Annual Report to Parliament on Immigration*. Ottawa: Author.
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2011). *Facts and Figures 2011 – Immigration Overview: Permanent and Temporary Residents*. Ottawa: Author.
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada (August 17, 2012). *News release – Revised Federal Skilled Worker Program unveiled*. News Releases -2012. Ottawa: Author. Retrieved November 13, 2012 from <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/department/media/releases/2012/2012-08-17.asp>
- Dauvergne, C. (2005). *Humanitarianism, identity, and nation: Migration laws in Canada and Australia*. Vancouver: UBC Press.
- Dlamini, N., Anucha, U. & Barat, W. (2012). Negotiated positions: Immigrant women's views and experiences of employment in Canada. *Journal of Women and Social Work*. 27 (4), p.420-434.
- Fairclough, N. (1995). *Media discourse*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Gee, P. J. (2005). *Discourse analysis: An introduction to theory and method*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Grant, T. (2009 January 26). Wading into the talent pool. *The Globe and Mail*.
- Gilmore, J. & Le Petit, C. (2007). *The Canadian Labour Market in 2007*, Ottawa: Statistics Canada.
- Henry, Frances & Tator, Carol. (1994). The ideology of racism: democratic racism. *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 26 (2), 1-14.
- Henry, F., & Tator, C. (2002). *Discourses of domination: Racial bias in the Canadian English-Language Press*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Hier, S. P., & Greenberg, J. L. (2002). Constructing a discursive crisis: risk, problematization and illegal Chinese in Canada. *Ethnic and racial studies*, 25 (3), 490-513.

- Jiwani, Y. (2006). *Discourses of denial: Mediations of race, gender, and violence*. Vancouver: UBC Press.
- Keung, N. (2007 September 13). When Bola met Alison: A newcomer to Canada discovers that her banking skills are transferable and wins over an ally with her positive attitude. *Toronto Star*.
- Ku, J., Doyle, J. & Mooney, N. (2011). Consolidating the self: Immigrant women's settlement in New Brunswick. In E. Tatsoglou & J. Peruvemba (Eds.). *Immigrant Women in Atlantic Canada* (pp. 79-110). Toronto: Women's Press
- Li, P. S. (2003a). Deconstructing Canada's discourse of immigration integration. *Journal of Immigration and Migration Issues*, 4 (3), 315-333.
- Li, P. S. (2003b). *Destination Canada: Immigration debates and issues*. Toronto: Oxford University Press.
- Lindgren, A. (2011). Front page challenge: A case study examining what the ethnic media promises and what it delivers. *CERIS Working Paper #83*. Available from http://ceris.metropolis.net/wp-content/uploads/pdf/research_publication/working_papers/wp83.pdf
- Luk, J. (2011). Who works behind your local Tim Horton's Counter? An examination of immigrant deskilling in Metro Vancouver. *Sojourners*, 3, 22-45.
- MacQueen, K., McLellan, E., Kay, K., & Milstein, B. (1998). Codebook development for team-based qualitative analysis. *Field Methods*, 10, 31-36.
- McIsaac, N. & Alboim, E. (2007). Making the connections: Ottawa's roles in immigrant employment. *Choices*, 13 (3) Retrieved on January 5, 2009 from <http://www.irpp.org/>
- Nonaka, I. & Takeuchi, H. (1995). *The knowledge-creating company: How Japanese companies create the dynamics of innovation*. New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Picot, G. & Hou, F. (2003) The rise in low-income rates among immigrants in Canada. *Analytical Studies Branch Research Paper Series*. Ottawa: Statistics Canada.
- Pitts, J. (2009). Impact of the Current Recession on Immigrants in Ontario's Labour Force: Findings from the Labour Force Survey. *Immigration Policy Branch*, Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration. December 4, 2009
- Polanyi, M. (1966). *The tacit dimension*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday.
- Reitz, J (2005). Tapping immigrants' skills: New directions for Canadian immigration policy in the knowledge economy. *Choices*, 11(1) Retrieved on January 5, 2009 from <http://www.irpp.org/>
- Sakamoto, I. (2007). A critical examination of immigrant acculturation: Toward an anti-oppressive social work with immigrant adults in a pluralistic society. *British Journal of Social Work*, 37(3), 515-535.
- Sakamoto, I., Chin, M. & Kim, J. (2011). Tacit knowledge and immigrants' employment challenges: A case of "Canadian Experience." A paper presented at the 15th Annual Conference of the Society for Social Work Research, Tampa, Florida, USA, January 13-16, 2011.
- Sakamoto, I., Chin, M. & Young, M. (2010). "Canadian Experience," employment challenges, and skilled immigrants: A close look through "tacit knowledge." *Canadian Social Work Journal*, 10(1), 145-151.
- Sakamoto, I., Bhuyan, R., Ku, J., Fang, L., Jeyapal, D., & Zhang, H. (2013).

- Understanding “Canadian Experience” in print media and public policy.* CERIS Research Summary. Toronto: CERIS – The Ontario Metropolis Centre.
- Sakamoto, I., Bhuyan, R., Ku, J., Jeyapal, D. & Fang, L. (2012). Major step-back on Canadian immigration system – Only those with “Canadian experience” need apply. *CERIS Blog*. Available at: <https://cerisontario.wordpress.com/2012/10/10/canadianexperience/>
- Sakamoto, I., Ku, J & Yi, W. (2009). The deep plunge: *Luocha* and the experiences of earlier skilled immigrants from Mainland China in Toronto. *Qualitative Social Work*, 8(4), 427-447.
- Sakamoto, I., Wei, Y. & Truong, L. (2008). How do social service organizations and social policies ‘acculturate’ to immigrants?: Social service provision for Chinese skilled immigrants in Canada. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 42 (3/4), 343-354.
- Sakamoto, I. & Zhou, Y. (2005). Gendered nostalgia: The experiences of new Chinese skilled immigrants in Canada. In V. Agnew. (ed.). *Diaspora, memory and identity: A search for home*. (pp. 209-229). Toronto: The University of Toronto Press.
- Statistics Canada (2005). *Longitudinal survey of immigrants to Canada: A portrait of early settlement experiences*. Ottawa: Author.
- Statistics Canada (2013). *Labour force characteristics by immigrant status of population aged 25-54, and by educational attainment, 2012*. Ottawa: Author.
- Strauss, A. & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Tamburri, R. (2005). Credit due for foreign credentials. *University Affairs*, August/September, 2005. Available at: http://www.universityaffairs.ca/issues/2005/augsept/foreign_credentials_01.html
- Tator, C. (n.d.) *Advancing the Ontario human rights policy and education function*. Ontario Human Rights Commission. Retrieved from: www.ohrc.on.ca/en/issues/racism/racepolicydialogue.ca on April 8, 2012.
- Taylor, L. C. (2008). Immigration: Dream or nightmare? Newcomers to GTA find their experience depends on settlement assistance. *Toronto Star*. Retrieved on August 7, 2008 from <http://www.thestar.com/printArticle/473659>.
- Toronto Immigrant Employment Data Initiative (TIEDI). (2012a). *Pathways to Permanent Residence: The Impact of Changes to Immigration Policies and Categories on Immigrant Service Providers – Roundtable Session*. Friday, January 27, 2012.
- Toronto Immigrant Employment Data Initiative (TIEDI). (2012b). *Pathways to permanent residence: The impact of changes to immigration policies and categories on immigrant service providers*. TIEDI Roundtable 1 Primer.
- Toronto Star (2010). New Workers, New Skills. *Toronto Star*. Sponsored Sections, March 24, 2010.
- van Dijk, Teun A. (1993). *Elite discourse and racism*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Wilkes, R., Guppy, N. & Farris, L. (2008). “No thanks, we’re full”: Individual characteristics, national context, and changing attitudes toward immigration. *The International Migration Review*, 42(2), 302-329.

REFERENCES FOR NEWS ARTICLES CITED

- Alavi, Najia. (2008, July 31). A waste of talent. *National Post*.
- Anonymous. (2008, May 19). PM unconvincing on immigration. [Editorial]. *Toronto Star*.
- Bauder, Harald. (2009, March 9). Economic crisis bears down on vulnerable immigrants. *Toronto Star*.
- Browne, Kelvin. (2011, July 9). Sucking up to cottage owners. *National Post*.
- Clark, Campbell. (2009, July 22). Skilled immigrants being squeezed out as temporary workers flock to Canada. *Globe and Mail*.
- Coffrey, Charles. (2006, June 28). Museum will honour rights. *Toronto Star*.
- Dallaire, Romeo and Peason, Glen. (2010, December 29). Birthing pains of a new nation? *Globe and Mail*.
- Drakes, Shellene. (2009, May 16). Discussing role of racism in Canada. *Toronto Star*.
- Ferenc, Leslie. (2008, October 7). Providing cue cards for Canada so talented immigrants can fit in. *Toronto Star*.
- Fiorito, Joe. (2009, March 2). The crying shame of the taxi. *Toronto Star*.
- Friesen, Joe and Grant, Tavia. (2009, November 24). Earning gap a ‘troubling’ trend. *Globe & Mail*.
- Goar, Carol. (2007, February 19). Coasting on past achievements. *Toronto Star*.
- Grant, Tavia. (2009, July 25). The recovery gap. *Globe and Mail*.
- Harper, Tim. (2012 October 10). Lessons from Ottawa for U.S. victory. *Toronto Star*.
- Hearn, Tim. (2009, January 19). Affordable housing belongs in the budget. *National Post*.
- Kymlicka, Will. (2007, December 7). Well done, Canada. *Globe & Mail*.
- Matas, Robert. (2008, April 11). Councilor’s story backs unskilled immigrants. *Globe and Mail*.
- McLeod, Lori. (2007, July 7). Pension funds on steroids. *Globe and Mail*.
- McIvor, Gordon K. (2007 December 4). Time to brag. *National Post*.
- Murphy, Rex. (2008, May 17). A half-empty cup of Canadiana. *Globe and Mail*.
- Ramsey, Jason. (2008, March 28). Turning down immigrants. *Toronto Star*.
- Rizvi, Medhi. (2008, March 25). New Immigrants need good jobs. [Editorial]. *Toronto Star*.
- Rizvi, Medhi. (2007, October 30). No medical cure for this disability. [Editorial]. *Toronto Star*.
- Shakir, Uzma. (2009, June 27). Immigration’s tough new face. *Toronto Star*.
- Shear, N. (1978, Jun 2). Canadian Experience. *The Globe and Mail*, Toronto, pg.7.
- Simpson, John Worsley. (2006, September 26). Educated immigrants get start. *National Post*.
- Taylor, Lesley Ciarula. (2008, August 7). Immigration dream or nightmare. *Toronto Star*.
- Urquhart, Ian. (2008, October 28). New faces join community board. [Editorial]. *Toronto Star*.
- Yenovkian, Vsem. (2008, March 28). Turning down immigrants. *Toronto Star*.

CERIS – THE ONTARIO METROPOLIS CENTRE

Creating and sharing knowledge on the lives of immigrants and the policies that affect them

Who we are

Established in 1996, CERIS – The Ontario Metropolis Centre is a research network focusing on the resettlement and integration of immigrants and refugees in Ontario. We engage in comparative research, knowledge transfer, and policy development, and we work in a collaborative partnership that includes universities, community organisations and different levels of government. For our first sixteen years, we were funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) and a consortium of 14 federal departments and agencies.

What we do

RESEARCH

CERIS has funded over 120 research projects selected by panels of academic and community researchers and policy makers who evaluate each project's academic and policy merit. Collaborative and interdisciplinary, our research projects are designed to create new knowledge to inform current immigration policy and practice, train graduate students, support community research, and promote knowledge exchange between researchers and all of our partners.

CAPACITY-BUILDING

CERIS trains a new generation of immigration scholars and researchers. Each year, graduate students receive funding to undertake their own research. We also provide support for students to present their work at annual conferences, local seminars, and graduate student workshops and conferences. We collaborate with our partners in the community and in government providing opportunities for them to participate in research projects and to learn more about research design and methods.

KNOWLEDGE MOBILISATION

CERIS supports making relevant research more widely available to policy-makers, service providers, researchers, and diverse communities. We hold frequent conferences and seminars to share our research. We also publish materials for a wide range of users and reach out to those who can use our research to effect evidence-based change.

Why we do it

Research has shown that immigrants and refugees coming to Ontario face increasing challenges. CERIS affiliates believe that good policy decisions flow from evidence-based research. We also believe that research must translate into action and we work to mobilise knowledge by getting it in the right hands at the right time.

Where we work

Our office is located at York University in Toronto, but our network extends across Ontario. Our research examines immigration issues in large and small cities as well as in rural areas across the province.