

**The social organization of the lives of 'semi-skilled' International Migrant Workers
in Alberta: Political rationalities, administrative logic and actual behaviours**

By

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Abstract

This institutional ethnography is an inquiry into the particular migrant category of International Migrant Workers (IMW) in Canada (otherwise known as Temporary Foreign Workers). It looks at how the daily lives of IMWs who have been deemed as ‘semi-skilled’ by the National Occupational Classification (NOC) system are organized by their immigration and job status in Canada. These IMWs are working primarily in the food service, hotel or retail industries in front-line and often precarious employment in Southern and Western Alberta. The data was collected through a literature review, interviews, observations, and textual analysis. The participants that informed this inquiry are IMWs, service providers in the immigrant sector, representatives from the Alberta Government, and an immigrant recruiter/consultant.

This study uses an ‘ideological circle’ (Yan, 2003), which maps out the process through which governmental ideology is filtered down to all levels of society via a set of ideas, knowledge, procedures and methods about people and processes. It provides a vehicle to identify the specific social relations that organize people in different sites. It

becomes apparent through this mapping that along with the political rationalities of *neoliberal criteria and the logic of globalization, and market civilization and citizenship*, certain administrative logic and technologies of government such as *situating IMWs as economic units in the Canadian nation-state, processes of skill codification, and devolution of immigration policies and programs*, become the foundations for the ways that IMWs live their lives in Canada. In particular, we can see how and why they ‘work’ for permanent residency, how and why they become vulnerable to precarious employment in their workplace and in other ways, and how and why they become isolated through family separation. The thesis ends with a look into how social workers and social service organizations are managing ‘professional’ relationships with migrant populations whose lives are organized in the above ways, and questions whether it’s possible at all to move beyond supporting ‘bare life’ (Agamben, 1998).

Acknowledgements

There was a point during this research when I wanted to stop because I felt that it was too hard and that academia perhaps was not for me. It was around the time I had completed all of the interviews with the men and women who agreed to take time out of their busy schedules to sit in a random coffee shop or community room in a local grocery store to tell me their stories. I look back on that moment and realize that I was probably feeling the weight of these stories on my shoulders and was not sure if I could do them justice. This dissertation was a feat for me, but it was shadowed by the commitment, sacrifices, hard work and dedication of the people whom I interviewed. Obviously, this work would not have been possible without their participation, but beyond that, I am humbled and in awe by their perseverance and their spirit that shone through in every sentence they spoke. A couple of years later, I am not sure where they are or what journey they continued on, but I have to believe that they are living the lives they intend and that their journey to Canada has been worth it for them. Malcolm, Jasmine, Jessica, Marie, Maurice, Magda, Juan, Paula, Pedro and Clara - Thank You is hardly enough for your participation in this research.

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Chapter One - Introduction

In the midst of writing this dissertation, I am paying attention to the sound bites and news clips from Davos, Switzerland where the World Economic Forum is just about to finish. My Prime Minister, Stephen Harper, has just finished his speech to the audience – both the one in the room, and the one that is listening from far away. He is offering a solution to the nation-states that are currently finding themselves in seriously hard economic and social times, suggesting that they have made the wrong decisions about the “hard choices” in the current global economy, and to “stop taking their wealth for granted”.

Is it the case that in the developed world too many of us have in fact become complacent about our prosperity? Taking our wealth as a given, assuming it is somehow the natural order of things, leaving us instead to focus primarily on our services and entitlements? (Canadian Broadcast Company, 2012).

During this speech, he outlines the Canadian version of this blueprint of “hard choices” that will be a “fix for a generation” who will need to confront the challenges of an aging population. Two main targets are clear: the disruption of Canada’s old-age security programs, and the implementation of significant changes to immigration. In an instant, it is clear that Canada’s economic problems are our social programs, and the solutions to these problems are to bring more people to Canada as workers.

Current discourses of conservative fiscal responsibilities would tell us that we have to cut spending on social services, and that we need more workers who are producing wealth in their own pockets and, most importantly, for the private and public coffers. A separate dissertation could be spent on deconstructing this taken-for-granted solution to our current day political economy.

I find it ironic that these national and international discussions are happening at the same time that I am immersed in my dissertation. The Canadian story of immigration is a long and complex one, at times heralded for its response to human crisis and pain and, at other times, tarnished with serious undertones of racism and exploitation (Backhouse, 1999; Knowles, 2007). Today, Canada's discourse on immigration happens simultaneously with discussions about our economic needs and obligations. The above sound bites from Davos are a clear reminder.

This dissertation explores the competing and complimentary points of view of this story. It is an account of the current manifestations and experiences of what it means to be a "semi-skilled temporary foreign worker" in Canada, in particular Alberta, today. This category of immigrant is an important one, as it bridges both our current immigration and economic landscape. This exploration will emphasize the discursive production of the Temporary Foreign Worker, through such concepts as the rational economic actor, the neo-liberal criteria of the nation-state, migration and labour, becoming 'economic units' and citizenship. The account of temporary foreign workers of themselves and by others invested in the program will alert social workers to the many ways in which vulnerability, isolation and becoming disposable are constructed, negotiated and resisted. Finally, it is my intention to bring the discussion of temporary foreign workers into the social work landscape, where it is currently missing. I argue in my concluding chapter that the reasons behind this omission may be related to the fact that temporary migrant workers in Canada today occupy a 'unique' space due to their constructed experiences as temporary, foreign and workers, where normalized social work processes may be challenged to address them.

“Temporary Foreign Workers” in Canada

The number of Temporary Foreign Workers with temporary visas in Canada has continued to increase at steady rates (Nakache & Kinoshita, 2010). Table 1 shows the number of entrants into Canada and Alberta on temporary work visas between the years of 2007 – 2011, whereas Table 2 shows how many people with temporary work visas were present in Canada on December 1st of that year.

Table 1

Number of entrants into Canada and Alberta on temporary work visas

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Alberta	29,288	39,993	28,547	22,994	25,553
Canada	163,542	190,766	176,800	179,179	190,842

Table 2

Number of people present on December 1st with temporary work visas

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Alberta	37,062	57,556	65,606	57,675	69,955
Canada	199,142	249,635	281,073	282,392	300,211

This emphasis on temporary labour as Canada’s dominant migration policy is also evident in the shifts in the classes of migrants. In 1973, 57% of people who entered Canada as ‘workers’ were granted permanent resident status, however, by 1993 only 30% were permanent migrants, while 70% came as migrant workers on temporary employment authorizations (Sharma, 2001). With these shifts in immigration class, there was a change in the emphasis on ‘skill’ levels. In 2002, 53.5% of all temporary foreign workers were in skilled occupations, while just over 26% were in lower-skilled

occupations. By 2007, this had shifted to 39.9% in skilled and 40.8% in lower-skilled occupations. During this same period, there was a visible change in the sending countries. Source countries in Asia and the Pacific have increased during the last decade, just as the proportion of temporary foreign workers from the United States and Europe has decreased, even though workers from these source countries continue to dominate the ‘high-skilled’ program (Nakashe & Kinoshita, 2010). It has become evident that immigration class, skill-level and source country are interdependent factors in Canada’s current immigration policies. These shifts are important to note, as Preibisch (2010) has argued, because they point to new processes that are “allowing employers to move away from nationalities that may be more empowered – either due to a stronger economic fall-back position and/or greater understanding of their rights – to groups that are more vulnerable” (p.406).

Labour migration in the world today

There is a connection between globalization as a capitalist phenomenon and the migration of people around the world, in particular for labour purposes (Overbeek, 2002). “Global capitalism is interwoven with the accumulation, reshaping and sometimes annihilation of the laboring bodies on which it depends. The edifice of the global economy is built upon these social foundations and is constantly shaped and reshaped by the struggles unleashed by conflicts over the construction, reproduction and utilization of labour” (Taylor, 2009, p.436). Instead of the taken-for-granted notions that it is an inevitable feature of progress and prosperity, I argue that it is a manifestation of the systemic and institutionalized neoliberalist ideologies evoked and sustained by current forms of political economy. Deregulation, liberalization, privatization, flexibilization,

reducing state budgets for social welfare, the undermining of the bargaining power of organized labour, the depression of wage demands are but a few examples of how neoliberalism systematically works to create the labour demands and conditions we see today (Brah, 2002; Hennebry, 2008; Overbeek, 2002). Hennebry (2008) argues, "...in a world economy that is characterized by local specializations, the emergence of a global labour market is encouraging labour specialization, with some countries specializing in particular types of workers" (p. 342).

It is these labour specializations, deemed necessary by perceived labour market shortages, that determine the "right" candidates for migration, usually from developing economies to developed ones (Brah, 2002; Cohen, 2006; Nakache & Kinoshita, 2010; Sharma, 2006; Taylor, 2009). Regulation and classification of certain classes of workers through policy tools such as specialized Labour Market Opinions (LMO) and National Occupational Classification (NOC) codes, further constructs a hierarchy of the worthy and desired immigrant. Canada's current forms of immigration channels are employer-driven, usually at the expense of humanitarian-driven objectives such as family reunification and providing safety for refugees. One of the objectives of this dissertation is to highlight the taken-for-granted assumptions and arguments that support current Canadian migration for labour programs through particular ideologies and how the state functions as a result.

By one thing, we create others

The second objective of my research stems from a simple question I had wondered throughout my own professional career (as a social worker interested in issues of migration and immigrant well-being) and personal life (as the daughter of immigrant

parents). “What does it mean to be in Canada as a temporary foreign worker ?” In order to answer this question, this inquiry is intended to explore these experiences and meanings through a variety of inputs. However, the inquiry does not stop there, as the ethnographic methods I employed will be used to draw out the ways within which “the development of one group is linked to the development of another” (Chambon, 1999). In other words, this inquiry has the objective to understand the new subjectivities produced by these meanings and experiences. I want to know *what kind of outcomes* (intended or not) are we (Canadians) producing through our migrant immigration programs and *how they are being produced*. In particular, what is the social work response?

I am interested in building on the important work done by Nandita Sharma in her book entitled *Home Economics: Nationalism and the making of ‘migrant workers’ in Canada* (2006). Through an institutional ethnographic approach, Sharma shows “how notions of freedom and its relationship to citizenship status has – and continues to – rely on the unfreedom of those othered by the ongoing project of White Canadian nation-state building” (p. 139). One of the key arguments that Sharma makes is that the creation of migrant labor programs in Canada simultaneously produces the citizen (worthy of rights and responsibilities in the Canadian nation state) and the non-citizen (temporary foreign workers who experience these rights and responsibilities at a lesser level).

It is on this foundation that my dissertation builds. To further the analysis, I am interested in how these subjectivities show up in the ‘social work world’. How does the discipline of social work take up a population of non-citizens? What are the possibilities and non-possibilities in working with temporary foreign workers given the following

analysis? Although it may seem that these are a disconnected set of topics, in fact studied together, they are show how ideological practices have material effects (Sharma, 2006).

Overview of study

This study's "problematic" (Smith, 1987) is explored through an institutional ethnography (IE) (Smith, 2005). IE does not ask the researcher to identify any research questions from the beginning of the inquiry (Campbell & Gregor, 2002) and so neither did I. Instead, IE asks the researcher to "identify an experience or an area of everyday practice whose determinants are to be explored" (Devault & McCoy, 2012). As such, my inquiry started with a simple question (driven by my social work sensibilities): "What is life in Canada like for people who come with temporary work visas?" Considering the IE approach to exploring the problematic is to take the standpoint of those who are somehow connected to the phenomenon, I collected data through fifteen semi-structured interviews which were conducted over a four-month period. These interviews took place with ten temporary foreign workers, one TFW recruiter, one staff at the Alberta Government Temporary Foreign Worker Advisory Office, and three staff of a TFW Support Services program through the Calgary Catholic Immigration Society. In addition, I attended several public information sessions where Alberta government spokespersons or community-based organization staff delivered pertinent information to an audience of TFW or employers of TFWs. Finally, I include some textual analysis of policy or program documents as well as information made public about the program, via government of Alberta and Canada websites and news coverage of the topic.

Organization of thesis

In Chapter 2, I offer an overview of temporary foreign worker programs, including a brief history on a global scale, and in more depth about Canada's temporary labour migration programs. Chapter 3 presents the methodology I have chosen, IE, and the groundwork for my inquiry, including the problematic I have identified that drives it. In Chapter 4, I review the literature, both theoretical and empirical, on globalization, labour migration, the nation-state and citizenship regimes, neoliberal and market citizenship, and bureaucratic responses to neoliberalism such as creating 'economic units', classifications of workers, and deregulation. Each of these content areas contribute to the context of my inquiry in ways that show that the concept and practice of temporary foreign worker programs are not necessarily as a result of the natural order of how the world has become more globalized, but instead have worked in tandem and in deliberate ways that respond to neoliberal criteria and logic that have been assumed by different levels of governments in Canada, civil society, the family and the self.

Chapter 5, the 'ethnographic chapter' is the 'story-telling' of what I heard, read and saw throughout the data collection phase. I offer this description as an entry into Chapter 6, where I make sense of all of the information I gathered in my own version of the 'ideological circle' of the temporary foreign worker. I present an adapted diagram that shows my conceptual framework of the inquiry. This "ideological circle" shows how the discursive production of the temporary foreign worker comes to be through the political rationalities of economic and neoliberal criteria, public and political debates, discursive practices through technologies of government, and finally through the actual behaviours of individuals. In chapter 7, I conclude with some of the key notions that I argue must be addressed in order for social workers and related professions to be able to

work with TFWs in Canada while supporting, even unintentionally, the ideological circle that produces them.

Chapter Two – Overview of Canada’s Migrant Worker Programs

The historical links of imperial countries to their former colonies for the purpose of recruiting low-wage labour is becoming far less tenous as the mobile labour supply itself becomes globalized in its origin as well as destination. As the clamour of xenophobia, racism and anti-refugee/asylum seekers rhetoric grows apace, the governments of many receiving countries fail to address the growing confrontation between the circulation of capital, commodities, cultural signs and products, on the one hand, and the circulation of people on the other (Brah, 2002, p. 38).

It is not my intention in the following section to prove a linear or historical continuity of foreign labour programs. I recognize that there is a risk, by including even the briefest synopsis of foreign labour programs around the world and in Canada, that I may give the impression that they are logical and natural human progressions. Instead, I hope to show that these types of programs have been used in several locales and over time in particular, deliberate and productive ways, and how they, as a set of practices, came about to produce a “regime of truth” (Donzelot, 2008) of globalization, economic rationalization and the migrant labourer.

Labour migration has played an important role in the imperial desires, economic development and political hegemony of many industrialized nations (Castles, 2004). Hahamovitch (2003) discusses the legacy of moving bodies from one part of the world to another in the name of nation building. Following the eras of slavery and indentured servitude, ‘guestworker’ programs were used as a means to replace the emancipated slaves in the British Empire in the 1830s. These programs differed from the indentured service and slave trade because these migrant labourers were expected to leave after their labour was no longer required. Several authors (Appleyard, 2001; Calavita, 2005; Castles, 2004; Cohen, 2006; Hahamovitch, 2003; Plewa, 2007; Sharma, 2006) have shown how guestworker programs were created during explicit nation-building eras.

These programs proliferated when rapidly changing industries, such as agriculture or mining, required a quick and flexible labour force. Leaders of these industries argued that workers can not be found within the citizenry because they are unwilling to take on these jobs. In response, governments become involved both to ensure a relative ease of access to foreign labour and to manage public opposition based on nationalism to foreign presence. In so doing, temporary worker programs fit the bill both ways: by filling *perceived* national labour needs, as well as ensuring a quick expulsion when temporary labour needs have diminished.

With the advent of both World War I and II, the desire for temporary workers accelerated in response to the demand for skilled and semi-skilled labour in Western countries for war mobilization and post-war reconstruction. Policy rhetoric in many countries during these times calmed nationalist concerns of citizens by guaranteeing that guestworker programs were restricted, protecting nations from “foreigners”. The public’s migration readiness during the pre- and post-war eras was as a result of the argument that there was need for temporary workers to relieve labour shortages due to the implications of war. Similar to the foreign labour programs before, these workers were subjected to menial, dangerous and low-paying jobs that the citizenry rejected.

Canada’s migrant labour programs

Canada’s labour programs exist in a long history of its nation-building enterprise. Our immigration policies and programs have oscillated over the last century between economic self-interest and humanitarian obligations. Certainly, the principles governing these programs prove that determining a perfect immigrant has always been the priority, ranging from preferences based on national, racialized and gendered characteristics to

their readiness to contribute to the development of a strong and viable economy (Harzig, 2003; Knowles, 2007; Vineberg, 2011). Neo-liberal criteria and logics have contributed to these shifts, as the “good” immigrant and citizen is the self-reliant “atomized market player” (Arat-Koc, 1999, p. 34) which has continued to differentiate people based on gender, age and racialized background (Arat-Koc, 1999; Ong, 2006). This neo-liberal approach to immigration policies satisfies the neo-liberal logic of a weakened welfare state; since the new role of immigration was to ensure that newcomers can integrate and contribute to the Canadian economy quickly due to more emphasis placed on their economic capability, job and language skills, there would be less reliance on social assistance (Arat-Koc, 1999).

Harzing (2003) offers an interesting glimpse into how Canada’s immigration programs have responded to various pressures coming from international politics, humanitarian interests, labour market demands and internal political interests over the years of 1945-1960. The author describes how significant adjustments were made to transition from a semi-humanitarian program to a labour market recruitment policy. Using the search for domestics during the 1950s as an example, the author shows that sources for domestic labour in “preferred source countries” such as the UK were becoming scarce because people began to find employment in their home countries after the stabilization of Western Europe after WWII, where living and working conditions for domestics were better. As a result, recruitment efforts were implemented in other parts of the world, and this is when the Caribbean domestics program was initiated. “Obviously the bargain that had been established in this scheme – you promise to do what we don’t like to do, at least for a year, and we give you the chance to become Canadian – had lost

its attraction to European women. Therefore, Canadians had to turn elsewhere, namely to the Caribbean to find people who were attracted to this sort of arrangement” (p. 37).

Similarly, Iacovetta (1991) discusses how the Canadian government formalized agreements with the Italian government in 1950 in which Italian workers fulfilled “bulk orders” in response to labour demands in specific industries such as agriculture, mining, domestic service, metal trades and logging. Italian officials would carry out pre-examinations on candidates before setting sail for Canada, with strict orders from their Canadian counterparts that those selected should be single, “genuine farmers, hard-working men, used to tilling the soil...no lawyers, philosophers or other such professions among them” (as cited in Iacovetta, 1991, p. 59). These migrants would have to sign a contract obliging them to stay in their jobs for one year, after which they could find work elsewhere. After five years, they were allowed to apply for residency if they desired. The author argues that the term “bulk orders” suggests how the workers were viewed as commodities, and treated as such.

Since the numbers of pre-selected men always greatly outnumbered the available positions, the centers overflowed with prospective candidates who were kept waiting for days at a time. Hundreds of men who had come long distances and could not afford accommodation slept outside the centers, awaiting inspection and the final "cattle calls." When the Canadian teams arrived, the men were subjected to a battery of questions, though they quickly learned to supply the appropriate answers. Each man's hands were also checked for callouses - leaving no doubt as to the type of jobs they were to fill in Canada (p.59).

Similar to Harzing’s (2003) account regarding the shift from preferred sending countries to ‘less-desirable’ ones such as the Common-wealth nations for immigrating women to Canada for domestic service, Iacovetta shows that at around the same time – 1951-1952 – Canada started to look at Italian women after efforts to recruit from the UK,

Germany and Holland (deemed preferred countries) fell short. Italian women were subjected to sexist and racist practices: not only were women chaperones ‘appointed’ by Italian officials to accompany Italian “girls” to Canada, they were housed in convents, and offered lower wages than domestics from preferred countries (Iacovetta, 1991). While in Canada as domestic workers, they were consistently blamed for issues that arose with their Canadian ‘mistresses’ as they were viewed as “poor country girls ignorant of North America standards of personal hygiene and cleanliness” (p.71).

Current day dominant government discourses usually emphasize how immigration policies will affect the Canadian economy. Both government and private industry sectors issue statements and policies that try to prove that immigration is the answer to Canada’s economic goals. In the Immigration and Refugee Act of 2001, for example, it states that Canada’s immigration policy is to “permit Canada to pursue the maximum...economic benefit of immigration” and to “support the development of a strong and prosperous Canadian economy” (section 3(1)). According to this legislation, “fast tracking international workers into in-demand jobs” is touted as the best response to labour shortages and employer needs. As a result, significant shifts to the *Federal Skilled Worker Program* (otherwise know as the ‘points program’) and the advent of the *Canadian Experience Class* program indicated that Canada was implementing a more focused approach to attracting specific immigrants to Canada by moving away from prospective employability as a criterion for selection, and towards the emphasis on actual employability (paving the way to a more an employer-driven selection) (Baglay, 2012).

All categories of the temporary foreign worker programs have been strengthened during these significant policy changes. Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), the

federal department in charge of guiding and implementing immigration policy, state on their website that TFWs “enter Canada to work temporarily in jobs that help Canadian employers address skill shortages, or to work as live-in caregivers” (2012). Organizations such as the Conference Board of Canada produce literature that invokes the “booming” business and economic goals of Canada as a reason for the TFWP. For instance, magazine articles state the following kinds of arguments:

Across Canada – from booming Alberta to British Columbia to the more humble economies of Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island – businesses are facing severe shortages in both skilled and unskilled labour. Temporary workers, brought into Canada under a tightly administered program that works efficiently, would help alleviate some pressure (Olijynik, 2007).

This increasing emphasis on the recruitment of temporary migrant workers became clear with changes to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act in 2002, favoring “flexibility” and “labour force responsiveness”. These changes are further reinforced in the introduction of Bill C-50 (2009) which provides the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration discretionary powers to select migrants on the basis of labour force needs (Hennebry, 2008). The following numbers show this shift. In 2008, over 182,000 individuals entered as TFWs (including internationally arranged (i.e. NAFTA), spouses/partners of TFWs, live-in caregivers, seasonal agricultural workers, and “low-skilled” workers under the pilot program). During the same year, 125,779 individuals came to Canada under the other three programs combined (Family Class, Economic immigrants, and Refugees).

Although the numbers of temporary workers to Canada have increased exponentially in the last decade, Canada has benefited over the last 50 years from a variety of migrant labour policies. It began with the implementation of the *Non-*

immigrant Employment Authorization Policy (NIEAP) framework in the early 1970s, which culminated in three particular programs. First, a program was developed to fill a perceived general deficiency for certain ‘high-skilled’ jobs, where Canadians are not able to supply the demand for labour requirements (i.e. high tech). Secondly, the program targeted two niche labour markets in the country through the seasonal agriculture workers program (SAWP) and the live-in caregivers program (LCP), each with their own set of regulatory frameworks and place in the on-going Canadian nation-building story. It is important to remember how the temporary foreign workers program differs from the other three migration pathways into Canada – the economic class, the family class and the humanitarian class. Out of the three immigrant classes, only the Economic Class takes into account, through the point system, the level of education and employment readiness that the immigrant brings to Canada, but does not fill specific labour market needs. The entrance requirements for someone in the economic class span a breadth beyond their labour market contribution.

The scholarship that looks at temporary foreign workers in Canada spans several frames of analysis. Out of the three specific temporary labour programs, the Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP) and the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP) seem to have dominated the policy and academic focus for analysis (Nakache & Kinoshita, 2010), whereas the third program, known as the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP), bring the most workers, but it seems to have gone under the radar of analysis and even public debate, until very recently.

Although the LCP and the SAWP dominated the temporary labour schemas in Canada in the 1970s, the TFWP, which started around the same time, was primarily

focused on ‘high-skilled’ workers such as academics and engineers. Over time industries requiring more ‘low-skilled’ workers, such as oil and gas, hospitality and service industries began to voice their interest in attracting foreign workers to meet an identified labour shortage (Nakache & Kinoshita, 2010). Thus, in 2002, the *Pilot Project for Hiring Foreign Workers in Occupations that Require Lower Levels of Formal Training* (referred to hereafter as “low-skilled pilot project”) came into effect, with subsequent changes to the program that expedited its use by employers in 2007. This dissertation will focus primarily on the ‘low-skilled pilot project’.

The administration of and recruitment for the ‘low-skilled pilot project’ runs in concurrent federal and provincial jurisdictions. Hiring a ‘low-skilled’ TFW starts with an employer who is interested in finding people for job vacancies they believe will not be filled by Canadians. Their first step is to apply for a Labour Market Opinion to Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC). A positive Labour Market Opinion (LMO) shows that the employer has made efforts to recruit and/or train “willing and available Canadian citizens/permanent residents”, will offer prevailing wages paid to Canadians in the same occupation and regions and that working conditions meet current provincial market standards. Once an LMO is approved, the employer will recruit TFWs, usually through an independent third party immigration recruiter or consultant. These recruiters may work in Canada or internationally and are willing to find, screen and coordinate interviews between employers and workers. When a successful match has been made, the worker is tasked with applying for a work permit, issued by Citizenship and Immigration Canada based on a ‘genuine’ job offer and the worker’s admissibility into Canada based on criminality, health and security. Provincial jurisdictions take over

once a TFW has arrived – via health, settlement, social service provision, and employment standards.

It is important to note the emphasis that this program places on delineating ‘skill’ levels, which are determined through National Occupational Classification (NOC) (further detailed in Chapter 6). In 2002, 53.5% of all temporary foreign workers were in skilled occupations (NOC A, B & O), while just over 26% were in lower-skilled occupations (C & D). By 2007, this had shifted to 39.9% in skilled and 40.8% in lower-skilled occupations. At the same time, there was a visible change in the sending countries. The source countries in Asia and the Pacific increased during the last decade, just as the proportion of TFWs from the United States and Europe decreased, although workers from these source countries also continue to dominate the ‘high-skilled’ program (Nakashe & Kinoshita, 2010).

Skill codes indicate an important aspect - whether the TFW will be able to apply for permanent residency once in Canada. Those in ‘high-skilled’ are able to apply to the Federal Skilled Worker Program or the Canadian Experience Class at the federal level, or the Provincial Nominee Programs (PNPs). The two federal programs do not allow low- or semi-skilled TFWs to apply; their only avenue is through select PNPs. For example, the Alberta Immigrant Nominee Program (AINP) is the only route for those in low- and semi-skilled occupations such as manufacturing, transportation, tourism, hospitality and food services.

Lastly, regulatory changes over the past seven years show that the program is intended to be responsive and flexible and should meet the needs and demands of employers and the economy. For example, in 2007, at the height of the economic boom

in Canada, the number of LSTFW increased dramatically due to an increased maximum period of validity of work permit to two years, as well as an introduction to an Accelerated LMO processing (which softened the regulations of the LMO). In 2009, during the ‘economic downturn’ things quickly changed, and restrictions to the program resumed. Employers had to once again prove that they could not fill the jobs with Canadians, and work permits were limited to one year (Woo-Paw, 2011).¹

In April 2011, new changes took place that were “intended to provide stricter employer accountability mechanisms and reinforce the nature of the TFW program as a temporary solution to labour and skill shortages” (Woo-Paw, 2011, p.9). For example, the maximum cumulative amount of time one TFW could stay in Canada is 4 years (if they have not or are not able to apply for PR), at which time they have to leave the country for a minimum of 4 years before they can reapply². More recently, changes to the program in 2012 have located TFWPs as a key contributor to Canada’s economic recovery. Three significant changes are taking place. First, employers with a “strong track record” will receive Accelerated-Labour Market Opinions within 10 business days to hire temporary foreign workers in high-skilled categories. Secondly, and perhaps most astonishing, the changes allow for lower wages to TFWs. According to Human

Resources and Skills Development Canada:

A new wage structure will also be introduced to provide employers with greater flexibility. Wages that are up to 15% below the average wage for an occupation in a specific region will be accepted; however, employers must clearly demonstrate that the wage is consistent with that of Canadian

¹ It should be noted that until recently, work permits can be granted extensions indefinitely, which is how many TFWs end up being on continuous temporary work permits; all that is required is a new LMO.

² Those that are exempt are people with managerial or professional occupational codes, TFWs who have applied and received permanent residency via a provincial nominee program, TFWs who are employed under an international agreement such as NAFTA, and TFWs who are exempt from Labour Market Opinions such as entrepreneurs, academics, or common law partners or spouses of ‘highly-skilled’ TFWs.

workers based on Statistics Canada data (Government of Canada, News Centre, 2012).

Finally, an explicit focus on “Canadians First” is demonstrated through the changes to the program, which are embedded in Canada’s annual budget *Economic Action Plan 2012*. While specific changes to Employment Insurance (EI) for Canadians were occurring at the same time, TFWPs and EI are linked through a public discourse of job availability and potential workers (Canadians or non-Canadians). As such:

The Government of Canada will improve the administration of the Temporary Foreign Worker Program through enhanced information sharing with the Employment Insurance (EI) program to help ensure that foreign workers do not displace Canadians workers. In addition, employment opportunities that would otherwise be filled by temporary foreign workers will be sent to EI claimants via the Job Alert system (Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, 2012).

Provincial Nominee Programs and the Alberta Immigrant Nominee Program

Provincial Nominee Programs (PNPs) have proliferated over the last few decades. Recognized as “spreading out the benefits of immigration around the country” (Kenney, 2011) these programs allow more active involvement of provinces and territories in the selection of immigrants that they deem fit their own selected criteria. Usually, this criterion is based on “properly responding to diverse economic, demographic, and social needs of provinces and territories as well as managing newcomer settlement patterns in Canada” (Baglay, 2012, p. 122). Both the TFWP and PNPs have proliferated over the same time period (primarily over the last decade), both offering a “two-step” migration process (Hawthorne, 2010). This allows for the development of migration strategies to attract and retain skilled workers by combining government and employer driven strategies. As Lowe (2010) puts it, it’s a migration process where “migrants enter with

restricted privileges and must prove successful integration in order to gain access to permanent residency” (p.26). It is clear that Canada’s immigration policies are moving in this direction as evidenced in the consistently decreasing numbers permanent immigrants and increasing numbers of temporary migrants and other “two-step” migrants (such as international students) since 2003 (Lowe, 2010).

Since 1998, many provinces have taken the opportunity to strike such agreements with the federal government; the Alberta Immigrant Nominee Program (AINP) came in effect in 2002. The Alberta PNP agreement allows it to select and nominate temporary foreign workers who are skilled, business and “semi-skilled”, all in specific occupations. The majority of applicants are individuals that are already working or in Alberta as TFWs.

The immigration process under PNPs involves two steps:

1. Applicant submits a PNP application to a given province. If the applicant meets provincial selection criteria, he or she is nominated for immigration.
2. Nominated applicant submits application for permanent residence to a CIC visa office. Inadmissibility checks, including security, criminality, and health, are conducted; an interview may be held if necessary. CIC makes a final decision on the application and issues or refuses a permanent resident visa. (Baglay, 2012, p. 127).

The expansion of the program is supported by a clear message from the Alberta Government that Alberta’s demographic situation (retiring “baby boomers”, low birth-rate) is a constraint on Alberta’s economic growth. The projections of required workers comes the “Alberta Occupational Demand and Supply Outlook”, a forecasting tool that expects that Alberta’s workforce is projected to be short 77,000 workers between 2009 and 2019. This same tool projects that the occupations that will be in demand are

construction trades and labourers, nurses, nurse aids and orderlies, and oil and gas servicing and related labourers (Woo-Paw, 2011).

Traditionally, TFWs in Alberta came from English-speaking countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia, however in recent years more people are coming from countries such as the Phillipines, Mexico, India and China. Skill level is an important aspect to the AINP. It is best described in a report by the Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Employment and Immigration called *Impact of the TFW Program on the Labour Market in Alberta (2011)*:

Neither the FSW Program nor CEC is available to low- and semi-skilled TFWs. Low- and semi-skilled occupations include those in manufacturing, transportation, tourism and hospitality, food services and food and beverage processing sectors. For these categories of TFWs in low- and semi-skilled occupations, there are limited opportunities to permanent residency through the Alberta Immigrant Nominee Program (AINP). For many that is acceptable – some TFWs who come to work in Alberta through the TFW Program are truly in temporary positions, such as seasonal workers. Others come to work in Canada for short terms under international agreements such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). However, an increasing number of TFWs are coming with the hope and expectation of becoming permanent residents - a hope that is often shared by their employers. Frequently, TFWs have given up other career opportunities and left family in other countries for the opportunity to work in Canada (Woo-Paw, 2010).

In 2010, the AINP application limit, a number set by the federal government, was 5,000. Out of those applicants, approximately 70% were in skilled occupations, leaving 30% open for low- or semi-skilled occupations. In the stakeholder consultations that informed the Parliamentary Secretary's report, it was identified that the Alberta government should look at expanding or changing the numbers of low- or semi-skilled workers who can apply since the AINP is their only route. The report states this in response:

There are concerns that increased mobility of former TFWs may potentially leave the employer in need of recruiting yet another TFW to fill the now vacant temporary position. As well, transitioning low-skilled TFWs to permanent residency without any specific human capital requirement may require future government investment.

Employers and researchers believe further study is required to thoroughly examine this issue within the Alberta context and properly inform future policy and program developments (Woo-Paw, p.11).

Other concerns have been highlighted by labour unions in the province, usually related to employment standards, labour brokers and recruiters, and changes to federal policies including Labour Market Opinions, amongst others (Alberta Federation of Labour, 2010). Generally, unions in Alberta have taken a stand to say that the TFW program does not work for TFWs or for Alberta workers, and that there should be either major overhauls to the program or a cessation all together. In November of 2010, the Alberta Federation of Labour (AFL) hosted a workshop with participants from immigrant-serving agencies, TFWs, community volunteers and trade unions, policy experts and government officials to discuss current issues and trends with regards to TFWs in Alberta. Several recommendations were made: 1) pressuring the federal and provincial governments to tighten up legislation (namely the Fair Trade Act regulating brokers, recruiters and agents in Alberta); 2) moving away from temporary work towards permanent residency (i.e. the AINP should be open to all TFWs, regardless of skill level); 3) ensuring that all workers have human rights protections to which they are entitled to (calling for a strengthening of the mandate and increasing staff at Alberta's Temporary Foreign Workers Advisory Office).

Identified success and barriers of migrant labour programs

The administration of the TFWP crosses the confusing terrain of federal jurisdiction over migration into Canada, and the managing of “foreigners”, while social programs such as settlement, health care, housing and employment standards are under the control of provincial governments (except for Employment Insurance, which falls under federal jurisdiction). Navigating the system is already relatively cumbersome; doing so when there are questions of safety, security or employment-based grievances would be daunting. Given that the particulars of grievances or access to rights dictates the path to resolution - whether it is the courts, a provincial administrative body (such as an employment standards officer or workers’ compensation board), a federal administrative body (such as CIC) or a public or private social service - it is easy to imagine that even one versed in the “lay of the land” would find it difficult to navigate the system. Nakache & Kinoshita (2010) show that even though there are no explicit distinctions between the employment rights of the TFW or a Canadian citizen or permanent resident, the practice of these employment rights are not as positive.

Temporary foreign workers may experience additional hurdles: inexperience with the Canadian legal and social systems, limited opportunity for permanent immigration, language barriers, misleading employer-provided information, and self-censorship to protect their jobs and threats of deportation, among others. Furthermore, the rights held out as protection for all may be of little value to the temporary foreign worker who is in the unique employment situation of needing a work permit that has legal restrictions” (Nakache & Kinoshita, 2010, p. 8).

It is evident that the ‘low-skilled’ temporary foreign worker in Canada lives in a “precarious status” (Bernhard, Goldring, Young, Berinstein, & Wilson, 2007). This status

is defined by the lack of securities that are normally found within permanent residency or citizenship (Goldring, 2010). The TFW is always bordering on the edge of legality/illegality in Canada, and this defines their experiences. Moreover, this precarious status is determined by the job stability that a TFW is experiencing. In other words, a TFW in Canada without a job (beyond the allotted 'grace period' of 3 months to find another one) suddenly becomes an illegal alien.

Other factors determine a state of vulnerability for TFWs. A number of authors have identified the challenges facing TFWs in Canada, in particular those in low- or semi-skilled occupations such as social exclusion and barriers to social rights (Basok, 2004); the effects of family separation and lack of social networks (Bernhard, 2009); the impact of precarious status on access to services (Bernhard et al., 2007); employment related rights and legal regulatory frameworks (Fudge & MacPhail, 2009; Marsden, 2011); routes to precarious status and illegality (Goldring, Berinstein, & Bernhard, 2009); gendered implications on temporary workers (Baines et al., 2002; Hermoso Santamaria & Preibisch, 2006); worker- community relations (Preibisch, 2004); chronic health effects (Preibisch & Hennebry, 2011); recruitment strategies and the illicit charging of recruitment fees (although they are hidden under the guise of allowable settlement fees), the restrictive nature of the work permit (such as the inability for the employee to change their employment), confusion of the right of the worker to access Employment Insurance (due to a confusing and restrictive permit), as well as the lack of access to social rights based on their temporary visa (Nakache & Kinoshita, 2010; Oxman-Martinez, Hanley & Cheung, 2004)

The report made to the Minister of Employment and Immigration in Alberta highlights these challenges as well as others that may or may not be unique in Alberta. These challenges include “high stress and vulnerable situations” due to family separation and isolation outside of the workplace, “mixed messages” about Canada’s continued discourse around worker shortages at the same time as restricted access to permanent residency, the lack of access to services such as language or training programs and lack of information. Significant concerns have been raised about the health and well-being factors such as female TFWs experiencing domestic abuse but not being able to access services, transportation and housing issues, and finally, health and safety concerns and other Employment Standards issues.

Conclusion

Canada’s migrant labour programs have supported the political and economic aspirations of our nation-building exercises over the last fifty years. These migrant labour programs are found in the complex of our immigration legislation and national and provincial economies. As a result, there is an updated version of the “preferred immigrant” to Canada, one that almost entirely reflects the desires of the Canadian nation-state for people who can contribute to its strengthening. Temporary foreign worker programs have indeed supported (and contributed) to this desire. Growing from the initial targeted agricultural and domestic work sectors, recently, the program has expanded to include many industries who have successfully lobbied that they are facing significant labour shortages, namely construction, food service and preparation, hotel, etc. Today, most employers who can prove that they are required to bring workers from outside of Canada because they can not find Canadian workers who are ‘willing or able’,

are able to bring temporary foreign workers in significant numbers. Once this application is successful, a number of regulations begin – work permits, visas, National Occupational Classifications, etc. Further proliferations of labour migrant programs are happening through the strengthening of provincial and/or employer deemed programs. Finally, a brief synopsis of the precarious status of these workers in Alberta describes the challenges that are faced by many workers, particularly those deemed ‘low or semi-skilled’.

Chapter Three - Research methodology

The purpose of this study is to glimpse into the lives of TFWs in Alberta today, in order to better understand what it means to be living in Canada as a temporary migrant worker. This can be perceived as a simple exercise, and one that may elicit a stop-gap response to whatever answers may follow. However, it is the intention of this research to develop a deeper understanding of the lives and experiences of temporary foreign workers, which in the end, may in fact contest normalized social work responses, and their associated assumptions.

I have used an Institutional Ethnography (IE) design for this research project. This “sociology for people” (Smith, 2005) studies everyday life in its current state. It is an approach that is grounded in a social ontology that sees lives as intricately shaped by social relations of coordination and control that we, as individuals, often cannot see because each of us lives in a local time and place and consequently our experiences are limited. IE looks for the ways in which our daily lives are put together and end up in a particular way. It proceeds from what people know of their lives, what they do every day and how they express their knowing (Smith, 2005).

It then moves beyond this local knowledge to explicate the broader processes that organize this local experience. As Devault and McCoy (2012) state: “In contemporary global capitalist society, our everyday worlds are organized in powerful ways by translocal social relations that pass through local settings and shape them according to a logic of transformation that begins and gathers speed somewhere else (e.g. if the local hospital closes, the explanation will not be wholly local)” (p.382). Using IE for inquiries

into what is happening at the local site helps the researcher to locate the context outside of the local that is helping to shape it.

There are two key features of IE that are important to foreground. First, IE is a method and theory of inquiry that is rooted in an understanding that our everyday world of experiences are put together by relations that extend beyond our own daily lives but these relations underpin the taken for granted ways in which we understand our daily lives. IE aims to uncover our own participation in social relations that may not be completely visible to us. As such, IE begins in the everyday lives we live and starts inquiry by documenting the ethnographic details of this local world. Nevertheless, even though IE inquiry begins with the experiences of people, it only starts there; it does not center these experiences. Instead, it uses the way that people talk about their lives to uncover aspects of the political and social forces that shape their lives. As Smith (2005) articulates further, this theory is “a method of inquiry that works from the actualities of people’s everyday lives and experiences to discover the social as it extends beyond experience” (p. 11). As such, participants in an institutional ethnography are not viewed as a population of subjects, but as informants knowledgeable about the experience or phenomenon that the researcher is curious about. The intent is not to generalize about this group of people, but to describe the social processes that have “generalized effects” (Devault & McCoy, 2012).

Secondly, this inquiry uncovers the social organization of people’s everyday lives. ‘Social organization’ refers to the interplay of social relations with people’s ordinary everyday activities. These are coordinated and purposefully orchestrated with dominant ideology, as it exists in institutional practices, discourses, texts and

technologies. The aim is to explore particular “corners” within a specific institutional complex “in ways that make visible their points of connection with other sites and courses of actions and always with a focus on how they are produced through the coordinated activities of people and the consequences they carry” (Devault & McCoy, 2012, p. 383). IE uses the term "ruling relations" to capture this dynamic. In order to reveal this process, the researcher must specify these forces and ‘map’ how they hook local experiences into larger relations of ruling (Devault, 2006). In other words, the process of uncovering these social relations allows the researcher to start naming the sequences of social action that, while starting (and being visible) at the level of individual activities, actually extend into wider arenas of power relationships. An inquiry into these two levels makes visible the social relations and complex practices that coordinate people’s actions across separations of time and space.

Considering Dorothy Smith’s roots in feminist scholarship and in challenging authorized ways of knowing, institutional ethnography stems from these two beginnings. Scholars interested in politically-charged and revolutionized intellectual work have been attracted to IE as an approach that challenges the way mainstream scholarship rationalizes and further marginalizes its subjects. Scholars have used IE in ways that trace gendered and classed divisions of labour and restructuring (Ng, 1998), to show the nationalist and racist ideological state practices in producing the foreign “other” (Sharma, 2006; 2001), to trace the de-skilling of immigrant professionals in adult education employment programs (Slade, 2012), and to examine the ways that organizational dynamics shape ethnic, gender and class relations in pan-ethnic community agencies that

thwart and facilitate alliances (Otis, 2001). These are but a few examples of scholars that have used IE in pursuit of critical inquiry.

Problematic

According to Smith (2005), “a problematic sets out a project of research and discovery that organizes the direction of investigation from the standpoint of those whose experience is its starting point” (p. 227). A problematic is not a research question per se, or even a problem that can be identified easily, followed by an easy explanation. Instead it is the direction of one’s attention to a possible set of questions, or curiosities, that may have been invisible to the casual glances we throw to everyday occurrences. It is a curiosity about an experience that we ourselves may be living, or the experiences of people we know, are around or care about (Campbell & Gregor, 2008). The problematic requires us to start from a standpoint – a place for the inquiry to begin – which can be from our own space as researchers, or that of the people who are living the experience we are curious about.

The problematic that guides my inquiry stems from three spheres of my life. First, being the daughter of immigrant parents to Canada, and specifically Alberta, I have been close to the subjectivity that this sort of human experience builds. My curiosity about the lives of migrants can be viewed as a curiosity about how my own life and the life of my family have come to be in Canada. Second, considering my professional social work education (and consequently, my personal political beliefs), my curiosity has to do with a keen desire I have to better understand the daily experiences of health and well-being for immigrants in Canada today, most likely because of a desire I have to respond in the ways that the social work discipline has taught me to do. Third, the particularization of

this inquiry – one that moves it from the general notion of ‘migrants’ to the more specific population of temporary migrant workers, comes from the unease I felt before embarking on this journey. I remember hearing about the fact that we had temporary foreign workers in Canada, and followed the mainstream beliefs that they were few in numbers and were relegated to the agricultural work and live-in caregiver programs only. It was until I was more proactive did I understand that this was not the case – the numbers of temporary migrant workers (particularly ‘low-skilled’) in Canada far exceeded what I had known, but what I could find out about them was limited. I felt ‘uneasy’ (Campbell & Gregor, 2002) at what I perceived to be a complete omission of the voices and experiences of temporary foreign workers in Canada’s current discourses about migration.

It is these three areas that shape my curiosity of what life is like in Canada for people who are here with temporary work visas. As I started to think about how I was going to approach the problematic, I began to listen, read and look for the ways within which TFWs were being talked about in Alberta and Canada. This follows an IE approach in beginning an inquiry: “Institutional ethnographers know what they want to explain, but they can discover only step by step whom they need to interview or what texts and discourses they need to examine” (Devault & McCoy, 2012, p. 383). At the beginning of my journey, as I was starting to learn more about the TFWPs in Canada, I also immersed myself in the writings of institutional ethnographers and realized quickly that this was a methodology that would lend itself to my rather incoherent curiosities at the time. It was then that my problematic became more clearly defined: *How are the daily lives of temporary migrant workers in Alberta coordinated by the regulation of their presence in Alberta/Canada?*

One of the ways that institutional ethnographers begin and guide their inquiry is to look at their problematic through a conceptual framework or, as IE calls it, a map that will help identify what the next steps of data collection and analysis may be. As IE is fundamentally an “analytical project” (Devault & McCoy, 2012), a map serves as a tool in understanding what is the context or terrain that one needs to cover for the inquiry, as well as the culmination of the analysis of the initial problematic. I chose to adapt the “ideological circle”, as used by Yan (2003) to serve as my own conceptual map to help me understand where I was to begin and where I was to go in my inquiry. An ideological circle is a process through which governmental ideology is filtered down to all levels of society, via a set of procedures and methods of reasoning about people and processes. It helps to identify specific social relations that organize people in different sites. This is done via discursive strategies, text and inter-textual relations, organizational policies, and actual behaviours by individuals that hook them into sustaining the original ideological discourse (Yan, 2003). Given that I was beginning to understand that my inquiry into the experiences of TFWs in Alberta was going to do with the reasons they came to Canada on temporary visas in the first place, I thought that the ideological circle started me off with good footing. I saw in it the opportunity to identify the social relations that organized people’s lives, the ways that those social relations were operationalized, and how, at the end of the day, they impacted people’s own behaviours.

In order to understand more fully how the TFW program coordinates the social, personal, and familial dimensions of the individuals living under it, I explored the actual social processes that organize a worker’s everyday experiences rather than analyzing them through issues and problems pre-defined in an established discipline. Therefore, I

looked at the account of the everyday work and social life processes of the TFW in order to move beyond these experiences to explore how they are organized as social relations. Thus, I started off with an exploration of the ways in which different actors – TFWs, immigration consultants, community-based service providers and Alberta government representatives – describe these workers, their decision to come to Canada and their current work-life experiences. The TFWs are not at the centre of this inquiry. It is the institutional aspects of the Canadian political economy – such as social service programming, government services and legislation, Canada’s immigration policies, and larger global economic and political processes relevant to their experiences - that are the focus of inquiry. As such, I anticipated that the concepts that I outline in chapter four (literature and theoretical review) such as *globalization, neoliberalism, migration and citizenship, and consequently, the subjection and subjectivity of the TFW* would be a part of the complex of ruling relations that organize the experiences of the TFW.

Research design

Site selection

The site for this inquiry is south and western Alberta because it attracts a large number of TFWs, particularly those that are deemed ‘semi-skilled’. Moreover, Alberta is one of the few provinces that have provincially funded social services specifically designated for TFWs. The agency that participated in the study – Calgary Catholic Immigration Services – has been funded by the province since 2007, when the Minister of Employment and Immigration responded to province wide concerns that there were huge numbers of TFWs who needed support while in Alberta. The Temporary Foreign Worker Support Services Program was used as the initial site for recruiting TFWs, social

service agency staff and other stakeholders. Other benefits to this organizational support were the opportunities to observe program services, such as information sessions, intake and site visits. A more fulsome description of the Alberta context is provided in chapter two.

Data collection

An institutional ethnography understands the experiences of everyday life to be constituted by people, thus detailed accounts of people's lives and their activities must be documented. It is a process that tries to understand how lived experiences happen in a particular way, therefore data are used to "discover material connections between what actually happens to participants in a research setting and what triggers those particular actions or events" (Campbell & Gregor, 2002, p. 70). This begins with 'entry points' shared with the researcher through talking to people that are somehow located in the sphere of the problematic. The way that people talk about the problematic and how they are involved in it is the local data that the researcher must pay close attention to so that she understands where to go beyond people's experiential accounts to the "second-level" data, in a sort of "process of tracking back or following clues" (Campbell & Gregor, 2002, p. 81). Going back and for between the different entry points means that the researcher is not only listening and looking to the way people experience the problematic (through their own accounts), but also conceptualizes the connections between theory and discursive production (the "second-level" data and on-going analysis).

A range of data collection techniques can be used in IE, the most common being interviews and focus groups, observation, textual analysis and the researcher's reflections (Devault & McCoy, 2012). The intention is to generate a description of the way people

are conducting their lives on a daily basis, in order to offer entry into the social organization that ‘hook’ them into the larger institutional processes.

Interviews

Institutional ethnographies tend to start off with interviews in order to see how people talk about their lives. It is at this juncture where the research can begin to identify other avenues for data collection – organizational or professional sites, observation, or the analysis of naturally occurring language (Devault & McCoy, 2012). Because institutional ethnography investigates widespread institutional and discursive processes, the researcher should find both formal and informal speaking opportunities with people. Recently, institutional ethnographers have used focus groups to generate group conversations about shared experiences.

In order to garner a wide range of voices and to understand some of the possible shared experiences of the program, I interviewed 15 participants. There are no conventional “samples” in IE since participants are looked at as informants, and not the subject population. Instead, the selection of participants should be chosen in terms of a diversity of experience as it relates to the problematic. As Devault & McCoy (2012) explain:

While the selection of informants is open-ended, the process is not haphazard. Rather, fieldwork and interviewing are driven by faithfulness to the actual work processes that connect individuals and activities within an institutional complex. Rigor does not come from technique- in sampling or analysis – but from the corrigibility of the developing map of social relations (p.389).

Temporary Foreign Workers were recruited for interviews in two ways. First, email requests were sent out to the client listserv of the Temporary Foreign Worker Support

Services office, and subsequently I received emails from individuals who were interested in being interviewed. Secondly, at the public forum sessions I observed, the research information and requests were displayed and individuals approached me after the sessions to indicate their interest in participating in the research. Also, it is important to note that three individuals accompanied people that I had originally set up the interview with and so these interviews became a sort of focus group.

As such, the breakdown of participants is as follows (Appendix A provides a more detailed description of the participants).

Table 3
Demographic information of interview participants

Number and description of individual	Gender	Other identifying information	Skill-code (if applicable)
10 temporary foreign workers	4 males, 6 females	6 from the Philippines, 1 from Columbia, 1 from Ecuador, 2 from Mexico	9 in NOC C & D ('semi-skilled'), 1 NOC B ('high-skilled')
1 Immigrant recruiter/consultant	Male	Former CIC officer	
1 representative from the TFW Advisory Office – Provincial body		Spoke on condition of anonymity	
3 staff from the Temporary Foreign Workers Support Services Program	1 Female, 2 males		

The temporary foreign workers were recruited through the Temporary Foreign Worker Support Services Program, and had to have entered into Canada through the Temporary Foreign Worker Program. A wide variation of work sites, national, ethnic and religious backgrounds and ages was covered through this purposive sampling procedure in order to

provide a broad range of experiences. Other interviews occurred with key informants, such as social service program staff and management, staff from governmental agencies (Alberta Employment and Immigration), as well as an immigrant consultant who specialized in the TFW program. Interview questions are found in Appendix II and III.

Interview requests were made to employers who hire TFWs. These employers were identified through interviews or conversations with TFWs or service providers. After several attempts at confirming meetings, I was unsuccessful. Similarly, interview requests with senior government officials were not responded to. It is difficult to say if these requests would have been granted, however, since I never received a response. A lack of response from these two informants is not surprising; when organizational or institutional leaders are asked for their input in research projects about their organization or institutional culture, these leaders may see drawbacks to their participation because of the potential scrutiny by the researcher and/or the public (Campbell & Gregor, 2002), particularly since it is their work processes and those of their agency/organization/system that determined the institutional power and discourses leading to social relations and social organization.

Observation

Participant observation in institutional ethnography is encouraged and acknowledged as having “the potential to refine our appreciations of at least the following dimensions of the craft: stories, authors, bodies, place, time, motion, how ruling relations work, and particular ways for seeing the social organization of the local” (Diamond, as cited in Smith, 2005, p. 58). This is an important data collection method

that delivers on one of the foundational ontological points of institutional ethnography: that the stories that populate the data are authored by someone's experiences.

The Temporary Foreign Service Worker Support Services Program offers regular information sessions geared to temporary foreign workers (in all categories) that cover issues related to their contract, immigration status, social service access, citizenship and sponsorship opportunities, and any other issues deemed as important. I attended and observed 3 meetings and wrote reflective notes related to how institutional relations may be found in these sites and about the coordination and organization of these dimensions. It also allowed me to see the way that texts get activated (addressed in the following section). I attempted to 'shadow' program staff when they did site visits or met with clients, however this request was denied by the agency due to issues of privacy and confidentiality of the client. Given the discussion above regarding the reticence by organizational and institutional to grant entry into workplace settings, it is conceivable that my request was denied because of the possible scrutiny my observations could have yielded.

Considering that interviews were difficult to obtain with employers and government officials, it is in the observation sessions where I was able to see how these informants were conducting their "work" as it relates to the problematic. For example, employers were observed in the information session with the immigration consultant, and this is where I was able to "look" for and "listen" to (Campbell & Gregor, 2002, p. 69) the way that the lives of TFWs were coordinated by the activities of these informants.

Document review

Texts and documents can provide accounts of the actual outcomes of institutional processes and are often key pieces of data that can inform the analysis of ruling and institutional relations (Campbell & Gregor, 2002). According to Smith (2005), incorporating texts is what enables us to reach beyond the observable local experiences into the deeper translocal social relations and organization. Throughout my research, I was introduced to key documents that are integral to the lived experiences of the TFW – the Labour Market Opinion, work permits, and NOC Code designations. Other texts such as interviews with government officials, government department program and policy directives, and media representation of the issue provided opportunities to uncover the “crystallized social relations” (Campbell & Gregor, 2002, p. 79) that these texts support. These texts help guide the decisions made by those who work within these institutions, thus identifying how the LSTFW experiences are created by these documents and decisions.

In addition to the administrative mechanisms that operate the TFW program, such as the NOC system, I included texts that were generated by government officials (a report by the Parliament Assistant to the Minister of Alberta Employment and Immigration, as well as a published interview with the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism) as ethnographic data sources that may also elucidate the crystallized social relations I am interested in. The texts also work to identify the public discourse in Alberta and Canada around TFWs so that they may be included in the analysis of the discursive production of the TFW.

Analyzing “experience” as data

The main point in the analysis of IE data is to keep the social relations at the center of the inquiry. As opposed to other qualitative research analysis, counting, categorizing, or thematizing are tasks that are not part of the IE framework. These tasks may in fact distort, make artificial or obscure the relations that are at the crux of this analysis (Campbell & Gregor, 2002).

Dorothy Smith’s legacy to feminist scholarship through IE is that experience remains of methodological importance. It means that the experience/data are not the topic/object of the inquiry, but they are the entry points into the social relations in focus (Campbell, 1998; Smith, 2005). For example, it is methodologically important to be attentive to how someone, speaking about his or her life, misses its social organization (Campbell & Gregor, 2002). This kind of analysis uses what people know and what they are observed doing for the analytical purposes of identifying, tracing and describing the social relations that extend beyond their experiences. It is my task as an institutional ethnographer to search out and describe connections among participants’ sites of experience and their social organization (Campbell, 1998).

The question to answer in the analysis is: “What and how are the social relations that are coordinating those experiences?” Interpretation is done through searching for traces of how participants’ actions and talk are conditioned. These social relations can be described by the researcher through an account of “actual behaviours” and/or “experience” (Smith, 2005), but should be read as discursive mediations where behavior is being accomplished through discourse (Campbell, 1998). This does not necessarily

mean the researcher believes that the experiential is solely factual and neglects their constructed/structured character. As Smith (2005) writes: “Experiential accounts cannot give direct and unsullied access to an actuality; actuality is always more and other than is spoken, written or pictured (p.125). In fact, experience in IE is recognized as a dialogical production between those that are sharing and those that are listening; however this does not mean that the data collected through experience is invalid. Experience is a resource to be “probed, expanded, opened up and taken wherever an informant can take it” (Smith, 2005, p. 142). The institutional ethnographer should see a successful IE analysis when it supersedes both individual accounts as well as the totality of the accounts.

It was during my interviews with temporary migrant workers and other stakeholders that I began to understand the context that I was working in. According to IE, this is the moment that analysis begins, and as such, data collection and analysis are concurrent tasks (Campbell & Gregor, 2002). As I began to chart my map for data collection, I simultaneously began my analysis. This is presented later on in both written format and through my ideological circle (presented in chapter six). IE sends the researcher back and forth, between collected texts, and the context of the interview (Devault & McCoy, 2012) which may sometimes mean that a researcher may find themselves looking back at collected speeches for new or different data to be taken up throughout the inquiry. This may happen because the researcher hears the way someone speaks about their lives in an interview, realizes it may offer a glimpse into the social organization of their lives, but not sure in what detail at that very moment. Later readings of the collected speeches, after having heard others speak, or having read texts or through

observations, may elicit new understandings of institutional relations. This type of analysis is evidenced in the Chapter 7.

Assessing knowledge claims in IE

Denzin & Lincoln (2011) argue that the qualitative researcher is similar to the maker of quilts or film – someone who assembles images into montages. These images, sounds and understandings come together under the qualitative researcher’s production as a “pieced-together set of representations that are fitted to the specifics of a complex situation” (p.4). Qualitative research is thus an interpretive process, whereby the researcher acts to put together simultaneously “different voices, different perspectives, points of view and angles of vision” (p.5). This is done in the ambiguity where qualitative research methods have no single methodological practice. Qualitative studies draw upon a wide variety of theoretical paradigms, epistemological and ontological standpoints and use a wide variety of methods and strategies for knowledge production. Under a current era in research movements for scientism, rigor, systematization and objectivity, qualitative research becomes “suspect” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

Similar to other qualitative research methodologies, questions of triangulation, applicability and generalizability are raised in IE. These challenges are not addressed by ensuring controls on methods like data collection or in analysis. Instead, the researcher addresses them by remaining in the social, and by using the everyday experiences of the informants as entry points into the larger, more generalizing character of the local and trans-local settings. It is through the explication of the social relations that have a generalizing character on individuals where IE finds generalizability. As Smith (1987) explains:

Beginning in the everyday world as problematic bypasses this issue [of generalizability]. The relation of the local and particular to generalized social relations is not a conceptual or methodological issue; it is a property of social organization. The particular “case” is not particular in the aspects that are of concern to the inquirer. Indeed it is not a “case” for it presents itself to us rather as a point of entry, the locus of an experiencing subject or subjects, into a larger social and economic process (cited in Tam, 2007, p. 61).

Institutional ethnography comes with its own strengths and challenges about how it claims to assess knowledge and its conceptualization of the social. Since IE stems from the basic assumptions of criticality; for example, that all thought is fundamentally mediated by power relations, that facts can not be isolated from ideological inscription, and that social relations between subject and object are mediated by capitalist production and consumption, the cautionary tales about critical epistemologies are the same for IE (Kincheloe et al., 2011). Observations that happen during research through a critical lens are shaped by its social theory, and “such theory provides the framework that highlights or erases what might be observed” (Kincheloe, et al. 2011, p.168). Ironically, it is this dominance of theory that Smith (2005) hoped that IE would reject because of its conceptual practice of producing social relations. Argued to be one of IE’s most important criticisms, the fact that it’s a social scientific practice means that “its ontology of the social is productive of the results of its analysis” (p. 1013). This is the reason why the researcher is at the centre of the knowing, never hiding behind a shroud of neutrality or objectivity, claiming their own positionality in the goals, intentions, and principles of their inquiry. Seeking absolute truths should never be on the agenda of an IE researcher, nor should the researcher bias be controlled or eliminated in an effort to capture objectivity (Tam, 2007). Therefore, reflexivity in IE research not only draws attention to

the researcher in interpreting participant accounts, is also draws out the assumptions that our frameworks impose on the analysis.

Institutional ethnography is also cited for ‘uncovering’ a version of people’s lives that they are not able to see, therefore seeming as patronizing to people who have aspects of their lives that are in need of discovery. This may be as a result of the theoretical standpoint of the researcher, which IE asks to name. For example, if the researcher intends for an emancipatory project, therefore steeping the inquiry and its methods into uncovering the way that people are subordinated and oppressed, the impression left about subjects are that they are, realistically and ontologically, subordinated and oppressed. The objectification of this subjecthood (and the framing of interventions in liberal democracies) occurs alongside these discursive productions. This may also result from a sort of ‘truncation’ whereby aspects of the social are trimmed out, as in any other form of social research (Walby, 2007). Therefore, what may be diminished in a particular IE analysis or explication, does not mean that it does not exist in some form or manner. In other words, when some aspect of the subject’s lives are illuminated or identified in an IE mapping of social relations, this does not negate the existence of other aspects of the subject’s lives at any given moment. Institutional Ethnography does not identify the gaps in people’s ideas of their lives, their inherent inability to enact agency, or that they are powerless in institutional fortresses. It identifies the institutional practices that knowledge, language and professional practices enact in order to make power and agency harder for some to access than others (Taber, 2010). This is done in hopes of identifying the holes and ruptures where advocacy and counter practices can emerge.

Researcher positionality and use of language

It is important for the purposes of this knowledge-making exercise to state that it is I who is making the decisions of what makes it onto these pages. I decided what curiosity I had to begin this journey, and I made the decision to put this curiosity at the centre of the inquiry. The people I met along the way did not invite me into their lives; I knocked on their doors and they chose to let me in. Along the way, I realized that each person had his or her own reasons to do so. More on this in a moment...

“Positionality is vital because it forces us to acknowledge our own power, privilege, and biases just as we denounce the power structures that surround our subjects” (Madison, 2012, p. 7). When I walked into every interview, or sat in every session to observe, or even read any relevant texts to analyze, I approached these data sets as the person I am in that moment. They were the research paradigms, authority and knowledge-making processes that I chose to take up, and as such, the account that I present below should be read as not objective, but as a subjectively-driven exercise, framed within the methodological and theoretical articulations that I chose (Walby, 2007). The contextualization of my own positionality is making this inquiry accessible and vulnerable to judgment because it comes from my own subjectivity and political perspective (Madison, 2012).

When I began my doctorate, I came to it with a very strong sense that I had an ethical responsibility to address injustice wherever I saw it. It was the main reason I chose to enter the program, because I believed it was as an opportunity to understand how I could challenge these injustices (and perhaps better understand them in the first place). I approached the doctorate program, and its content, through my activist stance,

because that's what had brought me to it in the first place. It was the journey through the doctorate program that introduced me to new ideas, and it is through this journey that I began to see that although all the injustices I saw had a political reason to them, it was from the voices of those who experienced these injustices that I should be listening to, not the dominant discourses that were the loudest.

Perhaps, this is why institutional ethnography seemed to be the right decision for me as I decided to fall down the rabbit hole. As Campbell & Gregor (2002) state: "The radical potential of institutional ethnography is to rethink social settings taking existing power relations into account. Institutional ethnography is theorized and its research design developed in such a manner as to produce an analysis in the interest of those about whom knowledge is being constructed" (p. 68). This fit with the ideas I had about what I wanted to do, who I wanted my work to benefit and the sort of difference I wanted to make in people's lives (Madison, 2012). At the instant that I made this decision and started on a path of research, I committed myself to becoming involved in the social relations I was thinking about.

For example, in chapter four, I outline literature and theoretical review of the concepts I picked up along the way in my inquiry. Each one of the concepts in that chapter offers a theoretical explanation – or way of knowing – temporary migrant workers in ways that institutionalize social relations. By including them in this dissertation, I am playing a role in the crystallizing of these social relations. At the same time, and because institutional ethnography explores the actual worlds in which "people live, work, love, laugh and cry" (Campbell & Gregor, 2002, p. 17), I believed that these concepts needed to be included in this inquiry because they are theorized practices that

provide authoritative ways of knowing temporary migrant workers. “Institutional ethnographers believe that people and events are actually tied together in ways that make sense of such abstractions as power, knowledge, capitalism, patriarchy, race, the economy, the state, policy, culture and so on” (Campbell & Gregor, 2002, p. 17). Therefore, naming these concepts becomes a method in institutional ethnography in naming these authoritative ways of knowing.

In Chapter 6, I spend a considerable amount of time using the entry points to the social, told to me by the informants in my research, to explicate what I argue are the ways in which the lives of migrant workers in Canada are organized. By the process of engaging in a discursive and analytical project (and through my own epistemological and analytical framework) I am writing a story of migrant workers that can be taken up as ‘truth’ as much as I may rally against it happening. I have tried to use reflexivity in order to augment my epistemological accountability, and hopefully through the naming of the frameworks I have used to collect and analyze data, I step further away from the objectification through misrepresentation that is possible in any qualitative inquiry process (Walby, 2007).

This brings me to the issue of language. Since this is an inquiry into the lives of people who are determined in Canada by a particular status, and are called in public discourse by a certain title – temporary foreign workers – it is important to discuss the use of these words, and how they reinscribe the social relations I aim to call out. The discrete and interwoven categories of temporary, foreign, and worker have certain discursive productive elements to them that impact the individual with that title in real ways (as it is shown in subsequent chapters). To not use this language when I am

referring to specific institutional processes and bureaucratic practices would deny the fact that they exist and circulate in common ways. However, to use this language in my own knowledge making exercise would continue to entrench these social relations. The way I have chosen to deal with this dilemma is to use the terms of “temporary foreign worker” and “temporary foreign worker program” when I am referring to a specific institutional relation that is doing so. When I am analyzing those relations, and in any other way that is my own interpretation, I will use the term “international migrant worker (IMW)” (Priebisch & Hennebry, 2011) in line with recent usage in scholarship that attempts to challenge the pejorative common-place language.

Chapter Four – Literature Review

This review of the literature helps the overall goal of my inquiry; to ‘map’ the actual determinations of the conditions that work together that underlie the everyday experiences of the temporary foreign worker. This is an important task in an institutional ethnography (as outlined in Chapter 3). Theoretical implications in IE do not commit us to theoretical explanations, “but to certain theorized practices of looking at the actualities of everyday life. Institutional ethnographers believe that people and events are actually tied together in ways that make sense of such abstractions as power, knowledge, capitalism, patriarchy, race, the economy, the state, policy, culture, and so on” (Campbell & Gregor, 2002, p. 17).

Therefore, an institutional ethnographers reading of the literature would not only discover the scope of the knowledge in this area, it also frames the inquiry in how this knowledge production contributes to the actualities of people’s lives. The appearances of the concepts I outline in this chapter are not meant to provide a ‘starting point’ explanation to the rest of my inquiry. They provide the opportunity to see just how these ways of ‘knowing’ temporary foreign workers has contributed to the ways within which their lives have been organized. The latter chapters, where the actualities of the lives of temporary foreign workers are described from a variety of standpoints, will show that the local setting in which they live are brought into being by what is already known about them.

Section #1 – Political Rationalities

Neoliberal criteria and the logic of globalization

Munck (2008) (Munck, 2008) argues, “migration studies should be embedded within broader debates around the political economy of globalization and its implications for development” (p.1228). To understand the processes and effects of globalization in a grand scheme would be daunting and outside of the purview of this thesis. However, I am including relevant literature about globalization as it informs my inquiry on IMWs in Canada.

There is rarely agreement about what globalization actually is, when it started, how it continues, and its advantages and disadvantages. Globalization theorists offer profoundly different views that signify globalization as either a sociopolitical production or a *fait accomplie* (Cohen, 2006). On one side, we see a conservative, or neoclassical, view that de-politicizes the processes of globalization, upholding the dominance of a capitalist world economy and accepting the “invisible hand of the (global) market, ignoring the powerful hegemonizing forces at work” (Cohen, 1997, p.156). For example, Overbeek (2002) states that it is a project that is “about the freedom of capital to maximize its accumulation potential...where globalization consists in the dialectic between the expansion of market relations on one hand and the pursuit of economic liberalism on the other”(p.75). It is a world where greater connectivity through technology has made it easier to move goods, capital and people across borders at an accelerated pace (Kalleberg, 2009).

On the other hand (and consequently, the one that I choose to take up in my analysis), cultural, post-modernist, feminist and voluntarist versions of globalization present it as a “project involving the world application of *laissez-faire* principles (Munck,

2008). These theorists would argue that it is a de-politicized way of referring to the spread of capitalism over the globe while ignoring the powerful hegemonizing forces at work (Brah, 2002; Gill, 1995; Nagar, 2002; Ong, 2006) (Giminez, 2004). Nagar et al (2002) in their analysis of the convergence of feminist analysis and the literature on economic globalization, state that it has long histories rooted in colonialism, imperialism and discourses of development. Harvey (2007) argues that globalization (and therefore, neoliberalism) is a political scheme that has reorganized international capitalism in order to re-establish the conditions for capital accumulation and the restoration of class power after the ‘crisis of capital accumulation’ of the 1970s that brought a “clear political threat to ruling classes everywhere” (p. 28). In this camp, it is the ideological victory of the spread of neo-liberalism, and capitalism to all corners of the world that certainly *gives the impression* that there are no alternatives to its economic, political and cultural changes even though we are in times where the majority of humanity continues to suffer abysmal conditions (Brah, 2002).

Globalization’s neoliberal agenda

Cohen (1997) offers a theorization of globalization that implicates neo-liberalism at its core. He states:

It is a commonly expressed belief that markets, technology, capital, trade and migration are remaking the world by sweeping all forms of localism aside. Yet there is a curious fatalism and determinism in such accounts that elides any elaborated consideration of the pertinent institutions and agencies that galvanize this process. This sense of predestination is derived from the almost total hegemony of neoliberal economic thinking in official circles and in the media which naively assume that “the market” is all that is needed to dynamize the global economy. Usually forgotten are the institutional and social mechanisms that manage and structure the market place and the agents who engage in market transactions (p.158).

Many have argued that the modern day iteration of the nation-state is both as a result of and in direct pressure to respond to and support a neoliberal agenda of globalization (Harvey, 2007; McNevin, 2006; Ong, 1999; Sassen, 2002). A Foucaudian perspective (Foucault, Rabinow, & Rose, 2003) spends considerable time on the “liberal” schemes that have produced a market that does not amount to a natural reality with intrinsic laws, but one that is constituted and kept alive by government’s political interventions. The “pure competition” and other laws that govern capitalism do not exist naturally and provide the justifications for political and legal structures that sustain it. Thus, in Foucault’s theorization, the state and market economy are not separate entities, but mutually constitutes the existence of the other. Capitalism, then, is a constructed “historical figure” and a “social field of regulated practices”.

An example of how the nation-state and ‘the market’ constitute one another, and imposes a neoliberal ideology into state affairs, is the impact that the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank have on several countries whose economies have been made dependent on these entities through past and current colonial hierarchies (e.g. Africa, Central America, eastern Europe). With the SAPs came a substantial reduction of external finance sources for states to distribute internally, changes from import oriented markets to export oriented industries, an increase of militarization, political crises and state collapses. As a result, countries facing severe SAPs regulations have lost significant numbers of people who have left (by choice or by force) to find security and a better life. Such countries have had to turn to other sources of income, such as the remittances of citizens who have left (Gammage, 2006; Goldring, 2004; Hernandez & Coutin, 2006). The irony comes full

circle as countries encourage and actively promote the process of outward labour migration which caused the problem in the first place.

These and other developments made possible by the ideas of neoliberalism and the mechanisms of globalization are indeed integrating “an increased proportion of the world population directly into capitalist labour markets and locks national and regional labour markets into an integrated global market” (Overbeek, 2002, p.78). It is important to note that, although there are differential effects of these neoliberal strategies on the global North and South, there are effects on both nonetheless, and they are simultaneously produced. Neoliberal hegemony that prevails in many national political economies has not only produced a “centre of the world capitalist system” where capitalists have and will always draw upon unfree labour, but also the amorphous socioeconomic forces that incline people to apply to and remain in labour migrant programmes (Binford, 2009). Taylor (2009) discusses how organized labour movements have suffered daunting organizational challenges as the public sectors and nationalized industries faced the threats of restructuring and rationalization. The global South, on the other hand, faced a type of restructuring and deindustrialization that forced a new reliance on primary commodity exports of resources and people, a supposedly banished form of colonialism from eras before (Taylor, 2009). The ability of capital to extract surpluses from labour depends on the co-operation among nation-states (in both the global North and South) in keeping a “docile and flexible” workforce, through both the establishment of free trade zones in the South and de-industrialization in the North. Both are simultaneous and compatible processes to facilitate profit augmentation and capital mobility (Ng, 1998). Ong (2006) puts it simply: “Indeed, the very circulation of capital

relies on the availability of floating pools of workers who can easily be substituted for one another” (p.158).

Labour migration

A focus on the interplay between globalization as a neoliberalist phenomenon and the migration of people around the world, in particular for labour purposes, will be foregrounded in this discussion. The connection is evident, as globalalization simultaneously creates and/or reinforces the demand for labour, usually under precarious labour conditions. Mainstream economic and political discourses posit that there is “a virtuous circle of expanding markets and an ever more complex underlying division of labour...reach[ing] global proportions” (Taylor, 2009, p.439). Within this analysis, labour is conceptualized as a static factor, something that pre-existed in a raw form waiting for capitalism to touch down and use it. “The dynamics of change within the global economy can then be related simply to the natural outcome of liberated market forces operating at a global level according to the unbending logic of comparative advantage (Taylor, 2009, p. 439). This viewpoint is clear through a quote found in Binford (2009) by the Mexican President Felipe Calderon: “You have two economies. One economy is intensive in capital, which is the American economy. One economy is intensive in labour, which is the Mexican economy. We are two complementary economies, and that phenomenon is impossible to stop” (p. 504). From this quote, we can see how migration is viewed as a labour-supply system.

The other side of the coin highlights the conflictive processes through which labour forces produce a global political economy. It problematizes the notion that global capital does not simply circle the globe in search of some natural and pre-existing cheap

and disciplined labour (Taylor, 2009). Instead, it is the accumulation of profit by people and through relations of power. Furthermore, the expansion of mobile labour requires the construction of suitable workforces across a range of scales, from the family and household to institutions and the state.

“Global capitalism is interwoven with the accumulation, reshaping and sometimes annihilation of the laboring bodies on which it depends. The edifice of the global economy is built upon these social foundations and is constantly shaped and reshaped by the struggles unleashed by conflicts over the construction, reproduction and utilization of labour (Taylor 2009, p.436). All of this is possible and sustained by a neoliberalist ideology that drives, supports and requires globalization. Deregulation, liberalization, privatization, flexibilization, reducing state budgets for social welfare, the undermining of the bargaining power of organized labour, the depression of wage demands are but a few examples of how neoliberalism systematically works to create the labour demands and conditions we see today (Brah, 2002; Hennebry, 2008; Overbeek, 2002). Hennebry (2008) argues that “in a world economy that is characterized by local specializations, the emergence of a global labour market is encouraging labour specialization, with some countries specializing in particular types of workers” (p. 342). These labour specializations are dictated by the labour needs of multinationals, and in countries in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the G8, it is these multinationals that control unprecedented volumes of national exports, employment output and technology investments (Brah, 2002). Finally, Ong (2006) argues that this it is through a sort of “labour arbitrage” (p.162) that these multinationals employ in the global labour markets. The same logic that has existed in a market civilization

logic, where trading of capital exploits price discrepancies, is used with pools of migrants; it signals “the ability to pay one labour pool less than another labour pool for accomplishing the same work, typically substituting labour in one geography for labour in a different locale” (p. 162). This neoliberal rationality of cheap labour substitution has significant implications for citizen labour pools in terms of job availability, and training investments by companies and corresponding human resource and labour departments.

Taylor (2009) argues that in order to grapple with the complex and conflict-ridden phenomenon of the international division of labour, we must consider a variety of analytical tools. For example, because we can see the movement of workforces from rural areas to industrial centres or, as in the case of Mexico, across the border (over 2 million to the United States between 2000 and 2005), we should revisit the processes of primitive accumulation theorized by Marx and Engels and Harvey’s reworked “accumulation by dispossession” (Harvey, 2004). Although Marxist or dependency theory analyses have been displaced by a focus on the gendered, racialized and classed processes through which labour is socially constructed, it is understandable that these analytical tools can have a dialectical relationship when conceptualizing labour migration, since the material effects of neoliberalism, globalization and thus labour migration can be identified at the most local of sites. We can understand these phenomena to be mutually producing and reproducing the complexities of the contemporary processes of labour migration. Jane Collins (as cited in Taylor, 2009) writes: “...gender ideologies inform [companies’] definition of the job and its skills, their understanding of the characteristics of new groups of workers, and their mapping of appropriate and inappropriate pools of labour” (p.442). These specific characteristics are

ascribed to femininity – passivity, dependency, and malleability and are constantly reproduced through various forms of surveillance and discipline that establish a new social standard for exploitation in particular industries.

Therefore, capitalism and neo-liberal forms labour migration should not only be seen as an economic system, but as a mode of production. “That is, capitalism is a way in which people produce and reproduce their livelihood under specific material conditions that go beyond the economy. It is a dynamic process whereby people’s livelihood is being transformed and reorganized according to the requirement of capital accumulation” (Ng, 1998, p.4). Capitalism is not autonomous; it is the accumulation of profit accomplished by people. In contemporary times, and in the case of temporary foreign worker programs where a variety of stakeholders including governments, government officials, employers and workers themselves are involved in the division of labour, the struggle is less between two classes, and instead more complex and fragmented. Ng (1998), in her analysis of how globalization has impacted immigrant women garment workers in Toronto through restructuring, argues that this class division also includes a “conglomerate” of institutions and apparatuses, including military, law and trade organizations (p.5).

There is a “conglomerate of institutions” that has been produced through neoliberal ideology and mechanisms of globalization in the realm of migrant worker programs. Coined the “migration industry”, it propels migration into market forces and imposes a neoliberal logic well-suited and dependent on globalization and the nation-state. Cohen describes this conglomerate as the following:

Despite the rigorous official control of immigration, there has been an extensive and rapid development of a “migration industry” compromising

of private lawyers, travel agents, recruiters, organizers, fixers and brokers who sustain links with origin and destination countries. Such intermediaries are driven by the cash nexus and make no distinctions, except in terms of price, between refugees and migrants, professionals or unskilled, illegal or legal migration. Points of departure and arrival are also linked by friendship, kin and ethnic networks organized by the migrant themselves (1987, p. 163).

Authors argue that the impact of globalization and neoliberalism on the immigration policies of countries is clear. While Sassen (1996) calls it a “de facto transnationalizing of immigration policy” (p.1), Brah (2002) argues that it is through global migrations that new transnational political economies are being reconstituted. The globalization-migration nexus creates several effects on the domestic policies of nation-states. For example, the growing demand for cheap unskilled labour immigration by resource rich and labour short countries is argued to be proof that neoliberalism has produced an apparent complementarity of interests between poor countries with unambiguous labour surpluses created, exacerbated and transformed under neoliberal reforms, and wealthy ones with sectoral labour deficits, especially low-waged, unskilled and semi-skilled occupations (Binford, 2009; Cohen, 2006). McNevin (2006) argues that neoliberal economies have generated demand for cheap, flexible and compliant labour to fulfill industries that require easily expendable/deportable labourers according to market fluctuations.

Canada’s Live-in Caregiver Program is an example of how neoliberalism, national political economies and demand for particular labour can govern the migration of women workers to provide care for citizens in the global North. As economic growth associated with neoliberal globalization and free trade accelerates, so does the number of

migrants allowed into Canada to provide for various forms of care. As Stasiulis (2008) (Stasiulis, 2008) states:

A number of structural forces, mechanisms, and ideologies have assisted in normalizing the situation whereby migrant women from the South leave their countries, homes, and families to provide care for strangers in more affluent countries. These have included international debt politics and subsequent structural adjustment policies in the South and the restructuring, deinstitutionalization and de-funding of social welfare programs in the North. The increased presence of married women with children in the labour force, and the rise of new forms of neoliberal political rationality valorizing ideologies of privatization, familialism, voluntarism, and the entrepreneurial flexible citizen have also created a demand for this form of care (p.144).

Ironically, while there is an increase in the demand for and supply of people that are deemed economically desirable, so is there an exponential increase in the control and reduction of other forms of migration such as those in the asylum or family categories. Even when selective forms of migration are sanctioned, “states have officially sought to prevent the settlement of unskilled, elderly or dependent migrants” (Cohen, 1997, p. 163). Several regional immigration integration processes and arrangements, such as the North American Free Trade Agreement or the European Economic Area, promote the movement of people insofar as they are connected to capital mobility. Meanwhile these regions are building up their border controls for migrants in other categories (Cohen, 2006; Hennebry, 2008). Overbeek (2002) argues that as a result of these controls built into regional frameworks, political changes in specific countries would be challenged to modify such policies, as they would be entrenched in mechanisms that go beyond their own borders. Accordingly, these neoliberal changes to immigration and economic policies of states make them more accountable to these regional systems than to their own domestic needs or even electorate. He goes on to state:

Neoliberal restructuring of the global economy involves both the deepening and the widening of market relations and the transformation of governance structures. Labour has a specific role in this process: because international labour migration is only one way in which global capital can access the emerging global labour market, the emerging global regime for labour involves both the disciplining of labour and the selective freeing of the mobility of labour. There is clearly a tension between regulating migration under the auspices of global neoliberalism on one hand and upholding the values of democratic governance on the other (2002, p.84-85).

The nation-state and citizenship regimes

Although the theorization and conceptualization of the nation-state and citizenship can certainly be taken up as a discussion of its own, I am choosing to draw upon those aspects of citizenship that draw the boundaries between Us/Them and how that process functions as a prelude to rights and belonging.

The modern day nation-state is best described as a “container concept” (Weiss 2005). Thus, territorial citizenship is predicated on this container concept of space, which means simply that people are either completely part of this space or completely outside of it. The importance of borders, and ones relation to them, is increased in this conceptualization of space as nation-state. Through its use of violence and surveillance, a nation state is capable of expanding and defining boundaries, which has implications for another major function performed by the state: adjudicating who is to be accorded societal membership and who is not. There is an ideal and typical mode of citizenship in this context; one that promotes a membership that is egalitarian, sacred, national, democratic, unique and socially consequential (Bloemraad, 2004; Brubaker, 2004). Included in this form of the nation-state is the Marshallian understanding of citizenship, which is composed of three sets of rights – civil rights (institutionalized in common law and the jury system), political rights (institutionalized in parliament), and social rights

(built into the welfare state of the 20th century). These forms of rights have been contested, namely for their neglect of gender, race and ethnicity, and accused of neglecting the rapidly changing forms of identity prevalent in last half of the century (Baines et al., 2002; Isin & Turner, 2007). Neo-liberalism has impacted citizenship in ways relevant to this inquiry, and will be addressed more deeply below.

It is important to think about ‘boundaries’ and the ways within which they extend beyond territorial citizenship and its corresponding rights. These boundaries can be real, symbolic, visible or invisible. The markers that continue to divide people could be territory, history, language, economic considerations or a symbolic identification of one kind or another. In Edward’s Said’s *Orientalism* (1978), he argues that these differences, the ones that demarcate the “Other” may be arbitrary, but it is enough that ‘we’ have set up boundaries for ‘us’ for ‘them’ to become ‘they’. These boundary making exercises become citizenship practices of letting people belong to an identity, a nation, and a set of rights and responsibilities.

Critical race theorists contend that in the construction of Canada as a white settler society in particular, what marks the difference between these two groups is a discourse and politics of racialization. Through particular national mythologies that make Canada a white nation, we are lead to believe that the white European, through having settled and built the land at the continued exploitation of Aboriginal and people of colour, is who makes the “us” in Canada, so as to demarcate the “other” as the “black body” (Mohanram, 2000). Thus, we can see that “bordering” (Thobani, 2007) occurs through specific racialized ways and is a key disciplinary practice of the nation-state. Thobani (2007) describes this process of “bordering” the outsider:

The figure of the national subject is a much venerated one, exalted above all others as the embodiment of the quintessential characteristics of the nation and the personification of its values, ethics, and civilization mores. In the trope of the citizen, this subject is universally deemed the legitimate heir to the rights and entitlements proffered by the state. Even when disparaged as a gendered, sexed or classed subject...in its nationality, this subject positively commands respect as the locus of state power...The outsider on the other hand, cast in the trope of the stranger who ‘wants’ what nationals have, is a figure of concern. Popularity defined as devoid of qualities and values of the nation – as being quite alien to these – the strange provokes anxiety, if not outright hostility. Indeed, the stranger has historically been suspected of embodying the potential for the very negation of nationality within modernity (p. 3-4).

Through the processes of bordering, and the “particularization” (Browne, 2005) of some groups and individuals into fixed and processed beings within a nation, citizens constitute and produce the “outsider-within” in the nation-state. This holds true for a number of state subject-hoods such as the citizen, immigrants, migrant workers, refugees, visa holders and the undocumented (Baines & Sharma, 2002). The material and ideological implications of these dynamics thus demarcates the citizen and the outsider, providing an appearance of control and order by de-racializing and nationalizing some members of the state and racializing and othering the “outsider-within”. The technologies of citizenship – namely the rhetoric of international order, labour market regulation, social stability, welfare provision, etc. target the irregular migrants in order to give the appearance of statehood in control.

Engin Isin (2003; 2008;1997) provides an important contribution to the discussion of citizenship as he takes up the genealogy of citizenship, not understood as a possession, but as an identity and practice through which political privilege and marginalization are constructed. His analysis challenges the historical notions of a progression of citizenship as gradual and linear, and argues instead for the idea of the necessary exclusion of the

non-citizen. “For Isin, the alien other, the immanent outsider and the citizen are mutually constitutive...an enduring feature of political communities, not only those characterized by citizens and citizenship in the conventional sense, but all those communities engaged in the political organization of affairs and the marking of boundaries” (McNevin, 2006, p. 137). Since ‘space’ as strategic property constitutes the real world and structures political relationships, Isin insists that the question then is, under what conditions is the *space being defined*, and if globalization is affecting how we relate politically to each other, then *how does globalization introduce new markers* of entitlement and membership as it relates to the citizen, state and territory (McNevin, 2006).

Bordering the labour migrant through citizenship – neoliberal/market citizenship

Neoliberalism becomes a sort of technology of governing and citizenship that delivers market-driven truths into the domain of politics. Its rationality informs the government of the individuals it is meant to govern, usually through the market principles of discipline, efficiency and competitiveness (Ong, 2006). It is this sort of knowledge that informs state governments about labour migrants, given that the subjectivity of the labour migrant is produced through their relation to political economies, the nation-state and being deemed as a rational solution to current day national economies – what Gill (1995) calls the current “market civilization”. Market civilizations are based on the ideology of capitalist progress and are marked by the cumulative aspects of market integration, primarily through consumption and work. They are coordinated and achieved through a combination of market discipline and the direct application of political power, and subject the masses to these rationalities. The individual becomes governed through this configuration of the nation-state as market civilization.

It is this sort of modern nation-state that “works to rationalize human behavior, yet it depends on mystification; its legitimacy is based on claims to protect against insecurity and chaos, yet it thrives on violence; it asserts sovereignty, yet it cultivates dependencies” (Taussig, 1995, cited in Baker-Cristales, 2008, p.352). It depends on the governmental rationality of “liberalism” that has conceived the modern nation state and society. As Hindess (2000) describes:

[Governmental rationality] is compromised of a variety of self-regulating domains – the sphere of economic activity, the works of civil society, the processes of population growth, and so on, each subject to its own laws and developmental tendencies and governed in large part by perceptions that the participants form in the course of their free interactions (p.124).

Consequently, labour migrants are governed by the ideologies of the market civilization and thus becomes known and subjected through specific forms of citizenship. Neoliberal citizenship, industrial or market citizenship describe the sort of citizenship regime that fits the discursive production of the labour migrant. These versions of citizenship have in a sense been disarticulated from the versions of citizenship described above and then rearticulated by market forces. To be a neoliberal citizen is to become, through market rationality, self-governed, individualistic, and entrepreneurial. It is to be able to make decisions about your daily life that are based on economic (efficiency) and ethical (self-responsible) reasoning (Ong, 2006). In particular, the neoliberal individual is coded for their value in human labour and commodity production (Hairong, 2003).

The marking of the labour migrant as neoliberal citizen is highlighted in Calavita’s book entitled *Immigrants at the Margins: Law, Race, and Exclusion in Southern Europe* (2005). The author details how immigrants in the Western hemisphere, through laws, economic rationalization and ideologies of race, have been stigmatized to a

point of codified exclusion. This un-freedom, or in other words, exclusion from citizenship is thus based on a marked economic exclusion. To be ‘citizen’ is to be ‘consumer’. Considering the discounted nature of the labour of foreign workers, and the positioning of marginalized populations as producers instead of consumers, this defines them as outsiders and denies them full participation in the consumer market, and thus the nation state. This study supports McNevin’s (2006) argument that irregular migrants (migrants who may be undocumented, temporary, or with “precarious status” (Goldring et al., 2009) are incorporated into the political community as economic participants but denied the status of insiders. Moreover, they are contained within informal economies and industries lead by subcontract employment, and subject to random policing that maintains them in a position of vulnerability.

How to understand the lived experience of labour migrants

Any inquiry into the discursive production of the IMW will theorize that they occupy a space both *inside and outside* of the nation-state. This unique space means that they are both included and excluded in its ideological and institutional practices. Those theorists who have written about biopolitics, sovereignty and state power – such as Foucault (1979), Agamben (1998), and Arendt (1951), amongst others - insist that the acts of *simultaneous* exclusion/inclusion of the individual in the sovereign state are based on social and political power over life. For example, Agamben’s writings, as discussed by Fiskesjo, about Aristotle’s *Homo Sacer* and ‘bare life’ describes “a human being alive only in a biological but not in any political sense” (Fiskesjo, 2012, p. 162). Through a historical lens, reducing individuals to ‘bare life’ in ancient times translated to slaves that were reduced to things and property, or to subhuman status and denied participation in

political life. In today's world it means, "in Western politics, bare life has the peculiar privilege of being that whose exclusions found the city of men" (Agamben, 1998, p, 7).

Although Agamben's writing is challenging at first read, others have written about his work as it relates to the way that certain events in show how 'bare life' has come to be in modernity. As Fiskesjo (2012) writes:

The key item on Agamben's provocative agenda is to warn that the constitution of the ostensibly democratic states of the West is built on the mechanism that produced homo sacer, and is not fundamentally different from that which enabled Hitler's concentration camps. He is less concerned with the historical making of state power than with showing to the citizens of modern states, to those already safely holding membership in present-day Western societies, how the built-in threat of their own exclusion from its protections and their acquiescence in this order of things (such as the acceptance of government and corpocratic surveillance; the "black prisons" of Guantanamo as permanent state of exception) is the foundational mechanism of power in these modern states, and that this means it is no surprise that Hitler's camps have already been reopened in new form (p. 164).

Others argue that the modern concepts of citizenship and legal rights should be foregrounded when thinking about IMWs. Lister (2007) argues for an approach to understanding "lived citizenship" as the inquiry into how "people understand and negotiate rights and responsibilities, belonging and participation, the meaning that citizenship actually has in people's lives and the ways in which people's social and cultural backgrounds and material circumstances affect their lives as citizens" (p.50). Taken a step further, it moves the emphasis on citizenship as a surety to rights, and places it on the impact that a certain migratory status has on the presence/absence of rights and entitlements.

For example, Basok (2004) studies the access to political, civil and social rights afforded to LSTFWs by either international conventions, their country of origin or by the

nation-state within which they reside. In Canada, although legal access to some economic, civic and political rights has been extended to non-citizens, the exercise of these rights may be precluded by the denial of social membership in the national community. For example, her inquiry into the “citizenship of practice” shows that Mexican seasonal workers, although entitled to access citizen’s rights such as Canadian Pension, health services, drug plans, Worker’s Compensation, etc., do not take up these rights because of a lack of knowledge or skill to be able to do so – something that their inclusion to host communities and full members may allow them to do. Their status, and consequent inclusion/exclusion, hampers their ability to negotiate access and respect for their legal rights due to a ‘deprivation’ of the opportunities to acquire knowledge, learn skills or secure support to claim these rights. Nash (2009) echoes this sentiment when she states “...the enjoyment of rights is never simply a matter of legal entitlement; it also depends on social structures through which power, material resources and meanings are created and circulated (p.1069).

Goldring et al. (2009), in their study of the Canadian context, challenge the conception of the discrepancy between binary or dichotomous approaches (ie. status/non-status) and offer a conceptualization of ‘gradations’ of the “less than full” or precarious status that “includes undocumented and documented illegality, and other forms of insecure and irregular migrant status. Precarious status, like citizenship, is multi-dimensional and constructed by specific state policies, regulations, practices of policy implementation, activism, discourses and so forth and there may be multiple pathways to precarious status, depending on the context and various levels” (p.240). This theorization is particularly relevant to migrant labourers because, as the authors argue, it generates a

class of people who ‘live and work in Canada without full resident, citizenship or labour rights.’ This contributes to the social, political and economic marginalization of temporary workers, and generates hierarchies of rights and membership in the Canadian nation (Baines et al., 2002; Basok, 2004, 2008; Fudge & MacPhail, 2009; Hennebry, 2008; Marsden, 2011; Preibisch & Binford, 2007; Preibisch, 2007; Sharma, 2001, 2006). In particular, when these hierarchies impact access to services to which individuals are entitled, this has an impact on people’s wellbeing, health, social inclusion or exclusion and sense of belonging to society.

Section # 2 - Bureaucratic responses to neo-liberal demands - the IMW as a response to ‘supply and demand’

The above sections have synthesized the literature relating to the “political rationalities”(Miller & Rose, 1990) which have rendered a form of government through the state, particularly related to global labour migration and citizenship. These political rationalities – neo-liberalism, neo-liberal or market citizenship and the ‘market civilization’ – have offered conceptions of the proper ends and means that are government as we know it today. It is important to note, as Miller and Rose do (as they elaborate on Foucault’s notions of ‘governmentality’) that through these political rationalities and corresponding technologies of government, we see that rather than ‘the state’ giving rise to government (meaning that it precedes the form of government that we see today) instead, the state becomes a form of government, joining an “ensemble formed by institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, the calculations and tactics, that allow the exercise of this very specific, albeit complex form of power” (Foucault, 1979, p. 20). As Miller & Rose (1990) state:

Instead of viewing rule in terms of a state that extends its sway throughout society by means of a ramifying apparatus of control, the notion of governmentality draws attention to the diversity of forces and groups that have, in heterogeneous ways, sought to regulate the lives of individuals and conditions within particular national territories in pursuit of various goals. (p. 3)

Taking up an analysis of power and how these forms of government actually govern will allow us entry into how the authoritative processes of certain populations, such as its “laws that modulate its wealth, health, longevity, its capacity to wage war and to engage in labour and so forth”. For example, to follow through with the above review of neo-liberalism, globalization and capital accumulation, moving the analysis through to understanding that these rationalities were not a matter of a central power extending its sway throughout society, but that instead “at a particular historical moment, states had managed to connect themselves to a diversity of forces and groups that in different ways had long tried to shape and administer the lives of individuals in pursuit of various goals (Rose, O’Malley and Valverde, 2006, p. 87).

In an effort to go beyond the denunciation of top-down control - which the previous two sections of this review can be read as – I will include in my framework ‘governmentality perspectives’ which can be taken up in a pursuit of neo-marxist studies, and which have the capacity to render neo-liberalism visible in new ways (Rose, O’Malley & Valverde, 2006). As such, following through with a review of the political rationalities of current manifestations of government and the state would require an analysis of the “technologies of government” that seek to translate the realm of thought about a particular population into a material reality of devices that make it possible to govern them. These technologies of government require discursive strategies, usually

through the usage of particular terminologies, categorizations, nominations, etc., in order for the exercise of domination, mastery and management of that population. Thus, “no usage of language can ever be considered neutral, impartial or apolitical” (Park & Bhuyan, 2012, p. 21). In fact, the usage of certain language carry with them significant weight in producing identity. As Miller & Rose (1990) state:

Discourse as a technology of thought, requiring attention to the particular technical devices of writing, listing, numbering and computing that render a realm into discourse as a knowable, calculable, and administrative object. Knowing and object in such a way that it can be governed is more than a purely speculative activity. It requires the invention of procedures of notation, ways of collecting and presenting statistics. It is through such procedures of inscription that the diverse domains of ‘governmentality’ are made up, that ‘objects’ such as the economy, the enterprise, the social field, and the family are rendered in a particular conceptual form and made amenable to instruction and regulation (p.5).

Focusing on language – and in particular the way in which individuals are categorized – can open up pathways to identify the ‘indirect’ mechanisms of rule that are important in liberal democratic societies, even those that have enabled government at a distance. Language serves as a ‘translation mechanism’ between the general political rationalities and the particular regulatory aspirations (Miller & Rose, 1990). As such, the following section will look at three specific regulating domains that are implemented by a variety of social actors. They are enacted through technical devices such as language and coding. They include the *labeling of migrant workers as “economic units”, using skill and temporary work as mechanisms to differentiate workers, and employing technologies that support the liberal paradox of devolution and protectionism.*

Economic Units

Labour migrants have been produced by, and in turn reify the production of, a neoliberal criteria/ethics/logics that ‘requires’ them to fulfill a capitalist mode of production. This framework begins by “knowing” individuals as labourers and workers in specific ways. Seen through the “logic of capital”, individuals become (and fulfill) systematic requirements for subordinate labour, and are thus known in these ways – “slave, followed by indentured, forced, non-citizen, illegal, colonial, ‘Third-World’” (Cohen, 2006).

Cohen (2006) uses the term “helot” to capture the subordinate situation of such labourers. A helot is the outcome of a model of migration that sets up a relationship between the concepts of development aid and mutual benefit. In other words, the neoliberal criteria of market responsiveness translates into a framework where labour-importing countries should benefit from the use of much needed labour, whereas the labour-exporting countries would deal with internal labour surplus by setting up an easy system of out-flow migration. Secondary benefits include the increasing of labour market competitiveness in importing countries, whereby exporting countries reap the benefits of returnees’ newly acquired skills and capital. Cohen argues that the helot experiences a certain level of subordination because, although they are not slaves in that the employer can not claim proprietorial rights over them, and they can not be bought or sold, they characteristically do not enjoy full social and civic rights, as compared with citizen workers. They are produced as a classical ‘reserve army’, ready to take over when existing workers are deemed to be at the end of their term – whether by the nature of their work permits (in the case of labour migrants) or by opposing the interests of market

ideology by demanding better working conditions, pay and other social entitlements (in the case of citizen workers). Hence, these existing workers are disciplined by the possibility of replacement by the helot reserve army of workers.

When entering the domain of labour migration, the individual engages in a neo-liberal economic model based on a cost benefit or “push-pull” analysis. This sort of model sees people as “exaggeratedly calculating and profit maximizing” (Cohen, 2006, p. 129). Consequently, this economic model centers on the capacity and potential of individuals and the population as living resources that may be harnessed and managed by governing regimes through two specific optimizing technologies (Ong, 2006).

Technologies of subjectivity rely on an array of knowledge and expert systems to induce self-animation and self-government so that citizens can optimize choices, efficiency, and competitiveness in turbulent market conditions. Such techniques of optimization include the adherence to health regimes, acquisition of skills, development of entrepreneurial ventures, and other techniques of self-engineering and capital accumulation. *Technologies of subjection* inform political strategies that differently regulate populations for optimal productivity, increasingly through spatial practices that engage market forces. Such regulations include the fortressization of urban space, the control of travel, and the recruitment of certain kinds of actors to growth hubs (p.6).

Modern day immigration regimes have constructed the migrant in several ways, eliciting several subjectivities. These subjectivities included the “nation-builder” immigrant who is granted citizenship rights and related entitlements, the moral-obligation migrants who are granted asylum, and finally, the labour migrant whose valorization comes in the form of contribution to a nation’s economic objectives (Hairong, 2003). Although historically, there have been less of a rigidity between these categories, in the latter part of this century, through neoliberal market ideologies and related mechanisms, the demarcation

between them has become entrenched. This is no more as evident as in Canada. Canada's immigration past has shown that if one could prove their worth in building a growing nation-state, then being granted permanent status was to follow (albeit with its own gendered and racialized implications) (Knowles, 2007, Vineberg, 2011, Harzig, 2003). It has only been in the last 40 years, since the advent of temporary labour migration programmes, that the nation-builder immigrant and "economic unit" (Lowe, 2010) migrant have become further differentiated (Sharma, 2006, Knowles, 2007).

On one hand, the subjectivity of an economic unit refers to an individual that is perpetually responsive to the modifications in their environment. "Furthermore, this calculative, self-enterprising subject is required to acquire skill, aptitude and competence in order to build up human capital, in short, to be self-enterprising" (Gordon, cited in Ong, 2006, p. 173). It is this subjectivity that an emergent "transnational governmentality" (Ferguson & Gupta cited in Baker-Cristales 2008) emanates from, as states subject populations to containment and control from away. For example, migrant workers who find themselves unable to gain wages that are sufficient for the livelihoods of themselves and their family, make decisions to leave in search of gainful employment. It is this logic that the governments of their nation-states draw upon to build temporary labour bilateral agreements with countries that have deemed this sort of work necessary for their national economies. In both instances, a sort of governance has implicated both the individual worker and the state that carries out such labour migration programs. At one level, this seems to be an image of order and prosperity, the right decisions for the right outcomes on everybody's part. However, it is through this sort of 'supply and demand' chain that we begin to understand what Marx called "commodity fetishism". In

this case, the commodity is the individual labour worker called to draw upon their self-enterprising capacities in order to fulfill their own desires and the desires of the state. Furthermore, as Salzinger (cited in De Genova, 2006) states, “it makes visible the connections between the production of subjects and the production of commodities” (p.249).

It is at this juncture, we begin to understand how the migrant worker, in fact, works in collusion with a conglomerate of forms of government – the nation-state, globalization, capital formation, etc., that contributes to their “economic unit” subjectivity. In an effort to be responsible for their own self-care, engaging in the actual processes of turning their labour into a commodity is a clear example of the “technology of the self” which a Foucauldian framework offers. This strategy of rendering subjects as ‘responsible’ – in particular, responsible to their family’s financial well-being, shifts the responsibility of the state for social risks such as unemployment and welfare dependency. As Lemke (2001) writes:

The key feature of the neo-liberal rationality is the congruence it endeavours to achieve between a responsible and moral individual and an economic rational actor. It aspires to construct prudent subjects whose moral quality is based on the fact that they rationally assess the costs and benefits of a certain act as opposed to other alternative acts. AS the choice of options for action is, or so the neo-liberal notion of rationality would have it, the expression of free will on the basis of a self-determined decision, the consequences of the action borne by the subject alone, who is solely responsible for them (p.201).

The last notion that has been connected to the subjectivity of migrant workers is that of ‘freedom’. More specifically, the notion of freedom has been used to differentiate the migrant worker and the rest of the differentially subordinate workers who have been historically unfree from their masters domain. According to Cohen (2006), they appear to

benefit from a modern notion of freedom found in the modern nation-state. For example, (and for the most part) they are free to join unions, vote, to access health care, social security, unemployment insurance, pension, and should be free from unfair wages, unfair dismissal and arbitrary state power. However, it is this idea of freedom – its realities and illusions, created by the modern liberal government and explicit in a neoliberal ideology that in fact governs the individual (Rose, O'Malley and Valverde 2006). The creation of freedom, and the individual's pursuit of it means that "subjects were obliged to be free and were required to conduct themselves responsibly, to account for their own lives and their vicissitudes in terms of freedom and choice, autonomy, self-responsibility, and the obligation to maximize one's life as a kind of enterprise" (Rose, O'malley & Valverde, 2006, p. 87). Thus, the conditions of the migrant workers security are in fact dependent on the conditions of their freedom (Hindess, 1997).

Ironically, it is the pursuit of freedom and self-responsibility that delivers the migrant worker into domains of 'unfreedom'. Sharma (2006) maintains that freedom for the migrant worker is defined by its relation to citizenship. Therefore the experiences of freedom once in the host country, turn from the act of pursuing freedom to experiencing domination and exploitation by the mere fact that they have no access to citizenship. In other words, it is their freedom that subjects them to their 'unfreedom'.

Using skill and temporary labour to differentiate between workers

Another mechanism that is used to regulate the lives of migrant workers are the ways within which they are marked to be different from citizen workers, as well as from each other. The former is evident through Calavita's (2005) book about immigrants in Western Europe, she writes the following:

Immigrants are useful to Italian employers precisely because they are different from locals. By this, of course I do not mean that there is some a priori racial or ethnic difference that constructs them as a good supply of cheap and flexible labour. Rather, their lack of integration into Italian society and culture is a critical ingredient of their flexibility. While in some regions (like the northeast) immigrants fill absolute shortages, mostly their value is that they work for wages and conditions that locals increasingly shun, and that unemployed southern Italians will longer move for” (p.65).

Although, the literature about citizenship regimes has been covered elsewhere in this chapter, it is important to note here how and why the migrant worker subjectivity is predicated on this notion of differentiation from the citizen worker. Several authors write about how the migrant worker population creates a new class of individuals, usually removed from the social and political rights afforded to the citizenry, but who undoubtedly contribute to the growth of domestic capital. For example, Cohen (2008) explains that the global migration of people for work has created a “labour diaspora” precisely because what makes a diaspora is a troubled relationship with the host society. This labour diaspora is marked by an unskilled migrant group that is locked for some time into a subordinate status through lack of opportunities and prejudice. What is unique about a labour diaspora is that it is a completely transitional type of community, distinct from other diaspora that historically have returned home or have attained some sort of middle-class status in the host countries. Labour diaspora are defined by the fact that they fill a large number of ‘3D’ jobs (dirty, dangerous, disposable), and that one set of workers are always on standby to fill the jobs of workers who are pushed to leave after their allotted time.

Standing & Moase (2011) maintain that there is a new class that is in the making, one particularly marked by its marginalized and exploited status in a class structure of the

21st century. The ‘precariat’ have become so through their lack of belonging to occupations and communities, which intensifies their alienation. Thus, they are viewed as instrumental and removed from their reproductive activities, which was work done for its own sake “to strengthen personal relationships, to be combined with public participation in the life of the community” (p.13). The precariat consists of workers who are “career-less”, temporary workers, low-wage workers – usually women, the young, the elderly and migrants. Coupled with the work experiences previously listed, there are also high incidences of undocumented status, losing jobs due to recessions and deportations. Again, it is important to note that the rise of the precariat coincides with the developments of the labour and economic markets of ‘residents’. As Shaheed (2011) writes:

In flexible labour markets with porous borders, wages are driven down to levels only migrants will accept, below the levels that residents used to high living standards will tolerate. Low wages in sectors where migrants are concentrated then intensify downward wage pressure in other sectors. The affluent benefit from low-cost cleaners, nannies and plumbers, while the supply of skilled migrants reduces the pressure on employers to train the unemployed (p. 462).

One of the most important markers of the migrant worker is that of “skill”. Skill and education have been used by states around the world as explicit identifications for the “right” immigrant in their regulation of migration flows. In Canada, they have been used in selecting immigrants since the beginning of the 20th century when “under the eugenics movement, public leaders, scientific experts, and media spokespersons raised the alarm over the disproportionate numbers of the “mentally defective” and “feeble-minded” among immigrants to Canada” (Tannock, 2011, p. 1332). As a result, an amendment was made to the Immigration Act of 1919 instituting mandatory literacy tests.

In 1967, the points system became Canada's new regulations for determining admissibility. This new system was touted as being non-discriminatory and objective by allocating points to potential immigrants based on language ability, educational attainment, age, skill and age, amongst others. It is through the economic stream (which uses the points system) that the majority of workers come into Canada as 'skilled'. According to Tannock (2011) the points system "acts as the institutional anchor and legitimation of a distinction that many in Canada make between "good" immigrants, who are skilled and deserve to be welcomed because they have acquired education to help themselves, and "bad" or "underserving" immigrants who are unskilled, and a drain on society and cost the economy" (p.1334). This preference for skill even played out in the selection of the right "humanitarian" immigrant. For example, in 1972 during the refugee crisis in Uganda with the expulsions of the Asian population, Canada sent immigration officials with instructions to "pick the best from the group", in other words, those that had skill and education to back their admission into Canada (Tannock, 2011).

Skill codification of workers fit within the sort of technologies of government that Miller and Rose (1990) write as being "apparently humble and mundane mechanisms which appear to make it possible to govern" (p.8). This way of knowing individuals in particular ways (ie through their apparent skill classification) enables domination from a distance. In other words, the migrant worker becomes known, managed and mobilized by distant governments and other actors even while they have yet to leave their home country, all by the classification of their labour skills during the process of application.

Skill calculation also becomes important when thinking about how a number of social actors work in tandem as a result of this calculation. Again, Miller and Rose

(1990) give insight into how these indirect forms of rule work: “[they] link calculations at one place with the action of another, not through the direct imposition of a form of conduct by force, but through a delicate affiliation of a loose assemblage of agents and agencies into a functioning network” (p.11). Thus, skill codification becomes a powerful tool linking actors such as workers, employers, provincial and federal government departments in an effort to be consonant in their management of migrant workers. Each of these actors uses skill codification as a technology of governing migrants to Canada, both permanent and temporary. For example, on one hand the de-skilling of migrants works for the Canadian labour market as employers’ insist that immigrations have Canadian experience, thus barring them from upper labour-market segments. For jobs that Canadians do not desire, this requirement does not exist. At the same time, from a corporatist perspective, de-skilled immigrants “represent the ‘flexible’ labour force Canada’s immigration legislation seeks to attract. They are highly educated, yet accept work for low wages in occupations outside their formal training (Bauder, 2003, p. 714).

Finally, it is important to consider skill-codification because basing an immigration system on the selection of skilled immigrants is deemed the most rational and beneficial for labour-accepting countries (Aydemir, 2011; Brunner & Colarelli, 2010). For example, Brunner & Colarelli (2010) use globalization and competitiveness in a high-technology world as reasons that countries should treat their immigration policies as a “hiring system” for new citizens and admission of immigrants because these policies should support key national goals of maintaining economic competitiveness. Family reunification is usually placed in opposition of such goals, unless it is coupled with an

economic points selection process as it is argued that high-skilled immigrants bring high-skilled spouses (Aydermir, 2011).

Entitlements and benefits for migrant workers have become identified by this neo-liberal criteria. In other words, those that possess human capital or expertise become highly valued through their high-skilled codification, and can therefore experience more freely citizenship-like status claims in diverse locations. Otherwise, those who have been marked as the opposite become devalued and vulnerable to exclusionary practices (Ong, 2006).

In Canada, a particular skill classification has material consequences from economic integration, to family separation, to housing options, to the access to permanent residency. Few workers intend to stay deemed as lower-skilled forever. The most important variable if they stay as labour diaspora is their social and employment mobility in the host society, and this is almost definitely tied to the skill codification that they are subject to.

Temporary labour migration vs. national unemployment

As much as the delineation of skill, the temporary nature of the length of stay for a migrant worker in Canada works on multiple levels to differentiate them from the citizenry. This “technology of subjection” (Ong, 2006) regulates the migrant labourer in order to fulfill the state’s obligation to its citizenry by ensuring jobs are available to them when jobs outnumber workers, as well as protecting citizens in an era of terrorism and national border protection. As a result, the temporary nature of the migrant labourer in Canada, particularly one that does not have access to citizenship, fulfills simultaneous nation-building agendas.

It is important to locate these notions in the larger discussion about “precarious employment” (Cranford, 2003) and the overall quality of work in today’s world, particularly since the 1990s. Employment precarity appeared alongside the macro-economic changes during the intensive neoliberal eras of the 1970s-1980s (Kalleberg, 2009). It is a form of work that is atypical from the standard employment relationship (SER) that refers to the normative model of employment where the worker has one employer, works full-time and permanently, and enjoys entitlements and benefits. Instead, precarious employment refers to work that has limited benefits, low pay, poor working conditions, job insecurity, no employment mobility and usually subjects the worker to detrimental health and safety standards. In Canada, it is women, immigrants and people of colour that continue to occupy this segment of the labour market (Bakan & Stasilius, 1997; Cranford, Vosko, & Zukewich, 2003; Goldring, 2010; Vosko, Zukewich, & Cranford, 2003). Precarious work has touched the lives of most workers worldwide, and is not particular to migrant workers. However, what defines the workers who have a precarious legal-citizen status are that they engage in only precarious work. Moreover, it seems that starting off in precarious work in the short-term for many temporary foreign workers can determine long term labour market outcomes that do not improve, regardless of a transition to permanent residency (Goldring & Landolt, 2011). This has become the ‘selling feature’ of migrant labour programs in labour-receiving countries – namely because their employment precarity is the insurance required in today’s labour market (when their labour is no longer perceived as required, their precarity makes it easy to expel them). This sort of societal arrangement requires “political affect [which] is central to the effective governmental mobilization of a sense of threat to the population” (Vukov,

2003, p. 338). “Political affect”, according to Vukov (2003) is the way within which regulatory and structural rationalities of governance circulate in the public culture, in order to arouse a commonsense imagining of national belonging.

Political affect has been used in Canada through the link made between unemployment and immigration, where articulations of the nation and its boundaries emerge. Palmer (1996) suggests that opposition to immigration by the citizenry is a multi-factored model that goes beyond symbolic racism to an interaction between various beliefs about immigration “that includes prejudice, but also include concerns about economic effects, crime, culture, increasing population size, and so on” (p.191). Government rhetoric and legislation mirrors these citizen-level beliefs as evidenced in shifts in immigration policy that have occurred within a considerably short time. For example, the 1966 White Paper on immigration strengthened Canada’s immigration program and came at a time when Canada’s economy was surging. In this paper, it stated: “immigration has made a major contribution to the national objectives of maintaining a high rate of population and economic growth” (quoted in Knowles, 2007, p. 204). Following this the Green Paper on Immigration of 1977, written at a time during the energy crisis felt around the world, took a completely different stance on immigration as a population growth strategy. It stated:

To many Canadians, living in a modern industrialized and increasingly urbanized society, the benefits of high rates of population growth appear dubious on several grounds. Canada, like most advanced nations, counts the cost of more people in terms of congested metropolitan areas, housing shortages, pressures on arable land, damage to the environment – in short, the familiar catalogue of problems with which most prosperous and sophisticated societies are currently endeavoring to cope (quoted in Knowles, 2007, p. 205).

The management of immigration levels as a “tap on/tap off” approach allows unemployment rates to dictate immigration rates as evidenced by times when unemployment rates rose between a one or two year period, immigration tended to fall a year or two after that time (Veugelers, 2000). This political affect works at another level as well. At times when high levels of immigration coincide with high levels of unemployment of immigrant workers, it shifts the responsibility of this unemployment down to the individual immigrant. In other words, governmental responsibilities to increase educational levels, quality, official language ability and the skills of the Canadian labour force are eclipsed by the arguments that the labour market is better responded to by simply lowering levels of immigration which flood it with too many workers who can not find jobs (Knowles, 2007).

The “liberal paradox” –dual devolution and protectionism

As noted above, the effects of neoliberalism on the processes of migration and on the state are evident. Hollifield (2004) argues that this complex contributes to the “liberal paradox”, an era where economic forces have been pushing states to a greater openness at the same time when domestic and political forces push states towards greater closure. At the centre of this paradox is the neoliberal logic that pushes economic openness by privileging institutions of the free flow of capital and goods, but at the same time reinforces the nation-state as a membership community by carefully selecting the right immigrants, and excluding undesirable ‘others’ (Varsanyi, 2008). The North American ‘liberal paradox’ is solidified via the Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP), which was founded in 2005 at a summit of the heads of state. It is coordinated by a powerful lobby groups including the US Council on Foreign Relations, the Canadian Council of

Chief Executives, and the Mexican Council on Foreign Relations, all calling for the maximizing of North American economic competitiveness, expedited means of resource extraction, and integrated energy supply management. At the very same time, the SPP calls for secured borders against terrorism and illegal migration (Walia, 2010).

This “political rationality” (Miller & Rose, 1990) becomes practice through the state activities of devolution. It is a simultaneous activity by the state that allows them to appear as though they are enforcing immigration to the benefit of the state – by protecting borders through increased militarization, and by selecting the right immigration for the right reasons. Devolutionary immigration policies become policies that strengthen the nation-state’s neoliberal logic by purging the system of obstacles to the free-market flow of capital. Examples of these sorts of policies are the expansion of immigration categories of economic migrants and the diminishing family categories, the expansion of temporary foreign worker programs, and the downloading of immigrant selection to sub-national entities such as provinces/territories and employers. The enforcement of such immigration processes (and consequently the servicing and policing of non-citizen populations) is downloaded onto state and local governments and other stakeholders such as community service agencies and neighbourhoods. Thus, neoliberal logic and values trickle “out to markets and down to local agencies” (Peck, 2001, p. 452) for them to enact these mechanisms, while powers of institutional coordination remain at the centre.

Devolution disperses the neoliberal logics of membership policies of the state, further reinforcing the division between the foreigner and citizen. Through these processes, it produces a sort of neoliberal subject (Bhuyan, 2012; Varsanyi, 2008).

Varsanyi (2008) argues that as the demand for deskilled labour grows: “these devolutionary policies produce categories of people who, particularly when approached by the state as immigrants, are placed beyond the protections of the constitution and the welfare capacity of the state, although they may live within the nation-state for many years” (p.892).

Conclusion

I review the literature, both theoretical and empirical, on globalization and neoliberalism, labour migration, the nation-state and citizenship regimes, neoliberal and market citizenship, and bureaucratic responses to neoliberalism such as creating ‘economic units’, classifications of workers, and deregulation. Each of these content areas contribute to the context of my inquiry in ways that show that the concept and practice of temporary foreign worker programs are not necessarily as a result of the natural order of how the world has become more globalized, but instead have worked in tandem in deliberate ways that respond to neoliberal criteria and logic that have been assumed by different levels of governments in Canada, civil society, the family and the self. In chapter six, these concepts are found in the ideological circle that I argue regulate the lives of ‘low-skilled’ migrant workers in Alberta.

Chapter Five: A story of ‘low-skilled’ International Migrant Workers in Alberta

In this chapter, I present the articulations of the daily experiences of work and life as presented by the IMWs, and other actors such as NGOs, government, public and political debates, and immigrant recruiters. The descriptions of the individuals that were interviewed are included in Appendix A. This chapter offers these accounts in order that they are included in the general frameworks and public knowledge currently produced about IMWs in Canada. These accounts provide the “entry-level data” (Campbell and Gregor, 2002, p. 60) that offered a starting point into the problematic at the local setting, through the way informants spoke about these experiences. It will be in the following chapter where I explicate these accounts.

With IMW participants, the interview guides I used were open-ended, general and meant to foster a discussion between the participant and myself. I asked questions that prompted participants to talk about their lives before they came to Canada, their process of coming to Canada, and their current experiences now that they were here. By focusing on the migration process I was hoping to direct the conversation to how and why one chooses to embark in the process of becoming deemed as a low-skilled international migrant worker, to see if there were ways of making visible the social relations that brought them to Canada. Secondly, by focusing on what life was like in Canada on a daily basis, I was hoping to see how their lives were organized in specific ways, and what sorts of ‘behaviours’ these social organizations were fostering.

The interview with other stakeholders – immigrant recruiters, staff at the Calgary Catholic Immigration Society, and a representative from the Alberta Government’s Temporary Foreign Worker Advisory Office, were done in the same vein. Open-ended,

and related to their daily experiences while interacting with IMWs in Calgary and area, the interviews covered topics that included their ways within they see IMWs in their workplace environments, in order to build upon the map of how the lives of IMWs are organized.

I begin with a description of my fieldwork – the sites, sounds and relationships built throughout the data collection process. Following this, the accounts from informants are organized in general broad headings that mirror the questions in my interview guides. Campbell & Gregor (2002) warn writers of IE that there is a danger of sorting one's data in artificial ways. I am not interested in generalizing in over-arching themes that may signify a commonality between individuals at this juncture, and Chapter 6 will show how my analysis supersedes any one account as well as the totality of what I have heard. However, for this chapter, in order to present the story I heard through ethnographic means so that I may build my arguments in subsequent chapters, I chose to present it through the course of the conversations I had with people talking about the world of 'low-skilled' international migrant workers.

Description of fieldwork settings

Early on in my data collection stages, I made the decision to meet with the international migrant workers (IMWs) in a 'neutral' space that was in a location in proximity to their homes or work place. I did not want to meet at the CCIS offices, or any other 'institutional' space because I wanted to distance myself as much as possible from those institutions. I believed that this was the right approach because I hoped that informants would speak as freely as they felt they could, without any concerns of any institutional entity (Citizenship & Immigration, Human Resources and Skills

Development, employment standards, etc.) being present in the interview space. The decision was made after having read an article by De Leon & Cohen (De Leon & Cohen, 2005) who argue that the material objects and space where an ethnographic interview takes place can influence what is said and asked in the actual interview. As such, I didn't want any organizational publications, wall hangings, desks or any organizational artifacts in the interview space.

In Calgary, the majority of the interviews took place at a variety of local co-operative grocery stores (called the Calgary Co-op) because they have community rooms that are available for rental at no cost to the community. After having discussed over email or phone in which quadrant the individual lived in, it was agreed that it we would meet at the local Calgary Co-op. One interview, with a husband and wife, happened in the informants' home. This was an invitation extended by them after I had suggested meeting at a Calgary Co-op. They asked if it would be okay to do so, since it would fit within their work schedules. In Banff, the interview took place in the hotel room I was occupying. This happened after I had asked the participant if it would be okay if we met at a local coffee shop. She asked if there was a quieter place to meet, but she did not want to meet at her home. She asked if it would be okay if we met in my hotel room, and I felt comfortable enough after speaking with her that this would be a good location for the interview. For other informants, such as CCIS and Alberta Government staff, as well as the immigrant recruiter, we met at their offices, as it was done so during regular work hours.

The recruitment for international migrant worker informants occurred through a mass email that was sent out over the email listserv of the CCIS (see Appendix IV).

Informants were asked to contact me directly to book a time and place. Although when communicating with them I confirmed their sole attendance, on two separate occasions, the confirmed individual brought other international migrant workers with them, usually co-workers or someone from their social circle. This happened at the first interview; I had confirmed the interview with Jessica, and when it came time for the interview, she had invited two others. When they walked into the room, she asked me if it was okay if she had brought friends “like her”, who wanted to talk to me about their experiences as international migrant workers. At first, I was not sure how to handle the situation, mostly because it took me by surprise; however, I quickly adapted to the situation and realized that it would be beneficial to have more respondents than less. The second time this occurred was with Malcolm, who also did not inform me he would bring someone with him, but showed up with a co-worker (who he called “employee of the year”). In every other instance, the interviews were with individual international migrant workers (except for the husband/wife duo).

The individuals that were recruited were all able to communicate with me in English, which is not surprising since they had to be able to respond to the recruitment poster. Some spoke better English than others, and in the instances where communication was challenging, I made sure to take the interview slowly or re-word any questions I had that elicited some confusion. I did not feel at any time that language was a barrier for neither the informants nor myself.

Before my first interview, I wondered if people would be nervous or apprehensive to speak to me, considering the content of the interview was related to their current status in Canada, employment situation and other issues that may be sensitive. These were my

pre-conceived ideas of what I was to expect during the interviews³. However, this was not the case, and I found myself to be more nervous, perhaps due to my newly acquired ‘researcher role’, than the international migrant workers I interviewed. As a matter of fact, I realized quickly that they had a lot to say.

Participants spoke at length. At times, we had come up to a two-hour mark and I had rarely completed the questions from the interview guide. My impression was that people had come to the interviews with ‘something’ to say, whether it was about their current employment situation, or to voice their confusion and/or frustration about having been brought to Canada via the Temporary Foreign Worker program, but not being able to stay. On several occasions, people took the opportunity to ask me questions – why did I think the program was the way it was, did I think it was fair they could not bring their families, did I think that their employers were treating them unfairly, etc. In the interview with Magda, who was a social researcher in the Philippines before she arrived in Canada, we spent considerable time discussing the political and economic reasons (near the end of the interview) behind why the program was implemented as it was. Whether this was true on the part of the participants or not, I remember feeling several times that people just ‘wanted to be heard’, and that this was one of the few, if any, venues where they could speak anonymously and without effect. At the end of these interviews, many people thanked me for my time and for listening.

Listening back to the tape recordings, I realized that I repeatedly told participants that they could come back to questions or skip them altogether, or end the interview at

³ After further reflection at a later point, however, I wondered how much of this was as a result of having just completed the University Ethics review process, which required that I think of my research study through a ‘risk assessment’ matrix, which identified all the ways that interview participants could be put at risk for taking part in my study.

any time. I felt that I sounded sometimes apologetic because of the questions I was asking, assuming that I was conjuring up a sensitive discussion. In a couple of the interviews, participants made comments along the lines that I didn't need to worry, they knew that I wasn't "immigration" or that they knew the interview was anonymous. It was the participants who put me at ease during the interviews, and not necessarily the other way around.

The interviews that took place with other informants had a different 'feel' to them, but were similar in one way – each stakeholder wanted to tell me 'their side of the story'. For example, the staff of CCIS took the opportunity to voice their own concerns about the exploitation they see happening to their clients. It was clear they had their clients interests at heart. The same could be said about the informant from the Temporary Worker Advisor Office from the Alberta Government, who I had met before at a couple of the public information sessions I had observed. In the interview with the immigrant recruiter (as well as in the information session where I observed his presentation to employers and HR personnel), he spoke freely with me and was generous with his opinions about the program, its flaws and its successes. I remember thinking several times in the interview: "Did I just hear him right?" because I thought that the way within which he was talking about his stake in the whole TFW complex was so forthcoming and blunt (almost like I had 'struck gold' in that I was going to be able to explicate significantly from his talk). Again, all these informants thanked me for my time, and I felt a burden of responsibility to be able to represent what I had heard.

During the observation sessions, I was a non-entity. By that I mean that other than the staff I knew from CCIS who were coordinating the events, no one knew, or I believe

cared, I was in the room. People were intently looking for information, and seemed very preoccupied by getting it. If they did not hear the answers to their questions in the presentations, they often stood in long lines to speak to the presenters after. I observed many of these lineups and listened to a lot of the questions, as I began to realize early on that there was significant ‘talk’ happening during these question and answer portions.

Theme #1 –Why do international migrant workers come?

The reasons behind applying to the TFW program seemed to respond to the lack of security and/or alternative to their current living and working conditions. Financial security, personal security and health security seemed to be a significant motivating factor in gaining access to Canada by whatever route possible. To a lesser extent, a personal desire for independence and a sense of adventure drove two TFWs, both of whom were single, unattached young people (under the age of 30).

Looking for (perceived) financial security

There is one overwhelming reason why IMWs decide to apply for the programs and travel to Canada to take part in low wage, deskilling and precarious employment. It was clear throughout the interviews that there were certain obligations to their families and their financial well-being that got them to begin the IMW journey. These obligations were to find “better opportunities” for better pay and perceived long-term financial security.

Obligations to children, spouses and other family members were a powerful motivator. Some saw the need for greater financial security in order to provide adequate living conditions for their families. For example, several people from the Phillipines described living in an economy with continuous inflation and lesser pay, for often times

skilled employment (many of these individuals were in management level positions at the time of applying). Malcolm described having been fulfilled in his employment, however, in terms of waning value of compensation and an increasing cost of living, he felt that he had no choice but to apply to the TFW program.

Magda spoke about the financial crisis that her family endured when her husband had been laid off and could not find work. With a need to supplement her income, even though she had been working as a social planner at the municipal level conducting social research initiatives, she decided to take courses after work hours in caregiving. She had been told by her aunt, who had been a live-in caregiver in Canada for over 20 years that it was lucrative and was more convinced it was the right decision when her aunt received her PR. Magda subsequently spent over 1 year working full-time and taking evening courses in caregiving. This was Magda's solution to finding "better opportunities" for her and her family in Canada. Although Magda has experienced difficult challenges related to family separation, job satisfaction and her housing situation in Canada, she responds with the following when asked if she felt she made the right decision to come to Canada as an IMW:

M: Oh, sometimes it comes to my mind, "Oh, did I make the wrong decision", but when I am thinking about my family that, we, um, can be together here in the near future. Yeah, I do believe that my children have better opportunities here. Better than in the Philippines. You know, that is my primary goal, for my children.

Many of the interviewees stated that their work situations were more satisfying before coming to Canada, and that it was simply a decision based their beliefs that working in Canada would provide them better financial compensation, and consequently better financial security.

Health security and access to services

The lack of services that foster health and social security in their home country also emerged as a reason for becoming a IMW. Those who stated this had particular family members that required access to services that were either too expensive or unavailable. For example, Malcolm spoke at length about his daughter with Downs Syndrome and as a result of the lack of services and support (both financial and social) at home, Malcolm and his wife looked at all opportunities available to them to find better opportunities elsewhere. They looked at applying to both Australia and Canada, and chose Canada and the IMW because of Malcolm's managerial experience in the food service industry made him an 'ideal' candidate for the skilled categories in the TFW program. It was Malcolm's belief that once in Canada, it would be easy to bring in his family, at which time they could start accessing the appropriate services for their daughter.

Personal security

Pedro and Clara spoke about a desire to leave their home country because of personal security issues related to ongoing conflict in the region. Interestingly enough, this came out as a top reason when interviewing service providers, who stated when asked why they thought people applied to the program in the first place. This is an important observation to make because it may be that many of these individuals, may be eligible for refugee determination in Canada.

The carrot: the chase for the elusive Permanent Residency

The majority of IMWs spoke about their desires to achieve permanent residency (PR) in Canada, in order to address the above motivating factors. Most of those I

interviewed were clearly frustrated and disheartened because it was only after a few years in Canada that they really began to understand how difficult it would be to achieve. Many of these people spoke about how they were misled by recruiters in their home countries or relatives and community members in Canada who had given them “false hope”. Some believed that if they just made it to Canada, that achieving PR would be easy enough. The majority, by year 2 or 3, had their hopes for this dashed as it became clear that PR was never accessible for those TFW who were deemed ‘semi-skilled’.

It is important to note how PR was discussed by a variety of stakeholders in the interviews and the information sessions I observed. The language, the way it is described and its significance are all unique to each of the stakeholders (IMWs, immigration consultants, Government of Alberta employees, community-based service providers).

International migrant workers spoke about how PR would be the ultimate path to the “better opportunities”. There was a certainty that most IMWs spoke with when they expressed their beliefs that PR would ultimately be the solution to the financial, personal and health security they are looking for. In the interviews, two IMWs spoke about how they accepted a semi-skilled, low NOC designation, although they were qualified and worked in high-skilled jobs in their home countries, because they saw this as the easiest way to get to Canada, and ultimately to get PR. Not only was this described in many of the interviews with IMWs, it was also a consistent message through the questions I observed in the public information sessions. In one instance, a question was raised by a IMW who wanted to hear specifically from the government employee how they can get back to their skilled jobs (which they had been working at in their home country for a significant amount of time) now that they had entered Canada as semi-skilled workers.

The answer was that it required a new LMO and visa, thus a restart of the whole application process. At this information session, which was set up by Calgary Catholic Immigration Society (CCIS) in response to the overwhelming questions about permanent residency that they receive from their clients, it was clear that the majority of people in the audience wanted clear information about the quickest and easiest way to gain PR. Not only was this clear in the public forum of the session, but every single IMW I observed approached panelists individually after the session took place and asked the same question.

Both the Alberta Government employee as well as CCIS stated that almost all of the people who arrive in Canada through the semi-skilled categories of the IMW program come here with the intention of staying in Canada. The Alberta Government employee stated that she thought that 99.9% of her clients had this intention.

Why Canada?

Many of the IMWs spoke about how they perceive Canada as a place where “better opportunities” exist and are plentiful. More specifically, they talked about how they believed that better compensation and benefits awaited them upon their arrival, regardless of whatever job they were coming to. For many, they believed they were going to be making more money in jobs that were below the skill level and title of the jobs they had before leaving their home country. It was said that this was a sacrifice they were willing to make considering their first desire was for better economic security.

International migrant worker spoke about how before moving to Canada, they viewed it as a symbol of prosperity and equality. This image of Canada was formed through stories passed onto them by a variety of actors ranging from immigration

recruiters, family members who had gone before them, and the images of Canada that were promoted in their countries by Canadian embassies. Malcolm stated that immigration recruiters told him “there were more jobs in Canada than people”. Magda stated that she had heard that “you can eat where the rich people eat”. She based her thoughts on the “better opportunities” in Canada because of an aunt who had been working as a live-in caregiver for almost 15 years and who was seemingly “taken care of” and successful at gaining PR. Jessica described seeing North America as a place “where there is just lots of money” based on what she had seen through popular cultural references on TV in the Philippines.

Many participants discussed another reason as to why they chose Canada. Many believed that permanent residency was possible (regardless of their NOC codes) and relatively easy to attain once they landed. In their view, this presented them the “better opportunities” for themselves and their families that they had been seeking. They spoke about their desires for their spouses and children (and even extended family members) to quickly follow them. When asked how they knew that this was the case, it was stated either that what was told to them by recruiters, or that they believe that it was the reputation of Canada to ensure family reunification.

Obligations to nation

An obligation to fulfill a civic responsibility to the nation came out as a clear reason behind how and why many individuals applied to Canada’s TFW program. This emerged through the interviews with the service providers, the observation of the information sessions and textual analysis of key documents.

Many of the people who apply to the TFW program do so because they come from places where there is considerable economic hardship and are thus seeking a way out. For example, during the interview with the immigration consultant, he spoke at length about how many of his international contracts are signed directly with Ministers of Immigration and/or Employment. Speaking specifically about his work in St. Lucia (“I even have the keys to the Minister’s office and can work there whenever I want”), he stated that it was one of many countries that viewed foreign worker programs as a part of the solution to their high domestic unemployment rates. As a result, many countries have set up governing agencies that actively recruit and send citizens to other countries as foreign labourers. Bilateral agreements have been struck between countries so that there is a steady sending and receiving flow of migrant workers between countries (for more detail, please see chapter 3). For example in the Philippines, the Department of Labour and Employment governs the office of the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA). The vision and mission statements of this office are:

Excellence in governance for World-class Filipino migrant workers
POEA connects to the world and in partnership with all stakeholders,
facilitates the generation and preservation of decent jobs for Filipino
migrant workers, promotes their protection and advocates their smooth
reintegration into Philippine society.

The significant impact of remuneration to domestic economies is a significant reason why governments support these migrant programs, and thus employ governmental agencies and departments to manage them. For example, on the PEOA website, the remittances of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) is listed by country for every year since 2003 (moreover, 2011 is further detailed by month). The total remittances from OFWs in

2010 were over 7 million dollars. Specifically, OFWs working in Canada sent back home a total of 2,022, 611 (USD).

Private sector immigration consultants (both in Canada and in these sending countries) find this as an opportunity to capitalize on. Buying into the discourse that these sorts of migrant labour programs (both sending and receiving) make ‘sense’ in today’s global economy, they have seen this as an opportunity to bring migrant labour programs into the private sector. The immigration consultant stated that when foreign governments saw the need to “internationalize their citizens for export” (p.30), then private immigration firms saw the opportunity to supply the training and resources for them to do so.

The desire by governments to foster citizens into migrant workers, as well as the industry that has sprung up around this, can be seen clearly in governmental discourse and corresponding public literature. To continue with the example of the POEA, the following excerpt comes from the 2008 Annual Report and is written by the Secretary of the Department of Labour and Employment:

The POEA’s role in the Department’s employment thrust and its ensuing contribution to the Philippine economy is such that it cannot be captured in one word. Over the years, the overseas employment program has helped uplift the way of life of countless Filipino families and stabilized the country’s financial position.

Amidst the world’s volatile labor migration scenario, the Philippines maintained its foothold in the world labor arena. The strategic programs of POEA, in partnership with government and private entities, contributed for the most part in the sterling achievement. A 14.7% increase in deployment of OFWs for 2008 is arduous as it is impressive in the light of obtaining global economic difficulties.

While we experienced the onset of the worldwide financial crisis in the last quarter, it adversely affected labor migration to a great extent. However, our statistics speak of solid accomplishments in the OE program in 2008. And we stand proud for turning the problem around.

Since my days in 1976 at the defunct Overseas Employment Development Board (OEBD) to the present, I have been steeped in public policy on migration and the building of vital infrastructure to bring to reality the common Filipino dream of working and living abroad. I know that doing that is not easy (source).

Responding to Canadian nation-building

During the interview with the immigration consultant (PB), he spoke about how prior to 2004, Alberta's TFW program was limited to skilled workers (a process he stated as "transferring people back and forth across the border"). In 2003, a consortium of HR lobby groups from the oil & gas industries came together to lobby the government of Alberta to open up the channels of both skilled and semi-skilled (at that time called 'low-skilled') temporary work permits. Their argument was based on their own projections that in the next few years a significant labour shortage in these industries would take place. As a result, aggressive lobby efforts on the parts of these consortiums took place. These consortiums also hired private immigration consultants to build their case and lobby on their behalf. According to PB:

I'll give you a little anecdote if you let me. I remember when we, in 2003, had a meeting in Fort MacMurray with what they call the HR Oil Consortium. Where these guys basically just sit around the table and they can anticipate what the labour needs are gonna be within the next two, three, ten years and so on. Now the same work is done by the Petroleum Human Resources Council of Canada. So basically these guys get around and this is a consortium of a whole bunch of oil and gas companies that work up in Fort MacMurray. These are the usual suspects, the Suncors, the Shells, the Petro Canada's back then, and so on. So they came into our office and they sat down in our boardroom and they said: "Well gentlemen, this is basically our projection". Then we started talking and they said "We will need in the next 5-10 years, we'll need 20,000 foreign workers." This will be like carpenters, brick layers, cement workers, pipe fitters, welders, and so on. I remember looking at my partner. We were looking at each other and thinking "what were these guys smoking", you know, 20,000 low-skilled foreign workers. We really thought these guys had lost it (p.3).

Private immigration consultants saw this time as an opportunity to “pioneer a brand new concept of managing IMWs to suit these big projects up north”. In this brand new concept, immigration consultants state that they are able to project the requirement for IMWs in Alberta “down to a science”.

In the interview, the immigration consultant stated that there are “wheels that turn” the Canadian economy, and that IMW play a significant role in this machine. The continued growth of the program during the first part of the last decade, and consequently the restriction of the program as the global recession hit were clearly taken for granted processes that became the “lay of the land”. Very clear discourses of labour requirement that benefits the Canadian economy are found throughout the interview with the immigration consultant, and can be seen in quotes such as: “Labour immigration are requirements for growth and expansion” and “immigration is a solution to a problem, never a problem”.

Theme #2 – How do they come?

Coming to Canada

The processes of coming to Canada through the semi-skilled NOC categories seemed to depend on which country they were coming from. For example, IMWs coming from the Phillipines generally spoke about either responding to an ad in a local newspaper posted by local or Canadian based immigration recruitment firms.

Respondents from Latin American countries (Mexico, Colombia and Ecuador) seemed to look for the opportunities more actively, meaning that they researched ways to come Canada on their own and approached immigration consulting firms on their own. Every

single respondent went through an immigration firm for the application, even though the application via the Government of Canada Citizenship and Immigration website is available to them for their own personal use. This isn't surprising considering applicants to the TFW program require a job offer before they apply for a LMO and a Visa, which would be next to impossible to secure on their own, thus requiring immigration firms who actively search these opportunities for their recruiting efforts.

There were discrepancies relating to fees charged by recruiters. One of the informants paid no fees, whereas some respondents spoke about application fees as high as \$2000 (CAD), with subsequent charges related to "settlement" and processing fees. What also differed were the opinions of informants about these fees. One stated that they had no concerns with paying such a fee because "it's their [immigration consultants] business, it's how they run it", whereas a few other respondents didn't want to share the amount they paid or the name of the recruiting firm because of a fear of repercussion that may occur to their status in Canada if they implicated the firms in any wrong-doing.

In general, the IMWs I interviewed were ambiguous with regards to any questions related to the processes of applying and entering Canada. Perhaps this stemmed from a concern about relaying information that could put their status in detriment. In particular, although they understood that immigration recruiters employed unscrupulous activities - primarily related to fees, recruitment, promising one job and delivering on another, and housing - they were hesitant to speak about it because of concerns it would somehow harm their current status. The following exchange occurred between Malcolm and myself:

R: What was the name of the agency?

M: Sky World Business Merger

R: Did you have to pay?

M: Yes

R: How much did you have to pay if you don't mind me asking?

M: Uh...

R: Or you can pass the question if you'd like.

M: No, ah, unless you will report me to immigration (laughs).

R: No, but it wouldn't be your issue, it's the consultants who are charging...

M: That's the thing, that's the question with the system. The system of Canada says you don't need to pay. But how do we know? We don't know that. We pay.

R: So you paid, ok...

M: Let's say 4 digits in dollars.

Later on in the interview another exchange took place while discussing Malcolm's pursuit of an employment standards claim with the TFW Advisory office:

M: At first, I brought myself to advisory office for foreign workers. I forgot the last name of M. They are in the JJ Bowlen building in downtown advisory office. Because they said that it's just the first step you make, then they will refer you to employment standards.

R: Right, and did you find that they were helpful to you?

M: Ummm...

R: Remember, none of this is getting back to you...

M: No, I'm not afraid, I'm not afraid, I don't think you're immigration...

Other discrepancies showed up in terms of the screening methods employed by either immigration consultants for job specifications or by Canadian Embassy staff or

Canadian Border Agency staff with regards to ‘desirability’ aspects such as language proficiency. More specifically, the screening for language proficiency seemed to differ depending on when the person had entered Canada. For example, if someone applied to the program and went through came to Canada prior to 2007 and during the economic ‘boom’ it seemed that if they “had a pulse” (in the words of the Alberta government employee) they were granted entrance, without regard to their language proficiency. However, since the time of the economic recession (and corresponding higher domestic unemployment rates), language and other factors were more clearly scrutinized.

In addition to language requirements, other ‘desirability’ characteristics determined through the application and arrival processes – through criminality background and health checks- are both administered by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) at any port of entry. Health checks are an interesting consideration when determining desirability because they are only required for the work visa application if the job they are applying for requires the worker to be in contact with the Canadian population. According to the Citizenship and Immigration (2012) website:

Depending on your intended occupation while in Canada, certain temporary foreign workers are required to undergo a medical examination. The following list provides examples of such occupations. This list is not all-inclusive.

Occupations that bring you into close contact (more than three hours a day or risk of exchange of body fluids) with people, namely:

- workers in the health sciences field
- clinical laboratory workers
- patient attendants in nursing and geriatric homes
- medical students admitted to Canada to attend university
- medical electives and physicians on short-term locums
- teachers of primary or secondary schools or other teachers of small children
- domestics
- workers who give in-home care to children, the elderly and the disabled

- day nursery employees
- Agricultural workers from designated countries or territories.

To understand another dimension of how specific IMWs come to Canada, one needs to look closely at the ways within which employers and immigration consultants engage in these processes. The ways in which IMWs come to Canada (primarily in terms of their skill designation and visa stipulations) are clearly formed by exchanges between these two stakeholders. This was clear in the observations made during an information session that was delivered by immigration consultants to employers. My first impression at this session was that the top priority of employers at the meeting was how to efficiently and quickly bring people into their job vacancies. Employers spoke consistently about their desires to expedite the process so that their labour needs be met quickly. This was tempered by a constant reminder from the immigration consultant that although hiring IMWs was the ‘cheaper’ route for employers (although he never made mention to what they are cheaper in relation to, one can only assume he meant hiring Canadian workers), they needed to be concerned with complexity, ‘red-tape’, and possible ‘bad employees’. In other words, the immigration consultant simultaneously encouraged the employers to hire IMW, and reminded them that the process to do so would be challenging to them.

This can be seen in several statements from PB such as the following:

Public relations will help you when you keep them on, but will not be on your side when you lay them off.

There is an advantage to hiring people from these countries because it’s easier [when discussing hiring people from countries where no visa is required].

Everybody is protecting TFWs, and that’s good, but you and employers have no rights.

When you start suing front line workers (because they have broken a contract or whatever) your PR goes down.

Preferences for specific designations of skill (through NOC codes), and types of work permits were emphasized by PB throughout the session. In particular, it was the work permits, NOC code designation and LMOs that would benefit employer demands/interests in expediting the process, and bringing people into jobs quickly that were highlighted as the most attractive. For example, the employers were encouraged to try to bring people in through the *International Experience Class* work permit and visa, allowing workers into Canada within 2-3 weeks of applying. This is an open work permit, thus freeing the IMW from the restrictions placed on them through the NOC code processes. This visa allows eligible foreign students and young workers from designated countries to work and live in Canada temporarily in order to learn new skills and gain valuable exposure to the Canadian culture. The programs vary from country to country and are managed by the Department of Foreign Affairs. According to Migration Expert, an immigration consulting firm,

Once an International Experience Canada visa has been issued, applicants are generally provided with assistance on organizing their trip, job search, assistance and orientation in Canada upon arrival, accommodation arrangement and support. The duration of the visa will usually vary between 1-24 months. Applicants can also pursue language, general interest or self-improvement studies. An International Experience Canada visa is an invaluable opportunity for young people to explore all that Canada has to offer. Applications are accepted on a yearly basis, on a first-come first-served basis. Some visas are issued as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, while others allow for repeat participation. Temporary work permit holders can extend their stay in Canada by applying for another visa, during their stay (“International Experience Canada (IEC), Youth Exchange Programs” para. 1).

In describing this particular work permit, the immigration consultant described the “good and bad” reasons for applying for open work permits: ‘good’ because the employer can bypass the LMO process and its corresponding bureaucratic time, but ‘bad’ because the open work permit means “that they can change their jobs once in Canada”. The way in which the *International Experience Class* work permit was described was interesting as well. It was described as bringing people in from where people have “freer movement” such as Australia, New Zealand and Japan. These countries usually have negotiated bilateral agreements on facilitating youth movement. By promoting the *International Experience Class* work permit as the easiest and quickest way of bringing people in, particular countries and age groups are presented as the most desirable foreign workers for employers.

Using the semi-skilled program as means to come to Canada

I observed, both through the interviews and in the observation sessions, that although many of the IMW would qualify for immigration streams that would provide them with less work permit restrictions and access to permanent residency, such as the *Federal Skilled Program*, they instead had applied for ‘semi-skilled TFW work permits (NOC codes C & D). When I asked IMWs who would qualify for NOC A, B & O categories or more permanent immigration channels why they had chosen to apply for the semi-skilled designation, almost all stated that they were told by immigrant consultants as well as family members that this is the way to get into Canada now because the other channels were getting harder to apply to.

Paula, for example, spoke about how she had over 10 years of experience in a advertising career both in Columbia and Dominican Republic, when she lost her job after

the global economic recession. She felt she had a future in Canada, but could not qualify for the Federal Skilled Worker Program due to a lack of English or French speaking abilities. This is when she decided to apply for a Visitors Visa, which she was granted. After a little while in Canada, she applied for a Student Visa, where she ameliorated her English speaking abilities. At this juncture, she was encouraged by an immigrant consultant to apply to the semi-skilled TFW program because this was “her only way to stay in Canada”, regardless of her extensive work experience beforehand. Madga’s story is similar in that even though she had over 20 years as a middle-management social researcher at the municipal level, she chose to apply to the semi-skilled program because she was informed by an immigrant recruiter that this would be the easiest and quickest way into Canada.

Juan spoke about how he had been working in hotel management in Ecuador and met many Canadians through his work. He became interested in travelling to Canada as a tourist, however was denied a visa because of “insufficient funds to be able to visit Canada as a visitor”. When he approached the Canadian Embassy for alternative routes to travel to Canada, he was directed towards the *International Experience Class* visa program but again was turned down due to the language requirements he could not meet. At the advice of the Canadian Embassy after inquiring about the two failed attempts, he approached an immigration recruiting firm that quickly put him through the processes of applying to the ‘semi-skilled’ NOC designations. Regardless of his management experience, and lack of language proficiency, he was successful in coming to Canada as an IMW and has been in Canada for 4 years (his semi-skilled NOC designation contract has been renewed 3 times). At the time of application, he was told by the immigration

recruitment firm that once in Canada, he'd be able to apply for PR. He shared that it was only after speaking with the Calgary Catholic Immigration Society, after being in Canada for 3 years, that he realized applying for PR would not be possible.

Theme #3 - What is life like now?

Housing

Housing is an important consideration in the life of IMWs in Alberta. Although IMWs under the low-skilled pilot project are not obligated to stay in the housing provided by their employers almost all of the workers I interviewed stayed in housing that was owned by either the immigration consultant they hired before coming to Canada (or by a family member or friend of the consultant) or by their employer. All those who were living in these housing situations were unsatisfied for many reasons. First off, the majority of these housing options are houses located in suburbs that room several people at once. Same-sexed rooms tended to have at least two people and sometimes up to five.

Magda spoke about how she lives in a home with other IMWs, deep in a suburb of Calgary, which requires her to travel by public transportation more than three hours a day to her job in downtown Calgary as a light duty cleaner. Owned by her employer, it houses 10 other female IMWs where two women share each bedroom. The household shares two bathrooms, a kitchen and a common living area. When discussing her housing situation, Magda speaks with a deep frustration related to the long commute she must take, sometimes alone, at night. She spoke about a few experiences where she felt unsafe. Our interview took place a few months after an IMW had been brutally murdered after she got off a bus and was walking home one night after work. When discussing her

housing situation, Magda talked about this particular case and stated: “that could have been me”. The location of her housing provides much discomfort for Magda:

M: It’s really difficult for me to adjust, you know. Firstly, the weather. Though it is summer I still find it cold. Then the transportation. Though its good but you know I really have to, the walking and our place is notorious for some not nice things.

R: You mean where you live?

M: Where I live, the neighbourhood, you know. That is where there is a Filipino woman murdered there. Yeah.

R: That woman...

M: A woman and a Canadian that were murdered on that place, [Franklin station].

R: Oh yes.

M: And I experienced one, because I have to go out, I have to leave the house at 4:30 to be at work at 6:00

R: In the morning?

M: Yes. I have to leave the house at 4:30 to be in the store at 6:00. Because it’s in the south. So you know walking in that area really gives me stress now. You know, because sometime there is a guy who would stop the car in front of me and then said “Um”. You see. Then at one point, there is a guy who after crossing the street, he rolled down the window and looked at me. So sometimes it is really scary. I’m scared, you know. Yeah.

R: Do you do that walk every morning by yourself?

M: Yes, because we have different schedules. Yeah, we are planning to move into some other house that is close to the store but you know, we are afraid to ask the employer. You know, because they got that house for us. They got that house for us, so we are scared to ask them can we move out.

R: Are they aware of your safety concerns? Have you told them about your concerns?

M: No, we don’t bother to tell them.

R: Why?

M: Um, we just don’t bother. Maybe we’re scared, you know.

Juan from Ecuador also spoke about a living situation that provided stress and anxiety over the last four years. When Juan arrived in Canada with three other IMWs, he was picked up by his employer and driven directly to a house provided by the employer. Upon arrival, they were told that they had to pay for rent on a monthly basis (Juan declined to say how much he was paying). For the first few months, Juan and three other IMWs had a lot of space and it was a comfortable living situation. However after three months, the employer informed the workers that his mother was going to move into the top floor of the house, thus forcing all of the employees into two bedrooms in the basement. Besides the change in newly cramped living quarters, he spoke about how the relationship between the employer's mother quickly turned difficult. She would blame them for things they claimed they weren't responsible for, chastised them for moving around the house at certain times of the day because she didn't want to be disturbed and demanded that they perform work on the house and landscape without any compensation. Since Juan was the only person in the group who was able to converse in English, he was nominated by the other workers to approach the owner with their concerns. It was at that point that employer told him that if they did not like their current living situation, they could leave as he could easily find workers to fill their place.

It was in the interview with Jessica, Marie and Maurice that it became evident that immigration consultants that recruit in other countries seem to benefit from the living situations of IMWs in Canada. They spoke about how they came to know that the employers they were working for (whose homes they were living in as tenants) were the personal and close friends of the recruiters that had brought them to Canada. This is relevant information because of the fees that IMWs were charged by the recruiters. As

already stated, there are huge discrepancies with regards to the amounts and purposes for these fees. Some were told that they had to pay for “settlement fees” that provided them with settlement supports such as food, personal item packages, transportation fees and other housing supports upon their arrival by their employer. When asked what these settlement items were once they arrived, those whose immigration consultants were friends with the employers, described that these items were as limited as a few cans of soup, one towel, a bar of soap and a couple of bus tokens – certainly not anywhere near the cost associated with the fees. When asked where they thought where the settlement fees had gone, most of the TFWs didn’t want to answer this question, probably to avoid implicating anyone in any wrongdoing. One respondent stated clearly “back to her friends”.

Appropriate and comfortable housing also came up in the interview with the IMW in Banff. Paula, who is in her mid-40s, was working as a front-desk clerk at a hotel (this is deemed a lower NOC C). The context in Banff is that the majority of people who are working temporarily have the *International Experience Class* visa – young, transient individuals on an open work permit who treat this working abroad experience as an ‘adventure’ more than a means to a end. As such, the housing that is provided by employers to these workers tends to be basic, scarce and is certainly treated as a temporary space by the workers, who are described as not caring for the state of the facilities. Paula described these quarters as dorm-style rooms, men on one side of the property and women on the other and included un-kept furnishings, ill equipped kitchens and unclean bathrooms. Paula spent weeks crying in her bed because of how uncomfortable she felt in the housing quarters, and tried on several occasions to bring the

issue to the attention of her employer. She was told that she had been the only person to complain, and as such they didn't address her concerns. After a year, they moved her to the one room on the premise that was an individual room. She was still sharing the common living space with others. She had tried relentlessly to find her own apartment but could not support the average rental price of about \$800 on her \$11 per hour wage. Finally, through her boyfriend who connected her to friends that had an available basement suite, she was able to move out and live on her own.

Life on the job

During the interviews with IMWs, I was struck with how often I heard them talking about how unsatisfying and de-motivating their jobs were. Every IMW in NOC C & D jobs stated this; the only person who did not was the one IMW I interviewed who was in a NOC B job. The experiences felt by these individuals in their daily lives as workers provided some insight into the impact on their personal and professional selves.

For example, in many instances, I heard individuals speak about the impacts they felt due to not being able to find better and more challenging jobs (due to their work permit restrictions). Consistently, I heard this described as being de-motivating, no incentive to do better, a lack of personal and professional growth, decreased sense of self, and a decreased sense of confidence. In the interview with Jessica, Marie and Maurice, the following exchange shows this (it should be noted that Maurice is currently working in a NOC B job, while Jessica and Marie are NOC D):

R: You said something earlier that was interesting to me. You said you're feeling like your career, that there's no...

J: No growth here like...

Marie: ...no learning

J: All I know how to do is make coffee [laughs]

J: Like it feels because you are not allowed to study, right? So like there's no growth for you personally in your career. Like when I am working in the Philippines, you will get more intelligent there because you are thinking. Here you don't need to think it's just double double, donuts...there's no growth. There's no motivation for the employees. No incentive.

Maurice: I can say that all foreign workers don't have that kind of ah, what you call this opportunity unless you applied for it [NOC C & D jobs]. Cuz it says in our permit that you cannot attend or upgrade or learn more if you don't ask the government to give you permission to do so. Maybe that's the reason why some of us, like on their [points to Jessica and Marie] part because I know that they only want like to go here. But first, you have to if you're - in the P they are managers but they have to start first. So we accept that.

Marie: But the thing is how can we like be a manager in the future. How can we ah, what you call this, get our careers here. So maybe that's the reason why they feel that way.

J: No, yeah, something like you can compare the foreign workers and the Canadians if they want to promote, Canadians is very easy. It's very easy because there is no paper you just appoint the person. But for us we have too many stuff, too many paperwork,

R: Because you have to go through an LMO change again?

J: Yeah, yeah, something like that. Even it's like a, what you feel you're very, very qualified for the position and then they promote the other ones. Like how come?

Maurice: Not only LMO. You cannot, you have to like ah, ah, you have to be recognized with what you studied in your country. We need to go to the government. At first we don't know, we don't know that stuff. Unless we ask like CCIS, or we ask questions about it. Cuz at the time we don't know that they can recognize our study. They can what you call this, have it equivalent or what is equivalent here in trades or in skills wise. So at that time we don't know. That provision in the work permit says that you cannot go and attend ah, or upgrade unless you ask the government.

IMWs also spoke about how they felt that they were not in a place to speak up about certain employment standards issues, job satisfaction and even experiences of

belittlement by fellow workers and managers. As Jessica put it while we were discussing a particular hardship she was experiencing with the way she felt the managers were “talking down to her”:

R: Do you worry about losing your job if you were to say something?

J: Um, not losing our job, but you know, um, personal damage to us. Like how can you explain this? The degrading, like I feel...um...before my confidence was like 100%, but now it's like 50% now. So like, I don't to speak [to the manager's] now because maybe I am wrong. Things like that....The confidence is gone.

Employment grievances were clearly heard as well – usually referring to low and unpaid wages, lack of full-time hours, treatment from employers and other workers, etc. I am not able to compare this with the treatment of Canadian workers in these or other settings, nor comment on whether there are particular employment concerns that are unique to IMWs or not. However, what is important to note is how IMW talk about why they believed they are not able to address these concerns.

Social Life in Canada

Three consistent messages came through the interviews with IMWs while discussing their lives beyond their jobs in Canada. Isolation, loneliness and family separation, stress due to their precarious status and temporary residence, and the worry associated with having to “prove your worth” to stay in Canada.

Paula spoke about her loneliness as she experienced it in Banff and, in her opinion, was the result of a particular context in Banff where people were very transient, and so friendships were hard to make because people were coming and going. She also spoke about how she observed that IMWs would socialize based on their country of origin, so Filipino IMWs socialized together, South American TFWs socialized together

and so forth. The third observation she made about social life as an IMWs was that it was hard to break into any social circles in Banff because of her age (44), while the majority of temporary workers are in the twenties.

P: In my opinion yes is lonely. Is lonely. It's difficult I believe it is like you are kinda middle. You are in a sandwich because you are here, but you aren't. Like one foot here and the other in your country. Then I believe like local people is not interested to be your friend closely because why if you are leaving. That happened a lot here in Banff, I have talked even with a Canadian guy who works in the hotel and even he was complaining that - how difficult is to [incomprehensible] here. He said because people doesn't want to be involved because here in Banff there is too much coming and going. Then why to create attachment?

Magda spoke about this at length. My observations of Magda were that she spoke with great sadness – there was heaviness in the room for the duration of the interview.

R: Ok, um, so I'm interested in learning a bit more about um, one of the things and of course you can tell me you don't want to talk about this, but one of the things that I get from you is that there is this kind of isolation that you're feeling from your family.

M: From my family yeah.

R: Do you feel like you have a social support here or do you go to work, come home, that's it.

M: Yeah that's it. I go to work, come home, go to work come home that's it.

R: So what do you do on your time off?

M: With my auntie, and sometimes I am going to the mall by myself. I think that is the difficult part living alone. Well when, yeah we have um, we have Canadian friends you know, but um, but we're not that close you know. Yeah.

R: So do you eat your meals at home alone, do you...

M: Yes, most of the time.

R: So why isn't the group at home, is there not a lot of connection in the group at home with you or everybody is too busy and different schedules.

M: Yeah it's because we're all busy. Yeah. I am stay upstairs and we are three. The two have same schedule so they often go together. But me I, I'm, we have different schedule. When they are off I am working, when I'm off they are working. So that's why, yes we're living on the same place but we don't have much time to be together.

R: So your days off are hanging out with your auntie and mostly on your own.

M: On my own.

R: And that's three days a week.

M: Ah yes alternate yeah.

R: What do you wish could be different?

M: What wish? You know R I'm always wishing my family would be here.

R: Yeah.

M: And that would make my life here in Canada complete. Because even in the Philippines when I'm off, I'm always with my family. With my children that's what I am missing here.

It is this deep desire to be reunited with her family in Canada that has motivated her to chase access to permanent residency status in other provinces and territories. The stress that she has experienced since arriving in Canada due to her low NOC code category has driven her to look for opportunities elsewhere, propelling her into more transition and isolation.

R: How much longer will you be able to do this until you make a decision whether it's been worth it or not or whether you should go back?

M: You know that's why, you know that is giving me sometimes it's giving me stress you know, because I've been here for two years but until now I cannot see the access of becoming a permanent resident here. Because I'm just in the low skill category and until now they don't have any, um, they don't have policy to address for us how to become permanent resident. Yeah. There are programs like the Canadian...the Federal [Federal Skilled Program] but they were just offered to those who have skilled job here. You know. So but for us, for the

lower skill they don't have yet so that is why I am so sad about it. So I am planning to move into other province.

R: Oh so you're thinking of moving somewhere else?

M: Yes.

R: So you'll finish your contract, you're extended year maybe or you're looking before just to see whatever opportunities you can get.

M: Um, as a matter of fact I am already applying for other provinces because I know that Alberta is getting stricter with the temporary. So I am planning to move to other province.

R: Like what, where are you looking?

M: Um, what province?

R: Yes

M: I have an application at Saskatchewan and I have an application at North West.

R: North west Territories?

M: Yes.

R: Oh wow.

M: Because they have, they are still lots with the temporary. They have the same policy for temporary foreign workers that after working for 6 months under the job *** they can ** by the employer. And Saskatchewan that's why I am planning to move in there. Because I could see about the new immigration law. The changes the amendment for Temporary Workers I know that starting April 1. So I said to myself, "Well I am really disappointed with that". Because it means that we still don't have a chance to become permanent resident. So I said to myself "Why not move into other Province?" Yeah. You know, R, honestly I love Calgary, if you would ask me I don't want to leave Calgary. You know, because I've adjusted already here you know. Though it's difficult but I think I adjusted already the transportation how to get there, um and every places here. But hey, I'm not here for myself only. I have to find ways how to become permanent to get my children. That is what I'm doing right now.

It was in Malcolm's interview where I heard an intense desire to continuously work at proving oneself in order to prove their worth in staying in Canada. In Malcolm's case, this desire meant that he decided to drop his employment standards case he had brought up against his first employer in order to focus instead on proving himself at his job.

M: But again, as a person as an individual I want also to prove myself that I can make it here. That can make it here, that I can make difference also and be part of the community and contribute I guess. I'm seeing myself given a chance to become PR, I guess I will be doing more volunteer job like for the down syndrome here. Not right now, I already contacted them. Maybe next week I'll be seeing them things like that. At work I know I can you know, things are done here differently. So there was some disappointment but I see a lot of opportunities that I can contribute. I can see a lot of opportunities that I can improve given a chance. Like in Wendy's. I know I can contribute and I can be in less *** I can prove myself as a manager because I have been doing it. But then when you hear about news about they're trying to regulate, it's kinda what give you some worries of some kind about your status. But then right now I'm just going with the flow. I'm tired of thinking of all those concern you know. Maybe I'll just continue to prove my worth you know, nobody can put a good man down. Just work, you know. Try to deliver what they are paying you, try to be as worthy as you can. Drama. [Laughs] I'm just trying to be, I'm just going with the flow.

Social support and access

When discussing their access to social and health supports and services, low NOC code IMWs spoke about little or no access to social or health supports delivered by the government or not-for profit agencies. Many had not been to doctors, or accessed agencies for food supports, housing supports or anything else related to their daily living. Many of them knew they could see a doctor by said that they tried to avoid having to take the time out of their work days, either because they could not afford the decreased wages, or were worried that time off would result in being fired.

When asked what would they do if they had some sort of emergency or crisis, the lower NOC coded IMWs said they would most likely depend on other IMWs who they

were living or working with. Magda said she depends on her elderly aunt. A few respondents talked about being members in particular churches that would support them when in need. It was clear that the social support networks of the lower NOC code IMWs were self-made, and sometimes non-existent. None of them spoke about an awareness of any agencies that could help them if they needed acute or long-term support, unless it was related to their PR status and/or employment standard issues.

Overwhelmingly, the reason most respondents had accessed services from community-based agencies was related to either employment standards issues and/or to seek information about avenues to permanent residency. This is not surprising, given that the respondents were recruited through email communication from Calgary Catholic Immigration Society, who had sent the call for participation for this research project over their email listserves. Other agencies that were named as having been aware of or attended were the TFW Advisory office (only three had been to the office, with questions related to PR and/or employment standards), and the Calgary Worker's Resource Centre. In general, the impression was that unless there was some sort of acute issue that needed to be addressed, IMWs spent their times at work and home, and depended on each other or members from churches for support.

The role of Calgary Catholic Immigration Society and in the lives of IMWs

The focus group interview with the staff from the TFW's Support Service Program at the Calgary Catholic Immigration Society (CCIS), as well as the interview with the representative from the Government of Alberta's TFW Advisory Office, offered the viewpoint of social services providers. According to CCIS, the client population that they see tends to be IMWs in low NOC coded jobs (although they are open to any IMW),

and usually have language barriers. In their opinion, these two characteristics are inter-related. In other words, because of the low-skilled designation, language requirements are less standard amongst this group, whereas 'skilled' IMWs tend to have a command of English. In their opinion, this is the reason why they see more 'semi-skilled' IMWs who need help to navigate daily life in Canada.

They also talked about how they have viewed the changing needs of IMWs since the inception of their program in 2008, when the numbers of IMWs entering Alberta was at its peak.

CCIS 1: The issues that we would be encountered aside from the language barrier, were about the employment standard issues. It was at the peak of this program when people come in droves complaining about how they are being housed in a crowded facility. They are like foreign workers who are in one room there's 10 of them. So those are the issues that they had at the time. I said from, from the language barrier that we have actually encountered foreign workers who had signed two different contracts. One in their language and when they set foot here in Calgary they have to sign another language. We do not see that now. Because I think the needs of the foreign workers are also evolving. But the start of the program during the onset of the program that's the um, the one of the main issues employment standard issues. Not adhering to the labor market agreement that they have signed. Really that these agreement is not being followed, all those kinds of stuff. So those are the things that we have seen before.

When the program slowed down, due to the economic downturn, they began to see the presenting issues of IMW change from those of employment standards, housing issues, contract issues, etc. to issues more related to their immigration and visa status and access to permanent residency.

CCIS 1: So another batch came of course when there was an economic downturn and the layoffs. Now another set of needs again has emerged when these changes came. So there are foreign workers who are coming here to apply for permanent residency and again they are coming just simply because the foreign workers under this category have very limited access to become a permanent resident, as against the skilled ones. So those are the ones who come to our office actually. Because the ones who are in the skilled category they have no challenge really

applying for permanent residency vs. having the ones in the semi skilled category. Because under the semi skilled category they cannot really apply to the federal because the federal is a skilled driven kind of program. The only avenue for them to apply for the permanent residency is through the Alberta Immigrant ** Program. Where are, wherein there are only 5 occupations for semi skilled category so. That's the reason why they come to us and ask questions for them to stay here longer or to stay here permanently.

Language barriers seemed to come up consistently in the focus group with CCIS staff as well as in the interview with the Advisory Office representative. When asked if they could provide a bit more clarification as to why they thought that language barriers presented itself so often in their clients, the response was:

CCIS 1: With the semi skilled category it [language requirements] is are not required. They are not really required to really speak English - of course those are the ones as light duty cleaner, they're room attendants, all of the ones under the food counter attendant where there's no chance for them interact with customers it's not even, it's not even indicated as part of the requirement for them to be able to speak English. But of course it depends on the employer to take somebody who speaks the English or not. But I think there was not as far as I can remember there was no regulation in the CIC that the foreign workers who are coming in here, should speak a certain level of English. Although they are the ones who are administering the programs together with Service Canada, it depends on the employers. So CIC wouldn't even know if this person who is coming in here have the language proficiency enough to be able to integrate in the community or not.

R: So, the reason why those in the high skilled categories would have the English is because they are required to...

CCIS 1: Yeah and also it's because of the companies and jobs they're in, like I said most of the foreign workers under the skilled workers are the ones in the bigger companies that you know, well except probably for the ones in the oil and gas where there might be English proficiency needed, such as the, there's a huge batch of foreign workers came from China before who directly went to Ft. Mac and they were not able to, they were not even required to speak English simply because they were in the field. So there's not much of interaction for English anyway. But generally speaking, the foreign workers in certain occupations at the skilled level usually have English proficiency anyway.

CCIS 2: In my experience for almost two years working in this program, um, the language issue was mainly presented at the beginning when there were a lot of people from Mexico. There was no visa requirements at that time. Only if they got their work permits in their country before they came here. There was no big need for

speaking the language, there was no big requirement. Because it was the boom I think at that time it was, there was no, they're not really following, paying attention to those things cuz they needed people. So then they would just become workers. Then they will stay um, so they will come see us here and then we, there was some language issues there. Then we would translate. Some of them also they speak, now it's less anyways the need for translation for me. Like it has been reduced probably since close to a year. Some of them they were comfortable speaking, they will feel they understand but sometimes they would rather get the information from someone in their own language. But they just want the comfort level to speak in their own language. Since they have seen that they have access to someone. They can tell the things in their own language. So I think that's why also the Hispanic ones will come to me even if they understand the language pretty well.

The change in presenting issues at CCIS from language barriers and employment standards issues to concerns about permanent residency occurred around 2009, just as the economic recession began to impact the national unemployment rates and correspondingly, less granted LMOs (and less entering IMWs). Besides an overall drop in numbers of entering IMWs (and better screening by immigration officers at entrance for language requirements), CCIS staff observed that the change could also be as a result that many of the more recent clients had been in Alberta for a range of 24 months to up to 5 years. In other words, in 2007 those IMWs who came to CCIS with issues that were related to their language barriers and challenges in navigating life in Canada had, by 2010, lived in Canada long enough to become comfortable with the command English, and had turned their sights instead to addressing their permanent residency status.

The mandate of the Calgary Catholic Immigration Society's TFW Support Services broadly addresses the concerns of IMWs at individual and/group levels. However, throughout the focus group, it became clear that they found a place in advocating for the rights and responsibilities for IMWs at large systemic levels. They spoke about how they had witnessed through their client population that language

barriers significantly prevented IMWs from expressing themselves (“they have no confidence to fight what is their rights because they can’t express themselves”) and as a result, raised this issue when they could (“in the seminars and symposiums we attended, we have always emphasized the fact that this is a major issue. I think that CIC (Citizenship and Immigration Canada) in their capacity addressed it as well”). Secondly, at a time when large numbers of TFWs were being laid off (around 2009), CCIS staff began to observe that many workers who were qualified were being rejected for Employment Insurance benefits. They saw this as another opportunity to advocate on behalf of the TFWs who were not able to.

CCIS 1: It was just at the time, I think it was around 2009 if I’m not mistaken, I think it was early 2009 that foreign workers who have to come here like in groups of 10, 5 and they were all laid off. At that time, they would apply for EI and then the government would, once they see the number 9 [on their SIN card], it was automatically rejected. But then since there was feedback about their EI’s being rejected simply because they are foreign workers, so it became an issue. But it was good that the province also addressed that. So we have seen foreign workers who were actually approved for the EI for as long as they were qualified. But initially, there were a lot of foreign workers who have been here in Canada for more than 9 months who’s EI were disapproved.

Overall, it seems that CCIS manages to alleviate the confusion and anxieties experienced by IMWs in Canada as a result of the language barriers to settlement, employment standards and permanent residency, the three main issues that they identify. They provide a space where IMWs can access the relevant and right information that has either eluded them due to language barriers, employers who do not honour the LMO stipulations or recruiters who offer false hope regarding permanent residency. One of the staff said the following:

CCIS 3: I speak from my own experience. I think you know, if I worked in my country, if I didn’t know any better, thinking that the boss is the one that tells me what to

do, where to go, how much he decides how to pay me. I have no knowledge that there is an office that perhaps called Employment Standards that regulates how much my employer actually pays me. Some of them, they can look at the LMO, but they don't know actually that that LMO must be followed. So some of them they think and they, they talk among them, they think that no, that's the way it is. Whatever your boss, your boss is the one that tells you what, how much they pay you. It doesn't matter how they treat you, that's the way it is. Especially in NOC C and D. It's just the labor guys. So some of them come here thinking that they're hopeless. So you tell them "No, actually your boss should pay you, this is what your boss should pay you". Here it is also not something that I am telling you by mouth. Here is, it's a book, it's a guide for temporary foreign workers. And I actually I hand one of those guys to them, they can take care of them. It actually says "Here you're employer needs to ..., and there is an actual office that can follow up with your employer. So they will leave and they feel better actually. Something can be done.

Another spoke about managing people's expectations to access permanent residency:

CCIS 2: Some of them have been misled by the agencies at their own country. So the agencies actually can find someone to bring here to work and fulfill the contract that they have with that employer. Some of them just want to hear what they want to hear, and some of them they don't know how to interpret the visas and LMOs. Like, because I actually have a case, I think it was last week, with the same question. The lady said "Somebody called me and they said that they hear it on the news or they saw it on TV that now I can apply because I pay taxes and I been here more than 3 years". I show her both the, the provincial, the federal websites and there is no information I haven't heard anything about that. Um, "No but people told me, my, my cousin told me". So we call the cousin "Where did you hear this can you give me the web site so I can refer to it, maybe this is misinterpretation". They couldn't tell. But she, she believes it that she can apply because she pays taxes and because she's been here over 3 years as semi skilled. So I went the extra mile to print the forms to make her feel comfortable. She said "But I also called the call centre and they said yes I can apply". Actually yes, under the regulations somewhere it says that you cannot discourage anybody from applying. If you go to an immigration consultant if you call the call centre, if you talk to an immigration officer, if you even, I think even the guys at the Advisory Office, if they are asked can I apply for permanent residency, they can not discourage anybody. Especially people that work for the government. You cannot discourage anyone from applying. So they take that to heart. "I can apply". But if you went to apply for this, under these category, these are the requirements, do you meet those requirements? No. So if you apply anyways you can go ahead and apply, but you're gonna spend the money, the answer maybe 100% is gonna be no. So we give them the info, we kind of make them go through the process. If you were to apply you don't meet those qualifications. So, go ahead. If you want, I can print the form for you. Take it apply but I'm

being more specific to your case trying to help you go through the guise and help you analyze if you ever, well if you're just giving yourself false hope right now. So that's I think from applying to actually qualifying that's what they don't understand sometimes.

Sacrifices

Although I asked specifically near the end of the interview if IMWs felt that they had made the right decision to come to Canada, many of them talked about the sacrifices they have experienced as a result.

Consequences of visa restrictions

As already discussed, the majority of participants who had come to Canada in search of “better opportunities” were working under lower NOC coded work permits, which means that they live with restrictions in terms of job mobility, opportunities for training and education and family reunification. These were all raised repeatedly in the interviews as sacrifices related to being a low NOC code designated IMW. For example, the lack of opportunities related to upward job mobility, the inability to find more relevant and skilled work, better employment standards and better pay were all clearly identified as being real consequences in people's day to day existence in Canada. These consequences were usually talked about in the same discussions around a serious lack of motivation, lowered sense of self and confidence and lack of incentive to make any real changes in their lives. Without prompting anyone on these descriptions, they were said several times in the interviews by respondents as realities they content with in Canada.

Access to new training or learning opportunities for upward job mobility came up through many of the interviews. Many respondents assumed that new skills and training opportunities awaited them in Canada through their new jobs and eventual upward

employment mobility. Moreover, the access to such opportunities was described by a few to be a direct cause of job satisfaction. However, many people spoke about how there were no opportunities to learn to skills and that the jobs they were currently in were menial, “mindless” and didn’t require any training in the first place (such as mopping floors, light duty cleaning, customer service, etc.). In other words, without the opportunity for learning or advancement, people saw themselves in jobs that meant nothing to them. Given that their work permits do not allow them access to any formal training or education, some anticipated informal learning opportunities and skill development at work. However because of the job duties usually found in NOC code C & D jobs, these information opportunities did not occur either.

Malcolm spoke about how he sees himself as a totally different person before he came to Canada and after. He described himself as a highly motivated, educated, successful and determined individual in the food service and hospitality industry in the Philippines, which he doesn’t see in himself anymore. When asked why he didn’t return to the Philippines, he believed that once he proved his worth as a worker to his current employer, they would promote him to a supervisor position (NOC B) or be chosen as the one candidate that year to be nominated to the Alberta Immigrant Nominee Program. At that point, he would continue with his plans with becoming a permanent resident and reuniting with his family in Canada. However, considering almost 2 years has passed (and he’s seen other younger, unattached people in his workplace successfully apply to the AINP program) he has come to the realization that this will unlikely happen. With this realization, he speaks of the ‘after’ person that he has come to know –someone who

is “demotivated”, “frustrated”, and “depressed”, characteristics he had never seen in himself before.

Another respondent, Paula, spoke about herself in the same manner. She spoke about how she was a highly motivated and ambitious woman who had left Columbia early in her career because of a job opportunity in the Dominican Republic that would considerably advance her career in marketing. She stated that she was always “looking to better herself” and that seeking new opportunities “was just who she was”. When she decided that learning English would accomplish these goals, she made the decision to come to Canada and initially arrived on a visitor’s visa. Given that she wanted an ‘easy and fast’ way to stay in Canada, as recommended to her by an immigration consultant, she applied to the TFW program under the low-skilled categories. She believes that she was hired as a front-desk clerk in Banff because she sees herself as being a happy person.

She describes a different reality after being hired in this position. Besides describing her living situation (described above already) that made her “cry uncontrollably” for weeks, she spoke about being trained by individuals who spoke to her in demeaning and patronizing ways.

Paula: Because many people think that all us who are that, all of us we are from developing countries, and they think like we don’t have education, I don’t know what is in their mind. But sometimes it’s like hmm, it is not possible that she will know about it. Sometimes even the way that they talk to you is like you are idiot. Yes I have a funny accent but that doesn’t mean that I am mentally retarded. *Laughs*. Some are nice but another is like ah, you know, I’m sorry I will be maybe rude with expression but you need to go around and check how the world is.

As a result of these experiences, Paula spoke about how she feels that she has become more stressed about life, and has experienced a few health scare episodes that were

attributed to high stress levels. She spoke frequently about being “too emotional” and “isolated”, experiences she didn’t have before being a IMW in Canada.

Family Separation

Many of the IMWs speak at length about the significant sacrifices they make by being away from their families. Many people choose this initial separation in hopes of becoming permanent residents, which in turn would allow them to be reunited with their families in Canada. In both the focus group with CCIS staff, as well as the interview with the TFW Advisory Office staff person, participants state that many IMW in lower NOC coded jobs come to Canada with false illusions of family reunification. These respondents state that it is likely that immigration consultants gave the impression that family reunification would be possible for those who apply to lower-designated NOC codes so that immigration consultants could fulfill their contracts with their own clients.

According to IMWs who discussed the sacrifice of family separation, it was clear that this was a (temporary) means to an end. Besides the immediate economic returns for themselves and their families, it was clear that sponsoring their families was of the utmost priority. Magda, who in the Philippines worked for 23 years for the local government as a social policy analyst, made the difficult decision to embark on the ‘semi-skilled’ TFW program as a light duty cleaner, because her husband had been laid off and couldn’t find work “due to the recession”. When asked why she decided to apply to the low NOC code job, she stated:

Magda: Um, I think um, that is because, that is what I have to do. Of course it’s because I’m, I want to bring them here honestly because I know that you know, Canada traditionally is entertaining ah, families here as immigrants so that is one of my reasons too. You know, that after working here for two years or so I can become a permanent resident and bring them here. So that is my, also my goal. Of course also for

financial reasons and secondly is because I want to bring my family here. So I'm not working just for myself here it's for my family.

People expressed sadness, isolation, loneliness and disillusionment associated with their separation from their families. Magda hadn't seen her children for over 3 years, and wasn't sure as to when she may see them next, as she is considering moving to the Northwest Territories where the Provincial Nominee Program is much easier to access. Marie had applied with her husband (they were married a few months before she left) who had been offered a job at first, but then lost the job at the last minute when the employer decided they no longer needed him. The couple decided that the woman would move anyways, with hopes that the husband would soon follow. That was almost two years ago.

Conclusion

This chapter provides a narration of the ways that IMWs come to be, the ways within which they come to Alberta, and how their daily lives play out as low-skilled international migrant workers. First, we can see that the pull for many of those interviewed has to do with a sense that there are better and more secure opportunities for the individual and their family once they arrive. Many who seek financial security, better access to health and social supports, safety and personal security, and independence seem to find their way into the 'wheels that turn' Canada's immigration policies. In particular, a sense of urgency and a desire to expedite the process hook individuals who see the 'regular' channels of immigration to Canada as lengthy and tightened drive them to pursue the quicker and 'easier' way of coming to Canada through our temporary foreign worker programs. This desire, coupled with the guidance of family members who have previously made the journey, as well as through the advice given via immigrant

consultants leads individuals directly to the door of the low-skilled temporary foreign worker program.

At the same time, two significant occurrences are taking place that facilitate, or perhaps even propel, the routes of individuals to our temporary foreign worker schemas. Countries where large numbers of citizens emigrate in the hopes of finding more satisfying work conditions strengthen government rhetoric and departments to organize and regulate this sort of out-migration. The example of the Philippines Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) shows the mechanisms at work that facilitate the large numbers of people who leave for employment purposes. Domestically, we see from the standpoint of an immigrant recruiter that temporary foreign worker programmes have come about in response to the needs of the labour market, where demand for workers by employers outweigh the existence of warm bodies in Canada to fill it. Described in a sort of ‘matter of fact’ manner, this naturally lead not only to the firm lobbying of HR councils in Alberta for opening up labour migration programmes, but also to the ability for the private sector to find market solutions (through the immigration recruitment industry) for the labour market problems.

These two forces at work – the foreign and domestic discourses that facilitate international migrant worker migration – seem to impact the ways that individuals come to Canada. Specifically, a preference by employers and recruiters for work permits that are quickly issued as well as limit the job mobility and place other restrictions on the individual applicant (which is facilitated by current federal immigration legislation) is showing up in the ways that workers are coming to Canada. In other words, the type of work permits and visas, which are all dependent on the LMOs applied for by employers

and granted based on the labour market needs of the region, are in direct response to the employer demands and preferences for certain workers. As such, more temporary work permits, low-skilled job classifications, restricted work permit stipulations such as job mobility and training allowances are being granted than ever before.

However, these ways that workers come to Canada (and live in Canada) are seeping into their daily lives in very material ways. The effects of being de-skilled, working jobs that are deemed ‘semi-skilled’, a lack of access to permanent residency, family separation, language barriers, isolation, housing and safety concerns, etc., were talked about at length by workers and staff of not-for-profit agencies. Finally, many individuals spoke about how staying in Canada as an IMW, despite these daily realities, was worth the possibility (and for some, strong belief) of permanent residency and family reunification.

Above, I offer a way within which ‘we come to know about IMWs’, through their own standpoint, as well as that of key actors in the complex of temporary foreign worker programmes. As IE asks us to do, the following chapter will use the ways within which people’s daily lives are described as an entry point into the way they are discursively produced, and how their everyday activities are coordinated through specific social relations.

Chapter Six – The coordination of the lives of ‘low-skilled’ IMWs: Political rationalities and technologies of government

Migrant workers in Canada have been discursively produced to be the solution in national debates on immigration, international trade, and finance (Sharma, 2006). They, in turn, become implicated in the ways that Canada becomes a ‘nationalized’ space, through the neoliberal logic of the market, and citizenship regimes. This dissertation explores more fully just how this discursive production works to coordinate their day-to-day existence in Canada. As Sharma (2006) states:

Whether people can feed, clothe, and shelter themselves *or not*, decide where to live or not, receive health care, educational services, and other social services *or not*, be protected *or not* by state forces: all these are significantly affected by their differential placement in various state categories of citizenship and non-citizenship. Notably, whether one is a citizen, a permanent resident, or a temporary migrant worker, is the most important factor in determining if a person will be free or unfree in Canada (p. 142).

I argue that the discursive production of the International Migrant Worker situates these individuals in Canada in specific ways and provides a basis of ruling. The IMW inhabits social and political categories that carry ideological weight and institutional logic, which in turn generate specific administrative practices that subjugate them in Canada. At the same time, the individual is left to manage his/her own experiences in Canada while navigating these categories. It is through these individual experiences, as described in Sharma’s paragraph above, that we see how ruling practices act to coordinate them.

As it is the intention of institutional ethnography to locate the workings of social relations in the everyday activities of people’s lives, this chapter is organized via the map of an “ideological circle”, as employed by Yan (2003). An ideological circle is a process

through which governmental ideology is filtered down to all levels of society, via a set of procedures and methods of reasoning about people and processes. It helps to identify specific social relations that organize people in different sites. This is done via discursive strategies, text and inter-textual relations, organizational policies, and actual behaviours by individuals that hook them into sustaining the original ideological discourse. The following diagram provides another view on this process.

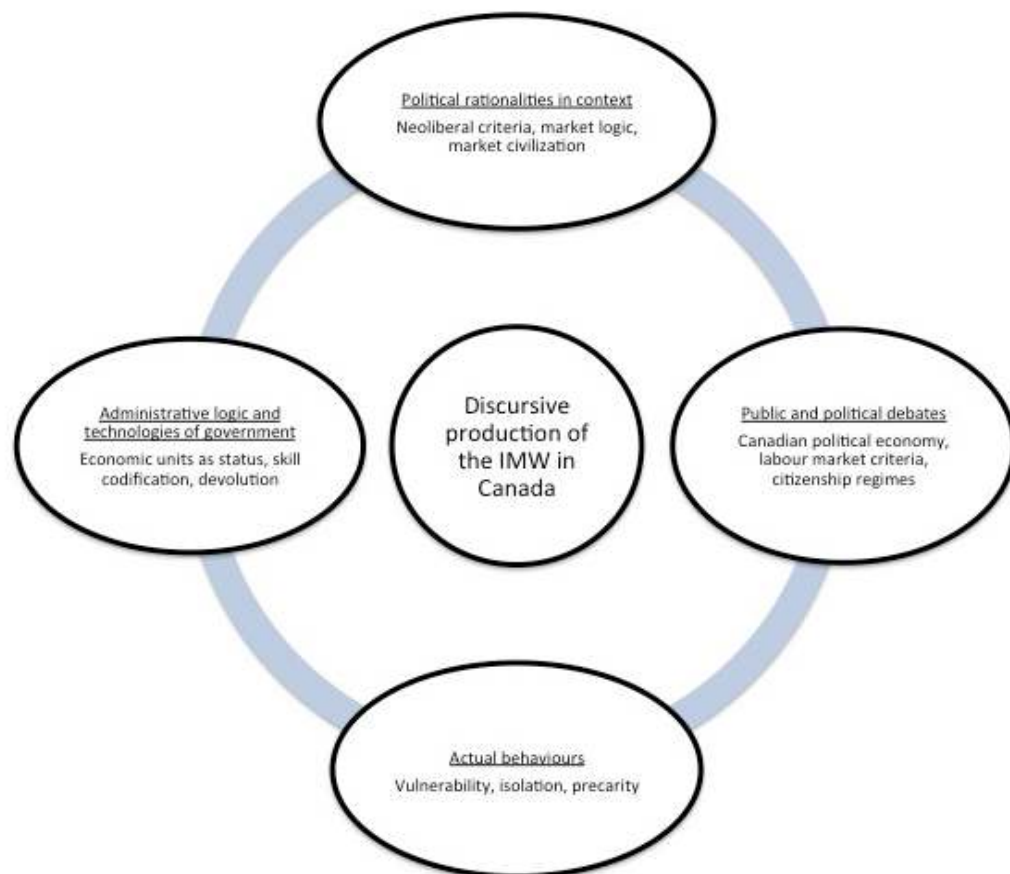


Chart #1 – The ideological circle producing the IMW (Adapted from Yan (2003))

In Chapter 4, I outlined the literature that highlights the political rationalities and public debates (identified in the first two squares in the above diagram) that sustain the ideological circle of the IMW in Canada. In this chapter, I will discuss the technologies of government, administrative logic, technologies of the self and actual behaviours that these political rationalities perpetuate. The first section of this chapter will discuss how the state and its citizenry ‘know’ the IMW in Canada through the *National Occupation Classification codes, the subjectivity associated with “economic units”, their relation to permanent residency, and through the interests of Albertans*. The second section of this chapter will explore the ‘actual behaviours’ or actualities of the lives of IMWs that highlight how the “mediated ruling relations actualize the embedded ideological discourse in people’s real life” (Yan, 2003, p. 137). I have chosen to discuss these actualities through *the daily experiences of vulnerability and isolation*.

Section #1: What do we know about IMWs in Alberta?

National Occupation Classification (NOC) codes and the concept of ‘skill-level’

In Chapter 2, the differentiation between higher NOC codes (A&B) and lower codes (C&D) were highlighted to show that there are significant and material consequences and impacts through each of these designations. Higher NOC codes afford certain job and lifestyle rights and freedoms (in housing, family cohesion, training, and access to permanent residency) that NOC codes C & D do not afford. NOC codes A & B can be considered ‘baby steps’ towards full permanent residency via a temporary labour visa, whereas NOC codes C & D bring people into Canada for short-term labour shortages, with very limited paths to permanent residency.

It is important to note how the NOC code designations found their way into the interviews with IMWs. When asked if they could describe or even name their NOC codes, many of them could not identify which code they were working under. Instead, the way in which they spoke about their NOC codes was through the material consequences that they experience as a result of the work permit and visa regulations as defined by the NOC code designation on their labour market opinion (LMO).

For example, many of the participants reiterate that the utmost priority was to come to Canada in the quickest possible way in order to begin the process of becoming permanent residents. Many of them, after being guided by family members who had already migrated to Canada, or through local immigrant recruiters (the two sources of information that are the easiest to obtain), applied to the ‘low-skilled pilot’ program, which they were told would be the easiest and quickest way to Canada– the TFW programs. This promise of an expedited process into Canada usually came without a warning of the consequences of being deemed a ‘semi-skilled’ IMW.

It is these consequences, and how they are described in the interviews, that alert us to the ways that the lower NOC code designations are felt in material ways by IMWs. For example, many of the respondents spoke at length about their dissatisfaction with their menial, meaningless and repetitive jobs. These individuals worked in high-skilled employment in their country of origin, and had gone through significant post-secondary education or training. Now, they were working jobs in Canada that were under-utilizing (or not utilizing at all) their skill and education level. In the interviews, respondents talked about the impact of their lower NOC code classifications as a severe dissatisfaction with their work, lack of motivation as a result of not being able to learn

new skills or improving their English through classes, and a sense that they aren't contributing to anything meaningful.

A second example of how respondents talked about the organization of their lives based on NOC codes was through their frustrations related to job mobility, family reunification and permanent residency. Lower NOC code work permits do not allow for any of these, which seemed to be the desires of most interviewees (except the single young male who had decided to go through the process as an "adventure"). Consequently, when these desires are not met due to strict visa stipulations, it is then that they realize that they will stay in the same meaningless job, not be allowed to stay in Canada for the long-term, or bring their families to be with them.

Campbell & Gregor (2002) state that it is methodologically important in institutional ethnography to be "attentive to how someone, speaking about their life, misses its social organization" (p. 91). In my reading of the interview transcripts, I am struck at how pervasive this is. Respondents spoke about how their expectations, based on pre-conceived ideas of the Canadian immigration system, were unmet, and expressed disappointment in a sort of taken-for-granted manner. Unbeknownst to them, their unmet expectations and the way in which they are able to conduct their daily lives is as a result of shifting immigration and labour policies that favour neoliberal ideologies such as temporariness and responsiveness to a market-based logic. Inherent to this logic are the mechanisms that support it; in this case, the different NOC code designations that produce IMWs as temporary and disposable manage to coordinate their lives in ways that are unsatisfactory to them.

There is one respondent who does discuss his views on the temporariness of TFWs and likens it to a “broken system”.

Malcolm: I would check analysis wise...because sometimes you question the system here. Like, why are they getting some refugees who become a pain in the ass in the community, and they can stay? Why not us? Why not us contract workers who work like a dog for them?

Note that Malcolm speaks about his experiences of temporariness through a comparison to another group of migrants who have come to Canada through different means. In his mind, this is how the ‘system is broken’ and suggests that the solution to his temporariness in Canada is to address the status of another migrant group in Canada, which he views as a problem. Malcolm conjures up a common-sense knowledge about immigration that is found in mainstream society; that the right and most effective system is the one that can deem certain categories of immigrants as the most worthy of staying permanently. This ‘other’-blaming is parallel to similar groups who position themselves in opposition to a problem group, i.e. welfare recipients and their views of welfare recipients, or unionized workers blaming other workers who may cross picket lines. In many of these instances, organizing forces remain invisible (Neysmith, personal communication, 2012).

NOC codes as discussed by employers and immigration consultants

The administrative logic and basis of ruling behind the NOC code categories also came up in the observation sessions, particularly the one in Banff. The guest speaker, an immigration consultant, (PB) stated that:

The different occupational [NOC] categories have the biggest implications – for you [employers] and *cost* and for the TFW and *permanent residency*” (emphasis added).

These implications are presented to the audience via a powerpoint presentation, found below. In addition, I have added the commentary made by the speaker when he wanted to emphasize a point he thought would be relevant to the audience (these comments are in quotations).

NOC O (Senior Managers, Execs), A (Professionals), B (Trades, technical)
Features: worker can pay for their own travel expenses, spouse can be here on a work permit (*“we do that because we want to attract Executives and professionals, we don’t want them to leave their families behind, we want them to settle”*), conducive to PR, work permit can be extended to 4 years.

NOC C (lower skills), D (lowest skill)
Features: employers pick up costs, rotational 48 months in 6 years out, families are not encouraged to come (*“because they aren’t making enough money to support their families, because their spouses can’t work on an open work permit, and so their spouse will end up working illegally”*), generally not conducive to permanent residency.

The presenter went on to talk about paths to permanent residency for people who fall within the ‘high’ and ‘semi’ skilled designations. When speaking about the Alberta Immigrant Nominee Program (AINP), he stated:

AINP was not designated for the ‘low-skilled’. Frankly, the province doesn’t like the low-skilled. We can’t build the capacity of the low-skilled.

NOC C&D’s aren’t strategic for the province.

Following this particular comment, he added:

Your industry [hotel and food service] need C&D categories so you need to sit with the politicians and advocate for NOCs C&D, they will not say no politically, but they will legislate C&Ds out.

These examples demonstrate the maintenance of a social relation that is traced between the state-employers-IMWs. Specifically, they show how the concept of ‘skill-level’

deems the ability of individuals in being able to act and plan for their future in certain ways. The concept of ‘skill-level’ optimizes the workings of the neoliberal logic that drives the program in several ways: when the labour market requires people who can work low-skilled, front line and precarious employment, Canadian immigration channels are opened up to expedite the import of these individuals who are carefully placed in these jobs. This is evident in the fluctuation of IMW work permits throughout the last decade. Locally, it has been viewed as a simple solution to a simple rational problem. Advocates in those sectors who consider this to be the right response have worked hard at convincing the public and government bodies tasked with implementing employment and immigration policy that this indeed is the right solution. Therefore, keeping these workers temporary and foreign is a necessary component of this solution. When the job market has dried up, there will no longer be a necessity for these workers.

The differentiation between higher and lower NOC codes is also important to consider and is not accidental. Higher NOC codes bring in more ‘desirable’ IMWs because certifiably higher educated people and those who work in professions are considered to be perpetually required in Canada. Their higher NOC codes, although deemed temporary at first, allow them to have more and easier access to permanency in Canada. This is argued to be a good thing, because it brings in the “right” people, for the “right reasons”, who would be welcome to stay in Canada.

Skill-level and language requirements

While high NOC code jobs are usually skilled, require some sort of post secondary training or education, and usually are professionally designated, lower NOC code jobs fulfill the demands of industries such as manufacturing, food and hotel service,

light-duty cleaning, construction, etc. These jobs may be seen as menial, hard labour, service oriented, all of which do not need any particular training or professional designation. Moreover, they may not need to know English or French, and in fact, those individuals who are coming to Canada for jobs that will not necessarily put them in front of the public seemed to bypass the language requirements required for entry.

Upon entry, all IMWs, regardless of their NOC code designation, must be able to speak either English or French. However, during the interviews with the service providers, they spoke about the fact that one of the biggest challenges for IMWs, particularly low-skilled workers, was that many of them did not speak either English or French. When further probed about how this was possible, considering the language requirements for entry, participants noted that with many of their clients, those who did not come into contact with the Canadian public were usually overlooked for language requirements. However, those who were in any sort of job that required contact with the public were usually tested for their language proficiency. From the standpoint of the service providers, this served to further isolate TFW who were already working in isolated or hidden jobs – manufacturing, food processing, light duty cleaners, etc. - people who do not need to speak English or French in order to complete their jobs. Not only does this isolate them from Canadian society, it acts to place more obstacles between them and any services or supports that they may require.

The representative from the TFW Advisory office and the staff at CCIS talked about how they saw many clients who could not speak English or French. When asked how they came in contact with these clients, they spoke about how it was usually because a member of their community or a friend told them about their services after having faced

some concerns in the workplace or elsewhere. At CCIS, a few of their staff could speak the language of communities representing high numbers of IMWs, which worked to break down the language barrier at the site of service provision. It was during these interactions where CCIS staff understood that the language barrier was producing significantly vulnerable and precarious work and life situations for IMWs, most usually because they couldn't understand a superior or colleague. Most often, gross misunderstandings of their visa stipulations, work place policies and employment standards, and access to PR, were significantly impacted by their lack of English or French language skills. Therefore, the requirement for English or French in their job description superseded the fact that language efficiency would better equip them in Canada.

NOC Codes as text-mediated relations

In the section above, we can see how the 'skill-levels' and work permit stipulations (via the NOC code classification system) for individual IMWs impact their daily lives. First, I describe how the effect of NOC code designations is felt by IMWs through job dissatisfaction, lack of access to PR, job mobility, and family separation, etc. Second, I move on to describe how NOC codes and skill-levels are presented from the standpoints of employers and immigration consultants, which they enact in specific ways to serve their own needs. Lastly, language skills and requirements are discussed in that they come to be actual behaviours enacted by actors, either by Immigration Officers who are supposed to identify this requirement at the border, or by IMWs who do not speak English or French.

At first glance, it may seem that many of these ‘goings-on’ are simply disorganized or disconnected. For example, the frustrations experienced by the individual IMW who cannot be with their family in Canada may be likened to an individual experience or frustration that they should have anticipated given their work permit stipulations. Moreover, the lack of English or French language ability for ‘lower-skilled’ IMWs who work away from the Canadian public may seem as though it was simply the oversight of one particular immigration officer at the port of entry. However, it is in these places of supposed disconnect where institutional ethnography allows us entry into how they are specific social relations that are brought into being at the local setting.

The everyday activities described above are text-mediated; in this case through the NOC code classification system. Text-mediated relations are “the forms of writing, speaking, or imaging that are replicable and hence can be read, heard, and watched by more than one individual, in different places, and at different times” (Smith, 2005, p. 165). Social relations (mediated by texts), instead of just a set of social relationships, become a tool in understanding how people in different sites are organized and “depends not only on its compatibility with its local context, but also its consistence with other texts used in different sites for the same ideological purposes” (Chung Yan, 2003, p. 130-131).

The National Occupation Classification system is administered by the Department of Human Resources and Skills Development (HRSDC) of the Government of Canada.

The NOC system is described as follows on the HRSDC website:

The National Occupational Classification (NOC) 2011 provides a standardized language for describing the work performed by Canadians in the labour market. It is used for many applications including defining and collecting statistics, managing information databases, analyzing labour

market trends and extracting practical career planning information. More importantly, it gives statisticians, labour market analysts, career counsellors, employers and individual job seekers a consistent way to collect data and describe and understand the nature of work. The NOC is developed in collaboration with Statistics Canada.

The NOC tool classifies occupations with a four-digit code according to skill type and skill level. The digits of the NOC code reflect important information about the occupation it represents (e.g., 3113 Dentists - “31” indicates that this is a health occupation and it requires university level education). For a complete overview of the classification system, please consult the on-line NOC Training Tutorial (See related links section).

The classification system also supports a variety of career information sources published by the Government of Canada and others. For example, Job Futures, the widely-used source of information about occupational outlooks, and the national JobBank®, an electronic listing of jobs, work or business opportunities provided by Canadian employers are both organized according to NOC definitions. By providing a standard way of organizing labour market information, the NOC helps all Canadians to be better informed about the world of work.

The NOC code system works to classify individuals working in Canada in specific skill categories, which according to the above statement “reflects important information about the occupation it represents”. In turn, this discursive production, which is driven by economic and neoliberal logic, frames the actualities of people’s everyday lives. In the case of IMWs, they are implicated via other text-mediated social relations besides the NOC code system, such as Labour Market Opinion (granted also by HRSDC), the work permit (granted by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC)) and the Visa (if required, granted by CIC). Together, they work to produce social relations specific to IMWs that, in turn, regulates them and their daily lives in Canada. Just as Smith (lecture notes, 2012, viewed online) describes text as “the very basic thing that organizes the reality in which everything else happens”, the NOC code classification system can be described as the very basic thing that regulates IMWs, even before they step foot on Canadian soil. Not

only does it determine the type of job that grants them access to Canada, it serves to determine their pay grade, their access to learning and training opportunities, job mobility, family reunification and access to permanent residency – all areas deemed as problematic in the daily lives of IMWs.

A closer look at the NOC code classification system as a text-mediated practice provides us with an “entry point” (Campbell & Gregor, 2002) into the problematic of interest of this inquiry: how are the daily lives of the IMW impacted by the regulation of their presence in Canada. We can see how NOC code designation provides a vehicle of what is *known* about IMWs. This knowing, or discursive production of the IMW, provides a basis of ruling and the operationalization of an “administrative logic” (Solomon, 2003, p. 695). This administrative logic and the policies and procedures it maintains, reifies the subjecthoods, and actual behaviours (Yan, 2003) associated with the designations of ‘temporary’, ‘foreign’ and ‘worker’ in Canada.

Working for Permanent Residency

As documented in Chapter 5, IMWs choose to come for one overwhelming reason - to be able to gain permanent residency status in Canada. Usually, people make decisions to engage in the temporary labour process based on achieving financial and personal security and to secure better opportunities for themselves and their children. For example, Magda spoke about how she would have never imagined that she would have been immigrating in her mid-life, with a career that was satisfying and using her skills and training. However, the decision to come to Canada was made because she believed she had no choice after her husband had been laid off and could not find any work. She also spoke about how she could see no future for her teenage children, particularly in an

economy that was “suffering the effects of a recession”. She felt obligated to find a quick solution to the family’s economic situation. Although she would have been able to apply through other immigration channels due to her language skills, training, education and employment experience, an immigration consultant informed her that applying to the semi-skilled TFW program would mean she would migrate to Canada in the shortest span of time. She also spoke about the isolation she felt, the lack of motivation at work, and a housing situation that she didn’t feel comfortable in. In short, Magda believed she would do anything to gain permanent residency and to bring her family.

I recount Magda’s story as a case study in how IMWs *work* to gain permanent residency. This is where Smith’s concept of *work* allows us to further explore these moments where “actions are actualizing” the social relations that coordinate people’s lives. Smith (2005) uses work in a “generous” sense that extends beyond what people are paid to do, but in fact, what it is that people do everyday that requires some thought or effort, and usually under definite circumstances. I found the following example given by Smith to be insightful:

The other day I was lined up in the bank for about forty-five minutes (during lunchtime in a big bank in downtown Toronto). I was reminded of Tim Diamond’s description of senior citizens in a retirement home who were waiting for breakfast to arrive:

There each sat before breakfast, bib in place, eyes glued to the elevator. They waited quietly, with a wild patience, practicing patienthood, actively practicing the skills of silence.

I and others in that long line at the bank were at work, practicing the skills of silence, shifting from foot to foot, easing our backs, trying not to get mad. This, for the institutional ethnographer, is no less work than digging a ditch, filling a form, or putting out a fire (2005, p. 152).

By using this expanded notion of work, there is the possibility of an “insufficiency of language” (Devault, 1991 – cited in Smith, 2005) that can arise given that there is usually a lack of fit between the experiences of subjugated persons and “the forms of thought available for understanding experience”. I have found this to be true in my analysis of how *working for permanent residency* is just that – work – even though it may be an awkward or unfamiliar way of calling it so. However, by doing so, it draws attention to people’s experiences regarding what they actually do to participate in an institutional process. I argue that by focusing on how IMWs work for permanent residency, we can get a closer look at the social relations that form a basis of ruling from two different angles; 1) through a mapping or sequencing of their work knowledge of permanent residency (in other words, what they believe they have to do for it), 2) uncovering the antecedents (in other words, the ideological circle) of citizenship in Canada.

The work knowledges of permanent residency

Throughout many of the interviews, both with the IMWs as well as with the service providers, it became clear that the whole progression of becoming and being an IMW – from the reasons why people chose to become IMWs, to the processes of entering Canada, to the way they lived their lives in Canada – is a *work process* that the individual engages in to become a permanent resident. It was clear that they were determined to withstand any questionable and/or challenging experiences in Canada because of their first and foremost priority of gaining permanent residency. In their eyes, this was what was going to deliver them and their families freedom, prosperity and security.

Smith (2005) suggests that by mapping out work knowledges, we begin to see how the social relations we are analyzing coordinate the doings of different people. “Each stage or step orients to the work with which it coordinates sequentially; each next stage or step articulates to the foregoing and defines it as well as orients to what follows. Assembling the stages helps to locate a sequence of action or a set of sequences, a social relation...” (p.162).

By looking at how people work for permanent residency, we can begin to map out particular terrains that people engage in and are also coordinated by. First, it can show us the antecedents of people’s activities as determined through an ideological circle via administrative logic and institutional processes (Sinding, 2010). I argue that the administrative logic, located above in the discussion about low and high NOC codes and their determination of length of stay for IMW, coupled with the institutional tasks and processes, are also mediated by the values and beliefs behind the Canadian citizenship regime. As discussed more fully in Chapter 4, current manifestations of citizenship are buried in the creation and maintenance of neoliberal citizens. Citizenship is used in the current neo-liberal era as a tool to define borders and the construction of the “us” of national characters and “them” of foreigners, all based on the self-sufficiency to be able to make it and contribute in a market civilization. It is the state’s responsibility to govern by adjudicating societal memberships for people deemed worthy of them, and it does so through particular processes of “bordering” (Thobani, 2007) and “particularization” (Browne, 2005) of the individual.

In Canada, we have a common national story that tells us, and the world, that by being here, freedom, opportunity and prosperity are possible. These story lines make

their way around the world via stories and shared experiences by those who have made it to Canada and prospered. These myths are also advertised in the state-sponsored material meant to attract worthy candidates for citizenship (Detre, 2004; J. Rose, 2003). At the same time, the processes of bringing in people to Canada – our immigration laws, national security measures, etc. – are administered via state structures that drive policies and procedures felt concretely by individuals (Harzig, 2003; Knowles, 2007; Vineberg, 2011). In the case of the IMW, desires for personal, economic and social freedom moves them to put in the work that will gain them access to a space where these freedoms are attainable. Thus, this work comes in the form of engaging in labour migration processes, being uprooted, family separation and under-employment.

Others have argued that Canadian immigration policies (and in particular the TFW program) acknowledge the drive of foreigners to find their way to Canada, and use this to advantage and benefit Canada and its economic prosperity (Harzig, 2003; Knowles, 2007; Preibisch, 2010; Sharma, 2002; Vineberg, 2011). Thus, those outside of the Canadian state are hooked into a social relation once they dedicate work to gaining citizenship. In other words, permanent residency is the carrot at the end of the long stick, and thus organizes the individuals' life in meaningful ways. When the individual IMW dwells in the chaos of “not-knowing” or believing that if they just proved themselves as hard workers in Canada, this in fact has been organized by the ideological practices of citizenship and determining worthy neoliberal citizens, which are used to make institutionalized processes accountable. In fact, the chaos and frustrations felt by IMW are not disorganized, disconnected or incoherent at all (Grahame, 1998) but are the manifestation of concrete and interwoven functional complexes of citizenship,

immigration, labour and the nation-state, which are constantly weeding out “undesirable” immigrants. As argued in Chapter 4, the concept of “undesirable” immigrants has taken on several manifestations over Canada’s nation-building history. The individualized experiences of lower-NOC coded IMWs in this study of their desires for and barring from permanent residency is a local site for the ideological practices of legal citizenship, in a long history of an ideology of the “other”.

Protecting the ‘interests’ of Albertans

There is no other site where the careful and deliberate distinction between citizen and non-citizen is more evident than in these programs. International Migrant Worker programs in Canada have always been predicated on the notion that they would not exist without keeping the economic and job interests of Canadians foremost. In Chapter 4, I outline the argument made by Sharma (2006) that the category of ‘migrant worker’ is a result of parliamentary discourses aimed at maintaining our national citizenship regime. The summation of her argument is as follows:

...notions of freedom and its relationship to citizenship status has - and continues to- rely on the unfreedom of those othered by the ongoing project of White Canadian nation-state building. These, together with my examination of how the discursive production of certain ‘national problems’ by parliamentarians engaged in debates on immigration, international trade, and finance in Canada’s House of Commons, helped to produce migrant workers as one ‘solution’ to ensuring the ‘prosperity of Canadians’ ... (Sharma, 2006, p.139).

The ideological hegemony that economic prosperity is essential for Canada’s survival creates specific social relations that happen across space and time. Sharma’s ethnography looks back over 40 years, however, I argue that it continues to organize the individualized experiences of migrant workers today. Not only is it clear that the IMW worker serves to reify and maintain the ideological hegemony of the nation-state and its

functions, it specifically maintains the interests and desires of capitalists and employers. IMW programs have become known as “employer-deemed” immigration programs, meaning that the definition of the desirable immigrant is the perfectly oriented market or neo-liberal citizen, who was once in the purview of government officials, but today has become the responsibility of the employer.

The desirable immigrant has now become a version of the desirable worker, particularly one that shows self-efficacy and sufficiency and who acts as an economic rational actor. In Canada, we are told that we need people who will take precarious, dangerous, low-paying jobs that Canadians won't take (Preibisch, 2010; Sharma, 2006). This is considered in ‘our best interest’. In an era of neoliberalism, desirable workers take precarious employment; long hours in contract positions, do not unionize, are barred from job mobility and seniority in the workplace, are denied nonwage benefits, and experience hazardous workplace conditions (Aguirre & Reese, 2004; Canterbury, 2001; Goldring, 2010; Kalleberg, 2009; Miqueluzzi, 1997; Mogensen, 2006). These characteristics of the desirable worker are the same characteristics of the lived experiences of low-NOC code IMWs. Consequently, Canada's immigration policies and directives –once steeped in federalism and managed by the federal government – continue to become decentralized in the hands of the provinces and employer-deemed selection. The desirable immigrant is identified by local labour market needs and sociodemographic factors determined by provincial and territorial governments, usually “rubber stamped” by the administrative processes by the federal government (Baglay, 2012; Lowe, 2010).

This became most evident in the observation session that took place in Banff, where an immigration consultant delivered information to a roomful of employers who would normally hire IMW in NOC C&D jobs. The organizers of the session felt that it was important to bring together employers in one place in order for them to receive clear and consistent information about hiring and employing IMWs.

I understand that the information given at that session was intended for its audience, and thus presented in a manner that benefited them and answered their concerns. However, through this public information session, several things became clear. First, I was struck by the way that IMWs were spoken about as resources for company extraction and use. I choose these words specifically. Throughout the two hour session, I heard the speaker talk about how choosing IMW workers prioritizes company expenses (“it’s cheaper for you”), and how using the program was a solution to their existing labour problems (“immigration is a solution to a problem, never a problem”).

Secondly, I was struck with how the presenter, through his advice to the employers, and how the employers, through their questions, clearly delineated the characteristics that are the most desirable. In essence, the most desirable IMWs seemed to be those who could be hired under the low-NOC code designations due to their stringent visa and work permit stipulations. Those workers brought into categories with more room for worker autonomy and job mobility were seen as too risky for employers. For example, when speaking about the various work permits available to employers, the presenter spoke about how open work permits, through the *International Experience Class* had good qualities to it because it brought in workers fast (“within 2-3 weeks”), and was usually medical test exempt. Open permits were a good choice for employers

because “they could bypass Labour Market Opinions” and shorten the process. In the same breathe, they are explained as “bad” because “ they [IMWs] are able to change jobs while here.”

A question from the audience shows how employers understand the visa differentiations, namely that open visas are more skill-driven then they are employer driven:

“The International Experience Class is more open, but they *aren't bound to us*”.

A third way that this hierarchy of desirability became clear was through the advice around choosing people based on their access to visas. For example PB states, “there is an advantage to hiring people from these countries [visa exempt countries] because it’s easier”. The speaker continues by saying:

“You have to think about where you are bringing these people from?”

“Why bring people from countries where it takes one year to bring them?”

Lastly, another impression was given during this session that is worth noting: that the IMW program is complex, too bureaucratic and high-risk *to the employers*. The session was infused with stories of IMWs who had either reneged on their contracts, came through one LMO and switched jobs when they arrived, or quit ‘for no apparent reason’. Interestingly, PB stated:

“Everybody is protecting TFWs and that’s good, but you [employers] have no rights”

He goes on:

“When you start suing front line workers (because they have reneged on their contract or quit) your PR goes down”.

The construction of the migrant worker as nation-builder

As argued in Chapter 4, neoliberal criteria include the easy and swift mobility of individuals from economies that don't include them to ones that show some sort of deficit – usually around low-waged, unskilled and semi-skilled occupations (Binford, 2009; Taylor, 2009). It is within this “interaction between markets and administrative decisions” (Ong, 2006) that we begin to see the ways within which migrant workers are constructed as commodities. This articulation is an important one, as it rationally embeds individuals ‘ready and willing’ to become globally mobile for labour purposes into a market ideology.

As shown above, IMWs are strategically identified as a necessity by immigration recruiters and employers – both considered agents of economic development by the state. The construction of IMWs as commodities is an important one to understand, as it supports the social organization of the lives of these individuals as workers. In other words, as the IMW in Canada continues to play a role in the nation-state building exercises of the state, their individualized experiences will continue to be organized by the state as well.

Chapter 4 goes into more detail around how Canada's immigration policies have been used explicitly through history as a means of empire building through economic strengthening, and more recently as policy responses to shifting labour market needs. This has not been a hidden intention, as is evidenced in policies and administration guidelines embedded in federal and provincial government bodies such as *Citizenship and Immigration Canada*, *Human Resources Development Canada*, *Canadian Border Services Agency* and their provincial counterparts. Other authors have shown the

historical progression of such policies, and their continued fine-tuning of immigration policies as a direct response to Canada's economic growth and prosperity.

I wish to raise this point because I am interested in how this ideology, and its related rhetoric, strategically aims to produce a certain form of subjectivity for IMW – namely one that makes them first and foremost a 'responsive worker' - or *economic unit*- to labour market needs. What happens when an individual is first and foremost introduced in Canada as a solution (worker) to a problem (labour market needs)? More importantly, what are the consequences of such a produced identity?

The sites of knowledge of the IMW as an important economic agent are clearly located in the realm of government discourse. One needs only to look at the websites and texts produced by the government bodies listed above to see just how IMWs are produced as commodities in Canada's economic growth pursuits. This does two things strategically: 1) it presents IMWs as less of a threat to Canadians' jobs and sense of identity; 2) it allows an easy path to expulsion when Canada no longer needs a 'solution to our problems'.

I will focus on two specific texts that show the discourse that forms our knowledge of the IMW. One of these texts is an interview with the Honourable Jason Kenney, Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, published in the quarterly publication of the Association of Canadian Studies (ACS) entitled *Canadian Issues/Themes canadiens (CITC)* (2010). It is a public document which is distributed free of charge to individual and institutional members of ACS, and which is also found on the internet for free, which is how I was able to locate it. The second text will be the Alberta Government's website, particularly the Ministry of Human Services Employment and

Immigration. Following a textual analysis of these two sites, I will include some observations made during my interview with the immigration consultant, where clear parallels, and some surprises, were discussed.

Published Interview with the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration

Generalized statements made throughout the interview denote a clear political affect as to why the federal government continues TFW programs in Canada.

Canadians have the first opportunity at jobs. This is one of the main principles of the Temporary Foreign Worker Program, which is why there are controls in place.

It's important to remember that temporary foreign workers are in Canada to fill *specific and temporary* needs.

When asked if the Government of Canada is shifting its focus from permanent to temporary migration and what are the different policy objectives pursued by these two types of migration, the Minister responded with the following:

The Temporary Foreign Worker Program aims to address labour shortages that are temporary, where neither Canadians nor permanent residents can be found to meet these needs. Generally speaking, the number of foreign workers that come to Canada depends on employer demand.... While temporary migration – whether of workers, students, or visitors – responds to diverse specific and short-term needs, Canada will continue to rely on permanent migration to support broader economic, social and cultural objectives. Canada is maintaining the number of permanent residents it admits (between 240,000 and 265,000 permanent residents per year). With respect to economic immigration in particular, there are various options toward attaining permanent residence, to respond to the diverse regional and occupational needs of Canada.

It is clear in this statement that Canadian immigration policy, and in particular temporary foreign worker program policies, are intended to respond to specific and timely economic needs in Canada, thus implicating the IMW in ways that rule their daily lives. Moreover,

in this same statement, a clear delineation is made between IMW and those entering Canada through “permanent migration”. The latter are defined as not only important to supporting broader economic goals, but “social and cultural objectives” as well. In this statement, the process of othering IMWs (not only from Canadian citizens but from other immigrants as well) happens. IMWs are clearly positioned as economic agents, omitted from other functions of the state.

Interestingly, in the same interview, not only do we see how the ideologies of neoliberalism and the market-state become administrative decisions – in a sort of devolution or privatization of immigration policies to the private sector – but there is also evidence that the realm of IMW health and well-being (in terms of settlement access) is passed on to the employer as well.

Generally speaking, CIC has a duty to maintain quality settlement services for *permanent residents*, to assist their integration into Canadian society. Those coming here as temporary foreign workers must have the educational, occupational and language skills required to do the job to which they are destined.

For all temporary foreign workers, CIC expects employers to take an active role in ensuring workers find their place in the community, as employers benefit directly from their presence in Canada.

Also, the Low-skilled Pilot Program imposes several additional requirements on employers. Under the program, the employer assumes greater responsibility for the lower-skilled employees they hire and an employer-employee contract must be signed. Employers must:

- Cover all recruitment costs related to hiring;
- Help the worker find suitable, affordable accommodation;
- Pay full return airfare for the worker;
- Provide medical coverage until the worker is eligible for a provincial plan;
- Register the worker under the appropriate provincial workers compensation/workplace safety insurance plans.

In this official government policy, we see that the government absolves itself from its responsibilities to IMWs in Canada, by mere fact alone that IMWs are to be found solely in the jurisdictional quarters of their employers. Not only do employers deem the desirable immigrant, they are loaded with the responsibility of settlement services and access to health and welfare. Furthermore, when asked about employer compliance mechanisms, a vague response is given:

The federal government is developing regulatory amendments related to the TFW program that are designed to increase the protection of temporary workers and *encourage* employer compliance with program requirements. This would include the ability for the federal government to deny employers access to the program for a period of two years, *in certain circumstances*. (emphasis added)

The Alberta Federation of Labour have argued that these changes, which were implemented in April 2011, have only served to appease the critics of the program who argue that it sets up workplace abuse and unequal employment standards. Even though it seems that the same employment standards afforded to Canadian workers are also afforded to IMW, in practice, this is not the case. Specifically, considering that the work permit of NOC C & D IMW is tied to the employer, any chance of IMW reporting of workplace violations is diminished due to a fear of repatriation if the worker is fired. This will be taken up in more detail in section 2 of this chapter.

Changes at Citizenship & Immigration Canada (CIC) – from service to regulation

As the above excerpts from the interview with the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration show, the course of Canada's immigration policies are charted by economic justifications in general, and in particular by employers. This style of privatization of our

immigration system has turned immigrants, particularly IMWs, into “economic units” (Lowe, 2010), and they are treated administratively as such.

The de-centralization and further entrenchment of market principles in our national immigration policies are further evidenced in the interview with the immigration consultant. PB describes at length how during his time at CIC, he observed the solidification of a transactional, demand and supply style of policy decisions and administration, which lead him to identify a business opportunity.

I was an immigration officer for a number of years here at the local CIC office. I did a stint up at the airport. I, um, I left the department in 1993 and I've been in private practice ever since. At one point, we, my partner and I, who, my partner was the acting manager of the immigration department, so when we left the department him and I set up a private immigration consulting firm which was fairly new in those days. The whole concept of, of private um, immigration consulting was really in the realm of lawyers. And really, there were no other you know, avenues for people to go to in order to get you know some advice for a fee. So when we saw that vacuum- when the department started to get out of sort of the service side of the service delivery, um, we felt there was a vacuum...we felt that we having been in the department for a long time knowing the rules, knowing you know, being familiar with the regulations, policies and so on, were able to provide and fill a vacuum within the market place. Our instincts were right because we ended up forming the largest immigration consulting firm in Western Canada.

This focus on the changes in CIC from “service” to a more privatized model, in his words, are a good “historical context” because it “is really important to understand what led to the privatization of service”. He goes on to state:

Let's start in the 1980s. When I joined in the late 1980s, there was a concept that Canada Immigration, which was at that point Employment and Immigration, was basically they had a mandate to provide service to the client. As a matter of fact they had coffee mugs that said ‘CIC Equals Service’. So there was a lot of lip service paid to making sure that the clients had good information up front. The clients, by that I mean the immigrants and people using the departments sort of services. There was a really sort of nice fit between, between you know, the immigration department and it's clientele. In fact, we weren't even called officers back then, we were called immigration counselors. Which, if you look at the word, implies counseling.

The departmental changes that took place during the 80s, and 90s, mirror larger ideological and administrative changes that favored the privatization of public enterprises and government jurisdictions that were taking place at all levels of governments (Bienefeld, 1994; Hunter, 2003; Wiseman, 1999). The same articulations of market forces were taking place at CIC, as evidenced above (Arat-Koc, 1999; Leo & August, 2009). It was during this time that the federal government moved immigration from a nationally-directed policy and program to a more decentralized, provincially-administered program, which opened it up to more market-oriented governance (Leo & August, 2009). It is at this juncture where we see the intense lobbying for Provincial-Nominee Programs (PNPs) and the advent of the immigrant consultant/recruitment industry. As a result, the function of the federal government becomes one that ‘polices’ and regulates the individual. This is described by PB as departmental decisions that mitigate the risks of “conflict of interest”, manage “chaotic” throngs of applicants and deals with the advent of technological advances in communication.

So what happened was, for example, on a normal day for me would be to go in, I would stand at my booth, you know, and people would come and say “you know I have this problem what can I do” and I’d say “ok look this is the way you go about it” you know, “you do this, this, this...” and it worked quite well until some lawyer in the legal department decided well it’s a bit of a conflict of interest because if I am the one advising on the particular procedure and I’m also the one deciding on that same procedure that causes a conflict of interest. Because what if I, you know, what if my advice is misinterpreted or misunderstood and then they would, then they come back and now they want, you know, remedies and retribution for having received the wrong information or perceived the wrong information. So anyways, the department said ‘ That’s not a good idea’. At that time, I remember you know, when I was a young guy and going into work, there would literally be people lined up out of the office and into the street from this building down at the Harry Hayes Building which is the federal government’s building. So it was very chaotic. The department came back and said “no, that’s not a good idea, let’s control this, people have to make appointments”. Ok fair enough, same thing, lots of people waiting, lots of coordination. So people would

make appointments to talk to immigration counselors. Then they said, “that doesn’t work either”, then they took, basically they got out of the whole direct face to face contact with the client and with the advent of fax.

PB goes on to talk about how during this time of major reform in the department from a federal-jurisdiction to “market-oriented governance” (Leo & August, 2009), public information about the processes of immigration to Canada was moved to the Internet for “people to actually do their own research”. However, a major obstacle for people who need that information quickly became clear: language. The information at that time was available in only French and English, and according to PB, impeded the majority of interested people from gaining access to this information.

As a result of the federal department decisions to continue to shrink their responsibilities for service delivery, PB recounted that downsizing of CIC staff occurred at the same time.

We were 52, and we went down to 38. So I mean, obviously our work didn’t decrease. And yes, technology was supposed to have sort of filled up, filled out some of the, you know, some of the excess work, but it didn’t.

It was at this time that PB saw an entrepreneurial opportunity to respond to this “vacuum” left by the trailing government responsibility for service delivery during a time when the demand for information increased.

So we saw this constant sort of shrinking and moving away from service. So that’s why the entire sort of immigration consulting field and world came about. Today, we are a profession. We are regulated by a federal body and we became a profession much to the chagrin, I think, of some of the lawyers...so that’s the sort of very brief history of how I see service having been privatized over the years to the point where now it’s standard and everybody accepts it and that’s just the way it is.

The above description provides a recounting of how the ideologies of neoliberalism and market forces show up through the processes of the devolution of the services related to immigration, echoing others who have written about similar accounts (Arat-Koc, 1999; Bhuyan, 2012; Leo & August, 2009; Varsanyi, 2008). In PB's account, the impact showed up in real ways; through the changed administrative decisions and processes, to shrinking government presence, and to the opening up of an opportunity for market forces to step in and respond. Interestingly, this description is one of two major accounts in PB's interview that describe specific articulations of market forces that have occurred through the ideological changes of our immigration system.

The second description given by PB where this was clear was through his description of how the shift occurred from an emphasis on "skilled workers" to "temporary foreign workers". Initially, the major source of "bread and butter" for PB's work was corporate immigration "that was basically transferring people back and forth through the border". It was around 2004, where the shift began to occur, and was described in a "personal anecdote".

I remember when in 2003 we had a meeting in Ft. McMurray with what they call the HR Oil Consortium. Where these guys basically just sit around the table and they can anticipate what the labour needs are gonna be within the next two, three, ten years and so on. Now the same work is done by the Petroleum Human Resources Council of Canada...these are the usual suspects, the Suncors, the Shells, the Petro Canada's, and so on. So they came into our office and they sat down and they said "Well gentlemen, this is basically our projections...we will need in the next 5 to 10 years 20,000 foreign workers."...I remember looking at my partner and thinking 'what were these guys smoking' you know, 20,000 low-skilled workers?'

It was shortly after this time period that Alberta (and Canada) saw the number of persons entering on a temporary basis increase significantly. For example, between 2002 and 2008, the number of IMWs in Canada rose by 148%, while the total entries of IMWs in

that time period rose by 73%. The share of this increase happened in Alberta, where total entries of IMWs grew between 2004-2008 by 270% (compared to a 47% increase of permanent immigration over the same period) (Nakache & Kinoshita, 2010). The close proximity of the lobbying of HR councils in Alberta, as shown in PB's interview, and a quick following of a major increase of IMW into Alberta, can be taken as an example of how market forces in the guise of private sector deliberations and projections have forced certain administrative decisions. PB goes on to state that it was also at this time that another entrepreneurial venture is identified:

So when I started seeing this I thought "You know what, there's gotta be yet another one of these moments of oh, there was a vacuum in the market place why don't I fill that"...I don't want to bore you with the details, but we really, with Petro Canada, we pioneered a brand new concept of managing temporary foreign worker programs to suit these large mega projects up north.

It is during this time, as described via PB's interview, where we see a sort of collusion between market forces and the governmental administrative processes. The immigrant becomes more strictly defined as a "temporary foreign worker", bringing along with it a subjectivity of codified "bodies" meant to fulfill a shortage. In other words, the IMW is clearly articulated and formulated as the supply side for a demand in the most classical of economic logic. This formulation even shows up in PB's account:

These men and women have it down to a science. They know exactly what the average age of a particular occupation is. How many are here, how many are at SAIT [Southern Alberta Institute of Technology] or NAIT [Northern Alberta Institute of Technology] sitting right now or about to graduate. You know, and they do a body count and they full well that you know, there's only so many bodies regardless of skill that are going to be available to us. Then they look at all the different projects around Canada and particularly around this particular area here. They say: "you know what, there are no bodies". These bodies must come from somewhere outside of Canada. I hate to talk about foreign workers as bodies...what is the gap? The gap has to come from outside. There is no other way.

Another example of how IMWs have been produced as economic units meant to be responsive in today's global market is via the way that PB speaks about his personal and professional relationships with Ministers of Labour or Immigration in other countries. In his description, he talks about how IMW worker programs are viewed as a win-win situation by sending governments who spend considerable time in preparing their workforces for migrant labour programs. PB began discussing this with me by stating "I have the keys to the Minister of Labour's office in St. Lucia" denoting another interaction between market forces and government administrative decisions. Foreign governments have unemployment to deal with, according to PB, and this is where immigration consulting firms see this as an opportunity to help them "internationalize their citizens for export". In other words, the IMW is constructed both at home and abroad as laboring bodies and economic units, not only meant to build the empire of the receiving country, but that also of sending, with the following parting message (as told by PB):

"Don't mess up, you are representing us."

Section #2 – The actualities of this knowledge

On becoming an IMW: How one becomes vulnerable

One of the major questions that drives my inquiry is how the current stipulations that regulate IMW experiences in Canada contribute to a specific social identity. Earlier, I discussed my problematic that stemmed from a curiosity I had about how IMW were faring in Canada. I assumed that considering IMWs, in particular those deemed low-skilled via the NOC C & D codes, were living in Canada under codifications that dictated

access to social services, health and other necessities of life, that there would be some concerns raised about their individualized experiences in material ways.

To answer this question, one only needs to look at the ongoing reporting done by community-based organizations, labour unions and academics to see how IMW navigate their daily lives around issues of access and a sense of well-being. A significant section of chapter four is dedicated to re-telling the findings from these entities. The following section will look at the ways that the participants – IMWs, CBO and government staff-talked about how these vulnerabilities showed up in real ways.

As noted in chapter 2, IMWs technically have access to health and social services and labour and employment standards, as does any Canadian or permanent resident. However, this does not mean that IMW necessarily access these rights or entitlements. Similar to what Bhuyan (2012) describes as the active processes where migrants with precarious status have to “negotiate” to access services and rights, the following examples drawn from the interviews show how the subjectivities produced through the institutionalized experiences of IMW affect their access to social services and other services in real ways. In other words, as much as events in the lives of IMWs, which will be described below, may seem disorganized or lacking in sense, we begin to see that in fact, these disconnected experiences become coherent when we understand their connections through certain relations of ruling.

I have chosen to explore these notions through two particular interviews that occurred with Malcolm and Magda. I believe that these stories provide a vehicle that allows these actualities to emerge. As Grahame (1998) argues, concrete experiences of individuals can be viewed as a terrain structured by these generalizing relations but not

wholly swallowed by them. In this way, the experience of the individual presents itself not merely as a case, but rather an entry point into the actual makings of those institutions that produce the generalized and abstract nature of societies (p. 353).

Discursively-produced vulnerability

According to Yan (2005), the actual behaviours of individuals are the outcomes of an ideological circle that is mediated by ideological discourses, administrative logics and discursive practices such as texts. This explication does not mean that it is a taken-for-granted natural order of things, but instead, shows us how these behaviours or occurrences are accomplished and replicable.

I argue that through the ideological circle that has come to produce the IMW in Canada, we have come to know and act upon the IMW in specific ways, what IE would call the social relations that create the daily experiences of the individual. These social relations become the antecedent for how IMWs live their daily lives in Canada. Given that my problematic is concerned with a subjective sense of health and well-being for IMWs, I explore these social relations and how they impose this sense of well-being.

I have attempted to argue that the IMW in Canada has been known primarily to be an “economic unit” through the judging of their admissibility and their *raison d’être* on Canada soil. This way of knowing the IMW forms a particular basis of ruling that defines their individualized experiences and reifies and maintains the ideology of those groups in power. Knowing the IMW as an economic unit means that they are treated as one. Being treated, or ruled, as an economic unit allows for certain experiences that may seem frustrating or annoying, as many IMWs discussed in their interviews, but in fact are organized in specific ways.

The IMW who is codified as semi-skilled in NOC C&D will be the individual where this is most clear. As argued previously, these NOC codes were created specifically because of a strong lobby by industries that deemed it necessary for a quick and effective response to their labour market needs. As IMW are known to be the solution, or supply, for this demand, the codifications and regulations that bring them in and organize their lives in Canada are traced back to these initial neo-liberal criteria. This is evident in the way that the work permit is created in that the individual worker must come to Canada via a specific work offer from a specific employer. Considering that the work permit is tied to this work offer, technically a TFW must work for this employer while in Canada. If the worker is not employed by the employer stated on their permit, the TFW is in fact in breach of the work permit which propels them into a state of illegality.

Through this discursively produced institutionalized experience, we can foresee that behaviours by employers, state actors and individual IMWs are coordinated in specific ways as they relate to workplace and employment standards and job mobility. The interview with Malcolm gives an illustration of how these institutional processes and practices positioned him to become vulnerable to some sort of illegality via two behaviours: 1) chasing job opportunities, and their related access to “better opportunities”, while in Canada that move him away from lower NOC Code jobs; 2) reporting employment standard issues and related consequences.

Malcolm’s story

I began Malcolm’s interview in the same way as I had begun all the others – by asking him about his reasons for coming to Canada, his work and life opportunities in the

Philippines, and how he came to choose and apply to Canada. It became quite clear quickly that this was not of interest to Malcolm. Instead, he dove into telling his story as an employee in three different jobs as a “colourful one”. Malcolm’s ‘coming to Canada’ story is about having decided alongside his wife that there were “better opportunities” for their family here because of their youngest daughter who has Downs Syndrome. Malcolm felt that the state supports in the Philippines for family’s who need them are extremely lacking. As a result, Malcolm quit his relatively comfortable and high-paying job in a career he liked (hotel and restaurant management) so that he could move to Canada and bring his family to these better opportunities.

After having tried to immigrate to Australia, which took considerable time and effort, it was suggested to Malcolm by the immigration-consulting firm he had hired to work on his immigration process in the Philippines, that he apply to the Canadian TFW program. They explained to Malcolm that it would be a quick process and that he would be able to apply to jobs that were within his area of current work (as an aside note, Malcolm was charged “in the four digits” for this service. He was reticent to tell me the exact number in case “he gets reported to immigration”). As such, Malcolm came to Canada under a NOC B (“skilled class”) work permit as a cook. He worked for a company that he sensed “didn’t have higher plans for him” (in other words, where he didn’t see any upward job mobility) and where he didn’t really work to his stated job duties anyways. Malcolm began to look for another job where he sensed upward job mobility was possible. Switching jobs is possible as long as he stays in Canada for the duration of his visa looking for a job with another employer who either has an existing Labour Market Opinion (meaning they can hire IMWs) or who is willing to apply for

one. The pressures of supporting his family and being able to sponsor them to Canada, coupled with a frustrating job scenario moved Malcolm to take on a job with a smaller sized company run by an owner who promised Malcolm upward job mobility once “he proved himself” as a supervisor, which is still considered ‘skilled’ and classified as NOC B. This seemed to satisfy Malcolm’s desires to stay in his field of work and where he could see himself moving up in ranks. However, this is where, while trying to move away from precarious and unsatisfying work realities, Malcolm actually moved closer to them.

It was at this at this new workplace where Malcolm began to face some serious employment standards issues. His regular job duties did not align with his stated ones; instead he began to wash floors, cleaned bathrooms and performed other duties that did not align with s supervisor role. When Malcolm raised these concerns with his new boss, the response he received was along the lines of ‘if you don’t like it, leave’ and usually came with veiled threats of deportation and “this is how we do things in Canada”. Malcolm found out that three previous IMW had quit before him in a three-month span. He decided to move ahead, with the support and guidance from the Calgary Worker’s Resource Centre with formal Employment Standards complaints. Malcolm quit this job. As he states: “I did not resign at all, I was forced.”

Considering Malcolm was in Canada with the primary intention to work and provide better opportunities for his family, Malcolm could not stay too long without employment. As such, he took the next available job that he could, which was with a fast food chain as a food counter attendant. This job is a downgrade in NOC codes. Instantly, Malcolm went from a “skilled” NOC B code job (with its access to PR, better pay and supposed upward job mobility), to a “semi-skilled” NOC D job. Not only did this move

him further away from the status and access he was searching for through a “skilled” job classification, he became deskilled in the process.

Another aspect of Malcolm’s story that is worth mentioning is that he believes strongly that if he “works hard enough and proves himself” that his new employer will nominate him for PR. This is possible through the Alberta Immigrant Nominee Program and its Semi-skilled Foodservices Industry Pilot Project. As stated on the Alberta government’s “Immigrating to Alberta” website:

The Semi-Skilled Foodservices Industry (Pilot Project) is limited to 600 nomination allocations for the three eligible occupations of Food and Beverage Server, Food Counter Attendants, and Kitchen Helpers. When 600 allocations have been approved, no further applications under this pilot project will be accepted or assessed. The pilot project will then be evaluated based on a number of criteria and factors. Additional allocations may be made available pending the outcome of the pilot project assessment.

The program, however, only allows for each employer to nominate ONE person per restaurant location for ONE of THREE selected occupations (Food and Beverage Server, Food Counter Attendants, and Kitchen Helpers. In Malcolm’s story, this is an important piece to discuss because when Malcolm found out that this was the case, he has since decided to drop his pursuant of the employment standards complaints against his previous employer because the process took up “too much time and mental energy”, and instead wants to “move on with his life”. When he elaborated on his decision to drop the Employment Standards case he said:

It’s my choice because maybe I just want to focus more to better my career at W_____ to go up and work my way. Because it will take about two years...the process itself is kind of taxing for me...it takes some time when I should have been working.

Malcolm's story opens up several possibilities to explicate social relations of ruling that have positioned Malcolm to act in certain ways. I argue that these relations of ruling have *organized certain aspects of vulnerability* for Malcolm, which in other words, has made it challenging to withstand a hostile local setting regardless of his intention. In Malcolm's ways of speaking about this vulnerability, he sounds as though he is frustrated, confused and isolated in his experience. However as we see, these disconnections are in fact coordinated by political rationalities and uphold certain institutional and organizational contexts.

Through Malcolm's story, we see how the ruling relations of neoliberal market forces which in turn produce Malcolm as an 'economic unit' squeeze him into specific work situations that continuously push him to vulnerable and precarious status (Goldring et al., 2009). His decisions to move to Canada, regardless of his middle-class existence where he felt that he and his wife were making enough money, was based solely on the fact that there was a lack of state-funded public services for his daughter who is disabled. Without going into too much detail, one can trace a line back to a lack of such services in countries who face significant economic pressures and must align political and economic goals with state austerity measures through such mechanisms as structural adjustment plans and other social funding cuts. As a result, many individuals find themselves on the move for what they believe are 'better opportunities' for their families, but in fact are finding individualized solutions to social problems. As such, Malcolm makes a choice to become involved in the global migrant labour force with millions of others who are also chasing better opportunities. Once this individual choice is made, labour market forces

and ‘greener financial pastures’ elsewhere around the world lock them into patterns of supply and demand.

Secondly, and this may seem as though it is inconsequential in the large scheme of things, the pressure of time and length of process of different migration programs and how they moved Malcolm to make certain decisions are important to note. At first, Malcolm had made the decision to apply to two countries via their economic and/or family class immigration programs, which was his initial preference due to his interest in bringing his family with him. When it became clear that these processes took more time than he felt he had, he decided to act on the suggestion of an immigration firm (based in the Philippines but with ties to Canadian employers) to apply to the TFW program, which he was told would be quick and much easier. As such, Malcolm is conducting his life by making what he believes is the best choice for his family. However, it is important to note that this was made quick and easy due to the neoliberal logics of importing a quick workforce to respond to local labour market needs.

This neoliberal logic keeps extending through Malcolm’s story. A closer look at Malcolm’s NOC code classifications (and the change that occurred midway) shows yet another way in which neoliberal logics, and consequential administrative decisions, have locked him into certain work and life situations. At first, he managed to move to Canada in a ‘skilled’ NOC code category, which responded to his desires to attain permanent residency and family sponsorship. It has been argued elsewhere that the IMW program is a de-centralized, employer deemed immigration policy with its own neoliberal criteria and ethics. NOC code classifications are specific administrative decisions that stem from these criteria, and as such, work the people who interact with it in specific ways.

Malcolm's initial job situation was not responsive to his desires for upward mobility and job satisfaction. As a result, he chose to find another employer that promised to provide him with these aspects. Even though he stayed within the same NOC code classification, it became quickly clear that the employer felt that due to Malcolm's status in Canada, he could take liberties with employment standards and was immune to any enforcement, which eventually led to Malcolm's resignation. International migrant workers, specifically those that are classified in lower NOC codes, are vulnerable to shady workplace conditions because of a fear of reprisal by the employer by firing them, which could end in deportation. As in Malcolm's case, he didn't proceed with the employment standards case against his employer because he felt that it was taking away from his work and focus on attaining PR.

Here, we see that the NOC codes that classify Malcolm do not necessarily make a difference to his day-to-day existence and do not necessarily protect him from overt practices of discrimination or exploitation, but also work against him when possible. When he was considered 'skilled' through higher NOC codes, this did nothing for his desires for upward job mobility or a line of sight for permanent residency. When he took it upon himself to find another job, the higher NOC codes did nothing to protect him from workplace violations, and in order to save him from possible deportation and to focus on staying in Canada, he abandoned any claims against his employer. Finally, through all of this, Malcolm 'decided' to take on another job – any available job – which ended up being with a larger fast-food chain with ongoing available LMOs (because they hire a large number of IMWs throughout the year), but this job landed Malcolm in a 'semi-skilled' low NOC code, which really brings him back to square one in terms of

trying to attain his ‘better opportunities’. Malcolm is further away from being able to claim permanent residency and to be with his family.

Social relations are found in a couple of ways in Malcom’s story. Beyond the workplace standards listed above, we can also see how this happens through the Alberta Immigrant Nominee Program. In Malcolm’s story, he feels that all he has to do is work hard and commit to his current job and this will get him the coveted one position per year per employer nomination. In theory, Malcolm has a chance to do so. However, at the local setting, employers conduct their lives and administrative decisions in different ways. In Malcolm’s case, his current employer recently nominated another employee for the one position per year – the employer’s own niece. Malcolm has to wait another year for the possibility of being nominated for the AINP, practicing his daily routine of “focus, commitment and hard work”, regardless of what that may mean and the vulnerable and precarious position that may place him in.

The duality of de-skilling and de-motivation

Canada has a long history of de-skilling its immigrants through the economic points program. Many authors have written about this process (Baltodano, 2007; Ferrer & Riddell, 2008; Guo, 2009; Khan, 2007; Mojab, 1999) and there are a multitude of policy and program initiatives aimed at rectifying this solution at the federal, provincial and municipal levels. There is a logical and rational reason to do so – if we brought in economic immigrants who have scored well in the points system, and they come to Canada and work in jobs that have de-skilled them, then we are ‘wasting’ their potential and Canada’s opportunity to benefit.

With regards to the IMW programs, this issue is not raised, even though a similar process is taking place. Throughout the interviews I conducted with IMWs, as well as with the service providers, the issue of de-skilling was raised several times. Many of the IMWs spoke about how they had come to Canada to work at jobs that did not match their previous work or training experience, and had chosen to do so in order to come to Canada quickly. They all had hopes that this would be a temporary state and that once in Canada they would be able to find jobs that matched their professional skills and experience. Some individuals talked about how they were told that this would be easy enough once they arrived in Canada by the recruiters that they had engaged to expedite the process. The majority of interviewees said they were not aware that under their NOC C&D coded jobs, they were barred from accessing any training or education in Canada due to their visa stipulations.

The ways in which IMWs spoke about the impact of not being able to work to their potential were usually with regards to how it impacted their sense of self, self-esteem and worth, motivation and confidence. In an excerpt from the interview with Jessica, Marie and Maurice we can see how the individual begins to feel as though they aren't able to better themselves in terms of training or job mobility.

Rida: But you said something really interesting. You're feeling that in your career, there's no growth?

Jessica No growth here like...

Marieno learning.

Jessica All I know now is how to make coffee

[Laughter]

Jessica Like it feels cuz you're not allowed to study right? So like there's no growth for you personally in career. Like when I am working in the Philippines, you will get, you will be more intelligent there because you are thinking. Here you don't need to think its just double double, donuts.. There's no growth..

Marie There's no motivation for the employees. No incentive so how can they like ah,

Maurice I can say that all foreign workers don't have that kind of ah, what you call this opportunity unless you applied for it. Cuz it says in our permit that you cannot attend or upgrade or learn more if you don't ask the government to give you permission to do so. Maybe that's the reason why some of us, like on their part because I know that they only want like to go here. But first,

Jessica It's limited.

Maurice ...you have to if you're - in the Philippines they are managers but they have to start first. So we accept that. But the thing is how can we like be a manager in the future. How can we ah, what you call this, get our careers here. So maybe that's the reason why they feel that way.

Jessica No, yeah, something like you can compare the foreign workers and the Canadians if they want to promote, Canadians is very easy. It's very easy because there is no paper you just appoint the person. But for us we have too many stuff, too many paperwork,

Rida: Yeah because you have to go through an LMO change again.

Jessica: Yeah, yeah, something like that. Even it's like a, what you feel you're very, very qualified for the position and then they promote the other ones. Like how come.

Maurice Not only LMO. You cannot, you have to like ah, ah, you have to be recognized with what you studied in your country. We need to go to the government. At first we don't know, we don't know that stuff. Unless we ask like CCIS, or we ask questions about it. Cuz at the time we don't know that they can recognize our study. They can what you call this, have it equivalent or what is equivalent here in trades or in skills wise. So at that time we don't know. That provision in the work permit says that you cannot go and attend ah, or upgrade unless you ask the government.

What separates the experiences of IMWs from other immigrants in the economic points class is that their de-skilling happens through explicit mechanisms that are built into the TFW program. If we consider that the IMW has been discursively produced to be part of a disposable workforce meant to fulfill temporary labour market needs, the logic would follow that when in Canada, these individuals do not need to access upward job mobility and/or training because it is not required to fulfill the labour market need for cheap, low-skilled labour. Thus, the feelings experienced by the individual IMW, or in other words the ‘actual behaviours’ (Yan, 2005), are in fact organized by the mechanisms of the program that produced them. Jessica stated this perfectly when she said: “All I know now is how to make coffee... Here you don’t need to think, its just double double, donuts”.

This is also made possible via what we (Canadians) ‘know’ about IMWs who are in lower NOC C&D codes. An IMW that has been classified in a lower NOC C&D code is known via this code to be “semi-skilled” regardless of their actual training or experience previously. This code has been deemed appropriate based solely on the job offer that has come to them via an employer. It is considered that these IMW are in fact semi-skilled and this knowledge of the IMW is a basis of ruling, which in this case means that the ‘semi-skilled’ IMW is denied access to upward job mobility and training. This keeps them in this vulnerable and precarious work situation the whole time while in Canada, but this is deemed appropriate due to the administrative logic of their NOC code positions.

On becoming an IMW: How one becomes isolated

As discussed in the above section on the desires of all of the IMW I interviewed to achieve permanent residency, I observed through the interviews as well as the

information sessions that this chase ends up working itself into a different basis of ruling. Again, if we were to use Yan's (2003) ideological circle to elucidate how an individual's behaviours are coordinated and brought into being through the workings of social relations, we would be able to see how individual IMW find themselves in isolating social situations. This section will look at how certain institutionalized social relations, such as the Alberta Immigrant Nominee Program and lower NOC code designations, act as a basis of ruling through their administrative logic, and consequently lead people into isolation.

During my observation of one of the public information sessions regarding general information about the AINP, which was delivered by a representative from the Alberta Government to a roomful of IMWs, I was struck by one particular question from the audience. At the time, I couldn't understand why this particular question stuck out for me. The audience member, a woman from Japan, asked the government representative if she knew if there were any other provinces who were opening up provincial nominee programs and if so, which provinces were making it easy to gain permanent residency. At the time, I found it interesting that this question was being directed to a government worker who had just finished giving information about Alberta's provincial nominee program and the impending changes (dubbed 4x4). Without being explicit about it, it was clear through this information session that it would, in fact, be harder for IMW to gain access to PR through the AINP. At the time, I assumed that the question from the audience member was in response to that.

Madga's story

It wasn't until I met with Magda that I understood more clearly my reaction to that question at the information session. Magda is 45-year-old woman from the Philippines who had come to Canada two years earlier as a light duty cleaner (NOC code C). She had left a husband and three teenage children to come to Canada in hopes of gaining residency in order to access better opportunities for her and her family. In the Philippines, Magda was the equivalent of what I understand to be a social planner/researcher in Canada.

Magda's story struck and challenged me on several levels, however, for the purposes of this section, I will only focus on one aspect of the interview. The following excerpt is about Magda's beliefs about gaining PR, her plans on moving to another province and her reasons why:

Magda: You know Rida I'm always wishing my family would be here.

Rida: Yeah.

M: And that would make my life here in Canada complete. Because even in the P when I'm off, I'm always with my family. With my children that's what I am missing here.

R: How much longer will you be able to do this until you make a decision whether it's been worth it or not or whether you should go back?

M: You know that's why, you know that is giving me sometimes it's giving me stress you know, because I've been here for two years but until now I cannot see the access of becoming a permanent resident here. Because I'm just in the low skill category and until now they don't have any, um, they don't have policy to address for us how to become permanent resident. Yeah. There are programs like the Canadian ** the Federal [Canadian Federal Skilled Program] but they were just offered to those who have skilled job here. You know. So but for us, for the lower skill they don't have yet so that is why I am so sad about it. So I am planning to move into other province.

R: Oh so you're thinking of moving somewhere else?

- M: Yes.
- R: So you'll finish your contract, you're extended year maybe or you're looking before just to see whatever opportunities you can get.
- M: Um, as a matter of fact I am already applying for other provinces because I know that Alberta is getting stricter with the temporary. So I am planning to move to other province. I have an application at Saskatchewan and I have an application at North West.
- R: North west Territories?
- M: Yes.
- R: Oh wow.
- M: Because they have, they are still lots with the temporary. They have the same policy for temporary foreign workers that after working for 6 months under the job *** they can ** by the employer.
- R: That's Northwest Territories and Saskatchewan?
- M: And Saskatchewan that's why I am planning to move in there. Because I could see about the new immigration law. The changes the amendment for Temporary Workers I know that starting April 1. So I said to myself, "Well I am really disappointed with that". Because it means that we still don't have a chance to become permanent resident. So I said to myself "Why not move into other Province?" Yeah.
- R: And how have you been, so have you been doing all of that sort of work on your own, or have you been helped by somebody?
- M: Yeah I have a chance to know an agency here who is looking for people in Northwest. You know R, honestly I love Calgary, if you would ask me I don't want to leave Calgary. You know, because I've adjusted already here you know. Though it's difficult but I think I adjusted already the transportation how to get there, um and every places here. But hey, I'm not here for myself only. I have to find ways how to become permanent to get my children. That is what I'm doing right now.

It was here that I began to understand what struck me about the first question I heard at the information session weeks before. The chase for permanent residency, coupled with

the mechanisms embedded in the AINP that essentially barred ‘semi-skilled’ IMWs not only uprooted people from their homes and their families to Canada, but also led to a sort of rerouting while in Canada. In other words, the desires to achieve permanent residency are locked in with the administrative decisions and neoliberal logics that drive immigrant nominee programs such as the AINP, and consequently become the instigator and maintainer of the ‘temporariness’ of the IMW. I argue that through the production of this ‘temporariness’ IMW are driven into isolation and more precarious work and life situations.

Magda speaks at the end of that excerpt about how she finally feels comfortable in Alberta. She speaks about her comfort with transportation, and in other sections of the interview she talks about how she finally feels comfortable in her home, her work (she likes her job and feels that her employer is a “good man”) and interestingly, in her solitude. Her settlement in Alberta has been tempered with her proximity to an aunt that had arrived in Canada over 15 years ago as a live-in caregiver. It was clear that she had come to the decision to relocate once again with some difficulty, even citing how stressed she felt about it. Through this rerouting, she will be delivered into more isolation, perhaps without the little support she currently receives in Calgary.

It is within the discursive production of the IMW, particularly one that produces them as economic units in our supply and demand chain in the labour market, that Magda’s decision to move to another province seeking PR is organized and viewed as logical. The way in which Magda is conducting her life – living in solitude, proving herself to her employer in hopes of being nominated, being separated from her family, and lastly moving to another province – are all behaviours that make sense under the

IMW program and its related mechanisms because it has discursively produced them as economic rational actors first and foremost. Hence, Magda's decision does not ring any bells, and whatever consequences that may occur- namely as I argue, living in further isolation and precariousness, are viewed as natural, and do not require any sort of intervention from Canadian policy makers.

Family separation

One of the most obvious ways that IMWs live in isolation is in their separation from their family. For all of the informants that had spouses and/or children, this was clearly the most pressing topic on their minds, and ironically, providing for their families was the reason they were in Alberta under the TFW program in the first place. For those individuals who were unattached – Juan, Jasmine, and Paula- they spoke less about family separation and focused more on a sense of social separation from their friends and social sense of self that they experienced back home.

It is obvious now more than ever that Canada is focusing less on family reunification and more on the economic immigrant, as obvious in current public discourses as evidenced in the current changes to immigration policies. Others have spoken at more length about the impacts of family separation on the immigrant (Cohen, 2000; Crawford, 2003; Sciarra, 1999; Suarez-Orozco, et al., 2002; Ward, 2010). What is less discussed, however, are the reasons why family separation makes sense, particularly for immigrants who have been discursively produced as economic units. In the case of IMWs, keeping lower NOC C&D coded individuals separated from their family is a mechanism that supports the ideological circle which produces the IMW. I have argued that the ideological forces behind the construct of 'temporary' and 'foreign' serve to

discursively produce the IMW in specific ways. By keeping lower NOC C&D coded individuals separated from their family, the IMWs ‘temporariness’ is cemented. Again, considering the low NOC coded jobs that bring in IMW to fill them are, in neoliberal logics, meant to be short term and responsive to market needs, those individuals that fill those jobs should be the same.

This logic was openly discussed during the information session delivered by the immigration consultant to employers in Banff. When discussing the different NOC code levels and their primary characteristics, he stated that those individuals that were granted work permits with the higher NOC Codes A, B & O were allowed to bring their spouses, who in turn could apply for open work permits while in Canada. In PB’s words:

We do that because we want to attract Executives and professionals, we don’t want them to leave their families behind, we want them to settle.

When speaking about lower NOC codes C&D, PB stated that “families are not encouraged to come” because:

They aren’t making enough money to support their families, because their spouses can’t work on an open work permit, and so their spouse will end up working illegally.

Thus, IMWs working under lower NOC codes C&D work permits face barriers in many ways, including being separated from their family. This further isolates the individual, which in turn impacts their sense of well-being, and can manifest as depression, anxiety, loneliness and a general sense of malaise. I choose these descriptions because this is how it was described to me in many of the interviews with individuals who were separated from their families for a range of time – between 8 months and 4 years.

Conclusion

This chapter details the latter part of the ideological circle (Chart 1), which I use as a conceptual framework, or map, for this study. It has used sections of interview data and text to show how the ideological and political rationalities of neoliberalism, market dominance and market citizenship become activated in ways that work to coordinate the daily lives of ‘semi-skilled’ IMWs in Alberta. As much as this has been an exercise in identifying how this programme has become a Canadian institution in specific ways, I have chosen to further the analysis to see if and how this institutionalized process has also defined subjectivities and specific behaviours. My interest to trace the links between these political rationalities and the way that people behave is to be able to see how people act specifically, or perhaps how they are coordinated to act, in their daily lives that may at first glance look to be individualized, coping or haphazard type behaviours, but in fact, are behaviours that are an activation of political rationalities. By using the concept of ‘governmentality’ in this analysis, I draw upon what Miller and Rose encourage to do; to see how both state rule (based on certain political rationalities and sustained through specific discourse and language) collude with the technologies of self (how the individual governs themselves) to form the realities and daily experiences of IMWs in Alberta today.

My intention in this chapter is to outline, or ‘map’ in IE terminology, the ‘ensemble’ that is the story of IMWs. Along with the political rationalities described in previous chapters, this ensemble includes certain administrative logic and technologies of government such as situating IMWs as ‘economic units’, skill codification, and through devolution. In turn, we can begin to see how the behaviours of individuals – how and

why they ‘work’ for permanent residency, how and why they become vulnerable and precarious in their workplace and in other ways, and how and why they become isolated through family separation, become the sites of how the Canadian institution in focus is shown across time and space. This exercise has been done in anticipation for the next chapter, where I explore the notions of where do we go next.

Chapter Seven – The meeting point of social work and IMWs

In Chapters 5 & 6, a story about the experiences of ‘semi-skilled’ international migrant workers in Canada has emerged. We have understood from the standpoint of IMWs, social service providers, government representatives, and immigration consultants that the daily experiences of IMWs in Canada are contested, challenged, and largely preoccupied with their temporariness and isolation.

The process of becoming and being an IMW has a general storyline. At the individual level, it seems to begin with someone who feels the intense desire to fulfill family obligations as they can not be met in their home country – either due to the inability to access services, a lack of good wages or to find new opportunities for their children. It seems to begin with an individualized decision to become an economically rational actor, whereby people make the right decisions to fulfill their economic desires. These decisions are influenced by the pressure to choose the right place to migrate where all of these desires are fulfilled. Family separation, becoming deskilled, and working in employment that is unfulfilling, dangerous and precarious are understood to be the right sacrifices to be made for the right reasons for those that find themselves in the semi-skilled international migrant worker categories. What holds this all together is the dream of permanent residency and the ability to become Canadian with the anticipation that this was their ticket to the stability that they desire for themselves and their families. Chapter 5 highlighted some of these experiences, activities, opportunities and barriers as told by the informants of this inquiry. Through ethnographic means, we begin to see the details of people’s lives as they are covered in the cloaks of Canada’s migrant worker programs.

Meanwhile, a second storyline has emerged. Other stakeholders have had the spotlight shone on them in order to highlight ‘what else is going’ on as individuals are making their decisions to become migrant workers, and during their time as migrant workers in Canada. These stakeholders, or in IE language, institutions (each with an ideological backing and discursive production abilities) hook migrant workers into specific social relations. In other words, we begin to see how these institutions coordinate people’s lives – their decisions, their daily routines, what they choose to ‘work’ on and how they do that, and the consequences of such things – in material ways. Flipped around, we begin to see how the migrant worker’s activities and experiences are the actual site of ruling relations and institutional logic.

Chapter 6 identifies these institutions to be the Canadian political economy, including labour market criteria and citizenship regimes, which are all bolstered by the political rationalities of neoliberal and market logic. These institutions produce specific administrative logics and technologies of government, such as skill codifications, the subjectivity of migrants as economic units and the devolutionary practices of the state. Finally, I argue, that in this process, the everyday activities of the IMW are coordinated, and that this coordination brings about a state of vulnerability, isolation and precarity.

The ‘low-skilled’ IMW program certainly works to the favour of the Canadian nation-state, its economy, and by proxy, its citizenry. Although it is marketed as a mutual benefit to those who chose to engage in it, we can see through this inquiry, that in fact, it is not. This story has parallels to other sites where the institutions that maintain the political rationalities of neoliberalism and market citizenship coordinate the lives of individuals, for example, the Seasonal Agriculture Workers Program, and the Live-in

Caregiver Program (although PR is much easier for live-in caregivers, due to the on-going lobbying and pressure from civil-society). These institutions are certainly a part of Canada's nation-state building story, which are simultaneously building a precarious class of people living on the margins.

In the space between the rock and the hard place – What about social work?

From a strictly economic point of view, the best immigrant is one who has just arrived, is...willing to work hard, [and is] undemanding in terms of health and other social services: in other words, the immigrant who is not integrated, who in other respects raises apprehensions and social tensions (Ambrosini, quoted in Calavita, 2006, p. 65).

While government policies may or may not support and strengthen (re)settlement for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, social and community workers have a professional duty to advocate for the human rights of this group of people, and to focus on working with them to achieve civic and social integration in their new communities (Nash, Wong & Trlin, 2006, p. 360).

I have argued through this dissertation that as a result of specific and deliberate social relations that are current in Canada today, IMWs are living through various levels of precarity, vulnerability and isolation. A variety of responses have sprung up in order to address this reality, ranging from areas such as law, critical geography, health, and to a lesser extent, social work. Although there exists a history and large quantity of social work scholarship that takes up immigration and asylum issues, there is a void of literature that pertains specifically to migrant workers in Canada, particularly those that are kept temporary and low-skilled.

Perhaps the void in Canadian social work literature related to international migrant workers is as a result of the paradox that is apparent with the two quotes above.

Inherent to the notions of the social work response to migrant workers in Canada is the dilemma that this a precarious and vulnerable social group, who will always be precarious and vulnerable as a result of their membership in that social group. This is exacerbated by the fact that the membership to this particular social group will keep people on the ‘outside’ of the membership of the Canadian nation-state. Given the fact that in democratic nations such as Canada, formal rights are dependent on the legal frameworks of the nation-state, and that the provision of the welfare state and its ‘safety net’ are as well, there is no easy way to define social work responses to IMWs in Canada today.

The rest of this chapter will identify some of the key notions that I argue must be addressed in order for social workers and related professions to be able to work with IMW in Canada while supporting, even unintentionally, the ideological circle that produces them.

In previous chapters, I simultaneously draw upon the literature and show through my institutional ethnography that the migrant worker subjectivity has been socially produced as first and foremost through their status as International Migrant Workers. Having been discursively produced and commodified as ‘economic units’ ready to fulfill the demands of the labour market has influenced their daily experiences of trying to navigate their worlds. They are a part of the cohort of today’s workers who have been subjected to “neoliberal assaults” of corporations and a sort of “financial fetishism” which sees migrant workers rooted exclusively in the financial system, wholly abstracted from wider processes such as class struggles (Soderberg, 2010). The structural violence that accompanies the disciplining of workers, through physical coercion such as the

illegalization and threat of deportation (Sharma, 2005), of barring access to permanent residency, as well as what Soderberg (2010) calls “economic coercion, such as the dereliction of labour law, deregulation of employment, retraction of collective protections, and so forth” (p.15) is a matter of everyday life for migrant workers.

Civil society actors become involved in these everyday matters. Social work literature takes up the larger work processes, usually under the term “intervention” in a variety of ways through settlement programs, employment services, health and education delivery, etc. Usually, these programs depict the problems to be at the individual level which can be addressed through “comprehensive diversity management and anti-oppressive programmes” (Danso, 2009); for example, when one can not find housing or employment, through the lens of justice or education, and other individualized depictions of problems faced by IMWs in Canada. Moreover, there is usually an assumption that immigration patterns follow a clear path to settlement, whereby permanent residency is easily attainable.

Only recently, has a discussion developed about how civil society gets pulled into this complex through its own (re)productive capacities. For example, Martin (2010) argues that “labour market boundary institutions” such as schools, social welfare programs, prisons and community-based organizations affect key aspects of workers’ participation in the labour market. “A worker’s interaction with these institutions profoundly affects the structure of economic opportunity that she will confront, from her ability to participate at all in employment, to the segment of the labour market open to her, to the wages she will be paid” (p.130). Humphries (2004) argues that not only has social work become more ‘involved’ with immigrants and asylum seekers in recent years,

it has also been drawn into a moral and physical regulation role through constriction and punishment. At the local level, Bhuyan's (2012) study of the ways within which Violence Against Women's shelters in Toronto navigate neoliberal assaults on their funding structures and devolution, may lead, albeit inadvertently, to reinforcing neoliberal values of citizenship onto their clients with precarious immigration status.

During the course of my study, many of the same aspects emerged. Service provisions to IMWs by not-for-profit agencies were based on facilitating their integration into labour market positions that would continue to subject them to the precarious status that they were trying to turn from. The delivery of information sessions and one-on-one counseling satisfied the demands of the client population, which were regarding how to best navigate the current system - how to find other jobs, how to apply to PR, what provinces were opening up their PNPs, how to file taxes, and support around mental health, stress and anxiety. This provision of such service delivery reinforces policies that are ideological, such as the TFW programs, and uses the evidence-based practice movement to legitimize these policies and programs through effectiveness and efficiency (Humphries, 2004). Besides this, however, I began to wonder what else is social work doing to influence the way in which IMWs lived their lives.

'Bare life', IMWs and civil society

Throughout my research, I continued to come across the concept of *bare life*, conceived by Giorgio Agamben, and used by many theorists and scholars in their writings related to migrant workers. To be honest, I could not grasp the density of his arguments, and as a result, included the briefest of introductions in my theoretical

chapter. However, it was not until I began to write the final chapters that it became clear to me the relevance of *bare life* in relation to my inquiry, and have chosen to leave my discussion about it until now. In particular, this concept has helped in my IE analysis that asks us to make “the invisible visible” (Smith, 2005).

It was during a re-reading of my interview with Malcolm where these ideas gelled together; making visible the sometimes invisible forms of ruling through understanding the lives of the IMW in ways that go beyond our common formal rights based understanding or the provision of a service they require as an IMW. At one point, near the end of the interview, after having discussed his concerns related to his previous employment standards case, the fact he has come to realize he would not be able bring his family to Canada, the in-coming regulations to the program that required him to leave within 4 years, Malcolm stated:

But then right now I'm just going with the flow. I'm tired of thinking of all those concern you know. Maybe I'll just continue to prove my worth you know, nobody can put a good man down. Just work, you know. Try to deliver what they are paying you, try to be as worthy as you can.
Drama. [Laughs] I'm just trying to be, I'm just going with the flow.

I remember during the interview, when I heard Malcolm say these words, I had a very bad feeling; the only way I can describe what I felt was that I instantly felt ‘gutted’. I remember that I had to work not to show this on my face or in any body language, because I had felt that it was my reaction, and should keep it to myself. I made sense of my reaction at the time by convincing myself that it was because I felt his heartache, his pain and frustration, and, in my intrinsic ways, wanted to help him navigate them as best I could. I concluded that those were Malcolm’s feelings and his alone, and did not make a connection to any of the other interviews that I had been through.

It was when until I re-read all of the interviews, when I began to see (and feel) the same reduction to ‘just coping’ that many of the IMWs were experiencing. Although they were expressed in different ways, a standard sense of ‘just going with the flow’ emerged. I had a sense that there was something ‘invisible’ in these sentiments, that there was something else at play than just the individual trying to cope with their marginalized status as a low-skilled IMW in Canada. It is here, that the concept of *bare life* begins to make sense, and allows an entry into how a particular *way* of living sheds light onto social relations that are hidden.

Briefly, there are a few assumptions and understanding of *bare life* that are important to name. First, any concept of *life* is necessarily political (Weiss, 2010). Differentiation, through politics, sovereignty, classification systems, etc. (of human, plant, animals life-beings) is in itself a political act, meant to qualify a distinction made between them. In this process, a separation is made between those that can live a “*qualified* life, a particular *way* of life” (called *bios*) and those that are “the simple fact of living (‘*zoe*’). (Agamben, quoted in Weiss, 2010, p. 2). For humans, their *bios* should be a life that is political, social and thoughtful, and anyone who does not live a life described as such has been reduced to their *zoe* – what Agamben calls *bare life*. As Weiss (2010) states:

Through reduction to bare life, one can no longer consider the importance of how life is lived; the possibility of the just and unjust are excluded. Any such relation to life is limited to a spectrum of management of a population which ranges from protection to violence, but which does not allow an assessment of the former as just or the latter as unjust (p. 2).

Moreover, living a *bare life* does not necessarily mean that one is completely excluded from the political order of the space where they live; “in a sense, one is excluded by

means of an inclusion; this unprotected person is included in the political order insofar as the law specifies that it excludes and no longer applies to them” (p.3). Lastly, it is the processes of *biopolitics*, which is the political management of the *bare life* of a population through their naming, numbering and ordering, that allows bare life to supersede any sort of ‘good life’ via social or political life (Weiss, 2010).

Looking back at Malcolm’s excerpt, where he states: “but then, right now, I’m just going with the flow”, I am struck with how he has articulated how “one can no longer consider the importance of how life is lived” (Weiss, 2010, p.2), a possible signifier of having been reduced to *bare life*. At that very moment, Malcolm describes how the public and politicized nature of his *bare life* is reduced to a private concern, behavior and coping mechanism. At the very same time, the reduction to “going with the flow” from a life where he attempts to be involved in the social and political makes invisible the “possibility of the just and unjust” (Weiss, 2010, p. 2).

What is worrisome as a social worker is that it can be argued that civil society has a hand in perpetuating such *bare life*. If we consider the interactions that Malcolm has had with several NGOs and other social actors throughout his process of becoming a IMW (both in Canada and before), we can see that they have had an active role in how Malcolm has come to “going with the flow”. As Ong (2006) states: “NGOs gain power over the politically excluded and exercise the power to regulate, frame, and represent their interests to various parties” (p.210). Programs that service individualized concerns of underemployment and unemployment, or help IMWs navigate a severely flawed system in relation to employment standards issues, or works concurrently for the interests of employers and migrant workers, are giving a value to the bare life of migrant workers.

This is because by doing that work, we are giving moral value to these institutions of relations, and in particular, acting as a form of social technology for them to continue to work (Ong, 2006). In Malcolm's case, every NGO, agency, labour union, even media, that he came in contact with over the last 4 years while trying to conduct his everyday life, has in fact been a part of the "moral economy" (Ong, 2006) that has produced him.

The neo-liberal citizen as social work 'client'

It was at these times I wondered then what is social work supposed to do? How does civil society work with people made vulnerable by the fact that they are governed by an orchestrated set of social relations, including their own involvement? How does social work reconcile the ideological basis of policy with its self-created anti-oppressive belief systems? I concur with Humphries (2004) when she states:

Although social work involvement is primarily in the area of internal controls, one of my complaints about current practice is that it takes place without any understanding of the context within which controls have developed. Were social workers to appreciate the shocking truth, they would find it more difficult to use individualistic models of AOP (anti-oppressive practice) and ARP (anti-racist practice) to justify their current practice. In particular, I will argue that immigration controls are inherently racist, and no amount of 'acting in anti-discriminatory ways' will remedy that basic truth" (p. 95).

Understanding the context of the experiences of IMWs is what lead me to choose IE as a methodology for my research, as it asks us to set aside "concepts, speculation and imagination in favor of engaging with actual people's actual activities" (Smith, 2005, p. 209), and in favour of "using the term ideology for specific contexts such as institutions" (p. 217). To avoid the individualistic nature of social work responses, a contextual analysis may open up the possibilities of avoiding the social reproduction of such complexes of marginalization and oppression through the identification of institutions

that govern. Instead of understanding the issues facing individual IMWs, which would lead to the sort of ‘intervention’ as mentioned above, a contextual analysis - how the *bare life* has come to be lived- one begins to recognize that members of a group form specific relationships with institutions by their own terms and experiences, based on a system of classification meant to keep certain orders of political rationalities alive.

It is at this juncture that social work can benefit from looking at other disciplines, such as critical law or geography studies. Using these sorts of frameworks for articulating the issues facing social workers, such as their involvement with IMWs in Canada, would shed light on how social conditions are spatially differentiated. Spatiality conceives justice and human rights in ways that attest to the fact that they exist in a shared space, where the construction of difference is felt by social groups through territory, power and access to institutions. Therefore, individual risks that are brought to the attention of service providers; underemployment and unemployment, impending deportation, inability to access the social safety net, etc., become transformed into what Kobayashi & Ray (2000) call “civil risk” felt by “groups who are marginalized by institutional practices that affect every aspect of people’s daily lives in their homes, schools, workplaces, and streets...and maps social characteristics such as gender, ‘race’, and sexuality across landscapes of oppression” (p.414). This ‘positionality’ to rights, in other words, the critical orientation of looking at individualized experiences via an understanding of the historical creation of power differentials, is in contrast to the notions of equality of rights through the provision of formal rights that social work stems from.

This is a second contribution from critical geography that would open up the possibilities for social work when working with the neoliberal citizen and marginalized

groups. Viewing IMWs through a lens of ‘civil risk’ suggests that any sort of justice will not be provided through the standard “rights-based distributive system of justice predicated upon impartiality which is the basis for so much of our social legislation”, instead, “social outcomes that reduce both risk and vulnerability must attain a central position in our conceptualization of risk and rights, and thereby address the systematic institutional processes through which differential levels of vulnerability occur across social space” (Ray & Kobayashi, p. 414). As such, the appearance of formal rights is challenged by the mere fact that for many groups who are marked as ‘different’ from the norm of which these rights were created for are unable to access them. It is only through substantive rights claims that first, rights provisions fail to occur within a particular context, and that second, only equity programs will result in overcoming the effects of inequality (Ray & Kobayashi, 2000).

My final argument, and one where I hope that the implications of this study become real, rests in the notion that if living a *bare life* is apparent through the ways within which semi-skilled IMWs speak about their lives in Canada, it may be that social work and other civil society members need to work at counteracting the reduction to a bare life by elevating people to live a *qualified* one. At the risk of this becoming a value-laden, paternalistic and marginalizing process in itself, it is at the very least an acknowledgement of the complexity that NGOs are involved with by the mere fact of their own collusion with neoliberal forces in today’s world. Ong (2006) states:

...NGOs in operation are not autonomous entities entirely devoted to an abstract notion of universal democracy. Rather, the NGO modality in action is one of complex attachments and detachments – embeddedness in cultural affiliations but solidarity with the plight of migrant workers; links to the nation and capitalism but contingent ties to notions of common humanity; use of situated ethical beliefs but rare mention of human rights; and

investment in regional attitudes toward migrant women more than in abstract ideals of global humanity (p.216).

Therefore, social work and its practice with international migrant workers— whether it is in the individual, community, policy or research domains, should keep this idea of *bare life* at its centre. In the stories that were shared in this inquiry, I heard this common thread. International migrant workers in Canada may be a version of the current-day *Homo Sacer*, the individual living inside and outside of the nation-state, subject to its whims, working hard not to be expelled in order to live the perceived freedom they think is possible. Personally, I am left at the end of this inquiry with an overwhelming sense that someone needs to work diligently to ensure that this is not done in the name of all Canadians. Professionally, I believe that it is social workers that, instead of working within this moral economy, are called to arm against it.

APPENDIX A - Descriptions of interview participants

Malcolm

Malcolm is a 43-year-old man from the Philippines. He has been in Canada for 2 years as an IMW. Before coming to Canada, Malcolm worked as a training and development manager for a food packaging company. He has college training in food service management. Using an international immigration-recruiting firm, he came to Canada in a NOC code B designated work permit as a cook. He has had three jobs in the past two years, which have moved him from NOC code B to a NOC code D designation. He left his first job because he felt that there was no future in management for him, and was lured to a job as a food counter supervisor (NOC B) to later experience significant employment standards issues. He quit and found a job at a large fast-food chain as a food counter attendant, which demoted his skill level classification to a NOC code D. He pursued the complaints process through the Employment Standards Office in the Government of Alberta, however dropped out after feeling that it was going nowhere, and took too much of his energy, which he says should be directed towards his new job so that he can prove himself and hopefully move up to a supervisor or management position again.

Malcolm left at home his wife and three children; the youngest daughter lives with Downs Syndrome. According to Malcolm, there are very little supports available to families who have children with disabilities. As a result, Malcolm and his wife made the decision that he would come to Canada by himself at first, in order to get settled and to apply for permanent residency (which was possible for him in his original job skill category). Now that he is not able to apply for PR on his own, he is hoping that he will be nominated by his employer through the AINP. As a result, he says all of his time and efforts are dedicated to being a good worker.

Jasmine

Jasmine is a 22-year-old woman from the Philippines. She has been in Canada for 2 years. Before coming to Canada, she worked at the airport as a ground stewardess for one year after graduating high school. She is the youngest child in her family. She has two older brothers who came to Canada under the Live-in Caregiver Program, but who now both work as managers at a large fast-food chain. She was recently nominated for the sole position in her workplace for the AINP (by her brother who is the manager). Malcolm and Jasmine work together.

Jasmine is a single, unattached woman who felt that she had a better future in Canada, and could more easily “make it on her own”.

Jessica

Jessica is 42 and has a Bachelor of Science in Tourism from a large university in the Philippines. She had been a kitchen manager in a fine dining establishment for 8 years before applying to become a migrant worker in Saudi Arabia, where she went with her husband for 2 years. On a visit to the Philippines, she saw an ad in the local paper for an

immigration-recruiting firm who stated they were looking for interested individuals with similar educational and professional background. She contacted the agency and began the process after discussing it with her husband (she has three children aged 11-15). Her decision to apply was based primarily on compensation, even though she enjoyed her work in the Philippines. Her husband is back in the Philippines and they hope to be reunited in Canada soon. She has not seen her children since 2008, the year she arrived in Canada.

Marie

Marie is 32 and worked as a store manager in a fast-food establishment for nine years before applying to the TFW program as a food-counter attendant (NOC code D). Marie was married a few months before she left. Her husband is waiting to be sponsored by Marie.

Maurice

Maurice is 38 and attended college in mechanical engineering in the Philippines before arriving in Canada. His work experience ranges from property management, an engineering facilities manager, and construction project manager. Maurice came to Canada through the skilled TFW program as a facilities manager (NOC B). He chose Canada over the United States, where he has family, because they told him that the economic opportunities were diminished after the recession. He felt that he had more opportunities in Canada.

Magda

Magda is in Canada as a light duty cleaner (NOC D). Prior to coming to Canada, she worked for 23 years doing database analysis in the planning office of a provincial government. She has a Bachelor of Science in Industrial Engineering. Her and her husband applied to the TFW program after her husband lost his job “due to the recession” and couldn’t find another one. They could not survive on her income alone. Magda took a six month caregiver training program, completing the coursework in the hours after her full-time job. Consequently, she was found a job as a TFW and her husband did not. They decided she would come to Canada and her family would soon follow her. They chose Canada because she has an aunt who came as a caregiver over 26 years ago (and has worked for the same employer during that time) and is now a permanent resident.

After being in Calgary for four years and realizing that she is not able to gain permanent residency due to the new regulations, she is contemplating moving to another province or territory like Saskatchewan or the Northwest Territories where PR is easier to access.

Juan

Juan came to Canada four years ago from Ecuador. At his job as a hotel manager, he met many Canadians and as a result, became interested in visiting Canada. After a failed attempt at getting a visitors visa, he applied as a TFW in the semi-skilled program. He currently works as a food counter attendant. He is single and is not interested in gaining permanent residency.

Paula

Paula left Columbia 11 years ago and moved to the Dominican Republic to work in advertising. When the “recession hit” she lost her job and decided to move to a country where she could learn English. She came to Canada on a tourist visa and moved to Banff to attend for a 6 month English language program. While in Banff, she decided that she wanted to stay longer in Canada and approached an immigrant consulting firm in Calgary who found her a job as a front-desk clerk (NOC C), which took over a year to process, leaving Paula to live unemployed this extended period of time. She has been living and working in Banff at this job for the last two years. She has applied to the Federal Skilled program and is awaiting their response.

Pedro and Clara

This couple moved from Mexico five years ago. Pedro came first, as a delivery driver (NOC C) after the couple decided they wanted to leave Mexico due to on-going security concerns (they lived near the Mexico-US border). After a few months, Clara and their two children came to Canada as tourists and Clara quickly found a job as a food counter attendant (NOC D). They have applied as a family through the Federal Skilled Program and are awaiting their response. Their two children are in elementary school and the family rents their own townhouse.

PB

Immigration consultant - The guest speaker was a representative from a Calgary based immigration firm whose tagline reads: “Corporate Immigration and Foreign Worker Specialists”. In the introduction to the session, the mandate of the company was clearly stated: “to match skills of TFW to labour shortages of employers” (personal notes, 2010). As an immigration officer with the CIC in the 1990s and changed careers to become an immigration consultant, which allowed him to speak from both perspectives and share his views on the changes that have taken place over the last 20 years.

Representative from Temporary Foreign Worker’s Advisory Office

The Temporary Foreign Worker Advisory Office and Temporary Foreign Worker Helpline help workers learn about their rights and find solutions for situations involving unfair, unsafe or unhealthy working conditions. Advisory offices are located in Calgary and Edmonton. International Migrant Workers can contact an advisory office by calling or by visiting in person. Once needs are assessed, services provided by the Advisory Office may include:

- Providing assistance in accessing and completing forms.

- Assisting in submitting a complaint.

- Providing current information on available federal and provincial programs.

- Working with immigrant-serving agencies across the province to assist with adapting to living and working in Alberta.

Calgary Catholic Immigration Society’s TFW Support Services Program – staff

The Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) Support Services acts as a bridge between TFWs, the Canadian community and employers by providing orientation

and information about employment rights & responsibilities, Canadian business culture, and other necessary tools that enable TFWs to adjust to life in Canada. The program provides regular workshops for employers and/or TFWs, as well as conducts individual and group consultations in Calgary, Brooks and Newell County, Banff and Bow Valley area.

APPENDIX B – Recruitment email/poster for International Migrant Workers

Research study on the experiences of Low-Skilled Temporary Foreign Workers in Alberta

Invitation to Temporary Foreign Workers (NOC C and D categories)

You are invited to participate in a research project that looks at your experiences in Canada while you are working as a Temporary Foreign Worker. This project wants to change the policies and programs that bring Temporary Foreign Workers into Canada in a positive way. This project is interested in better understanding the following:

1. Your voyage to Canada as a Temporary Foreign Worker. Why did you choose to apply? How easy was the process to come to Canada?
2. Your experiences in Canada as a Temporary Foreign Worker. How is your current job situation? Do you feel you have access to services (food, shelter, health, education) in Canada when you need them?
3. Your overall thoughts. Did you make the right decision to come to Canada? How do you rate your quality of life in Canada as a Temporary Foreign Worker?

You are invited to volunteer for a 60-90 minute interview in a location of your choosing. You will be paid \$25 for your participation.

In the interview, you will be asked questions like the ones above as well as others that provide information about your experiences as a Temporary Foreign Worker in Canada. **Your contributions could help change these programs so that they better serve you.**

The information you provide will be kept **completely confidential**. I will be the only person who hears what you say.

If you are interested in participating, please call Rida Abboud at 403-251-9091 or email rida.abboud@utoronto.ca.

APPENDIX C – Recruitment letter for other Stakeholders

Research study on the experiences of Low-Skilled Temporary Foreign Workers

You are invited to participate in a research project that examines the experiences of Low-Skilled Temporary Foreign Workers (LSTFW) in Alberta, and their ability to exercise a full social franchise as temporary workers. By social franchise, I am referring to the activities that an individual employs to improve their quality of life in domains such as the personal, economic, physical, familial, and community. This project hopes to influence the policies and programs that bring Temporary Foreign Workers into Alberta in a positive way. This project is interested in documenting and understanding better the following:

1. How you come into contact with Low-skilled Temporary Foreign Workers In what capacity do you interact with them in your daily work life?
2. What are the programs or services you may provide Low-skilled Temporary Foreign Workers? What are the policies or documents that guide this interaction?
3. In your opinion, what are the barriers to a full a good quality of life for temporary workers?

I would appreciate about an hour of your time to sit down for an individual interview.

Your contribution could help in making recommendations to the policies and programs that effect this population.

The information you provide will be kept **completely confidential**. I will be the only person who hears what you say.

If you are interested in participating, please call Rida Abboud at 403-251-9091 or email rida.abboud@utoronto.ca.

APPENDIX D – Interview Questions for International Migrant Workers

I'd like to ask you a few questions about yourself.

- * What is your current immigration status? Do you have a current work visa?
- * Is this your first time in Canada as a temporary foreign worker?
- * How long have you been in Canada?

The first set of questions will ask you about your life before you came to Canada.

- * What kind of work were you doing before you applied to come to Canada?
- * Did you go to school? For how long?
- * What was it like in your community? Were there enough jobs for everyone?
- * Did you have family members who left to work somewhere else in the world?

The next set of questions will ask you about why and how you came to Canada.

- * How did you first hear about the possibility of coming to Canada on a temporary work permit?
- * What were some of the reasons you wanted to migrate and work in Canada?
- * Why did you choose Canada over another country?
- * What did you know about Canada before you came?
- * What did you expect when you came to Canada? (in terms of work life, personal life, community life)
- * Who did you leave behind?
- * How long did you expect to stay in Canada?

This set of questions will ask you about the process you took to come to Canada.

- * How long was it between when you started applying and when you finally arrived in Canada?
- * Who helped you with the application process? Did you have to pay any money? (probe for info on labour recruiters, people appearing to be government staff, etc.).
- * Were there any issues in your application? What were they? How were they resolved?
- * Tell me about your visa. What are the conditions?

The next set of questions will ask you about your arrival to Canada.

- * What happened when you arrived here? How did you find a home? Your way to work?
- * How long was it between arriving in Canada and starting your new job
- * What did you think your life in Canada was going to be like?
- * Were there any people or groups that helped you with your settlement? How did they help?
- * Do you know what kinds of government services you have a right to?

The next set of questions is about your life in Canada.

- * What happens when you need to find food? Find a babysitter? Find legal help? Need medical attention? Need a new place to stay?
- * How is your current job situation? Do you feel like you work enough? Too much? Was the job what you expected it to be? Any issues there? Describe your job.
- * Are you making enough money? Why or why not?
- * What happens when you get sick, or hurt at work. Do you feel like you can take time off?
- * What organizations or services do you use most? (probe: health care, education, social service)
- * What about your family reunification plans/possibilities? Does your spouse have a permit? Where are your children?
- * What problems or issues do you have that you feel you can't deal with today? Why?
- * Are you glad you moved to Canada?
- * What do you hope for in your future?

APPENDIX E – Interview questions for Other Stakeholders

This first set of questions will ask you about how you come into contact with LSTFW workers, and what you come to learn about them.

- * In what capacity do you see LSTFWs in your daily work life?
- * Describe how they may come to you?
- * Is there an intake process? What kinds of information do you get from them?
- * What are the criteria to participate in your program/service?
- * How do you assess the needs of the LSTFW?
- * What do you see as being the most pressing issues/problems faced by them?

The next set of questions will be about the program/service you provide.

- * What are the guiding documents, policies and/or procedures that guide the work that you do (either intake, referral, service provision, etc.).
- * Who wrote these documents?
- * Do you feel that the documents address the needs you see in the current client population? If yes.....; if no....
- * Please describe the services/programs you provide. Are there funding restrictions? What services are available for LSTFWs and which are not because of funding restrictions?
- * Are you at capacity? Are there more people you can serve, but are unable to? Why or why not?
- * Do you feel that the services you offer meet the needs you see in the current client population? If no, why not?

The next set of questions will ask you about what you see in your daily work experiences that may impact efforts that LSTFW are making to improve the quality of their lives.

- * How does your service/program articulate these domains?
- * What are the priorities of the service/program?
- * What are the domains that your service/program does not address? Do you refer people? Where to?
- * What happens when a client has an issue/problem/need that your service cannot provide? In general, or because of their status as LSTFWs? Or both?
- * Is there follow-up?
- * Why would a client stop coming to your agency? What are the procedures after such an event?
- * What are the main concerns of clients upon their exit of the service/program?

Finally, I'll would like to ask you to reflect on work issues that impact your job with this population.

* How do ongoing work issues (caseload, organization of work, agency-wide initiatives, budget restraints, funding, etc.) affect the way you work with this population?

* Do you foresee any trends or pressures that would make your job with this population any easier? More difficult?

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