The Colonial Mirror: Immigration, Inequality & Colonialism

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Dr. Mirna E. Carranza

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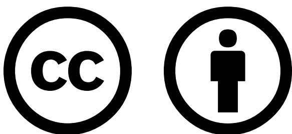

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Contents

- Accessibility Statement
- Main Body
- Chapter One: The Complexities of "Cause and Effect": Colonization and Modernity
- Chapter Two: The Colonial Grid and Colonial Conditioning
- Chapter Three: The ability to assimilate: Understanding myself through the colonial grid
- Chapter Four: A Cultural Mosaic: Canada's Multicultural Policy Then and Now
- Chapter Five: The Making of Whiteness
- Chapter Six: What is Cross-Cultural Across from?
- Chapter Seven: Helpers as Knowers
- Chapter Eight: Migration as a Family Process
- Chapter Nine: Working with Immigrants/Forced Migrants and Trauma
- Chapter Ten: Gender as an Axis of the Colonial Grid
- Appendix: List of Projects

1

Accessibility Statement

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1

Chapter One: The Complexities of "Cause and Effect": Colonization and Modernity

Abstract: This chapter introduces the book's theoretical frameworks: Coloniality of Power, Coloniality of Gender, and The Colonial Grid. These frameworks will challenge the entrenched ideas that position immigration as "the search for a better life" and Canada as "a safe haven."

Key Concepts: The Coloniality of Power, the Coloniality of Gender, the Colonial Grid, the Stranger and Orientations.

Introduction

Narratives of migration are fluid and construct the image(s) of both the "immigrant/forced migrant" and the country of resettlement. Canada boasts itself to be a multicultural "nation of immigrants," "built upon diversity and as having one of the highest levels of receiving newcomers of the countries in the Global North" (Sakamoto et al., 2018). This imagery of welcoming, acceptance and multiculturalism exists in the Canadian psyche and influences people's formal and informal reception. Migration as an act of movement is constructed and subject to interpretation – as white people (often from Europe) are typically migrating for purposes of "moving up" – financial gain, schooling, or an adventure. These migrants are often referred to as "ex-pats" or living abroad, and European migrants were sought out to build the nation. Whereas those from the Global South who are racialized are understood to be escaping the slow grind of poverty, seeking refuge, desiring the comforts of advancement and development – displaced. The underlying narrative is that they are searching for a "better life."

Canada has always used migration strategically – from the British Christian migrants who were transplanted to build the nation in England's image to the white, European, non-Jewish post-WWII economic boom that brought population growth and labour. Immigration systems were designed to resettle those from what is now called the Global North. In recent decades, the faces of people crossing borders have been changing. Pathways to citizenship continue to exclude those who are not considered

desirable or an asset. Despite Canada's move away from the Eurocentric immigration policy in 1978 and the adoption of Multiculturalism (Mahtani, 2002), racialized immigrants/forced migrants remain at a structural disadvantage (Carranza, 2017). Canada's response to immigration and re-settlement, including social work, has not kept pace with the global movement of people despite the 45 years of official policies of Multiculturalism. As a strategic policy, immigration continues to be used for nation-building, state renewal, and the promotion of a Canadian image – friendly and welcoming.

Canadian Multiculturalism Act [1985]

https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/c-18.7/page-1.html

Multiculturalism is intended to symbolize belonging. As legislation, the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act [1985]* codifies the importance of all Canadians maintaining their ethnic and cultural heritages. It further sets out the requirement for equitable participation for all citizens in "Canadian life." Finally, the *Act* claims that Multiculturalism is a value of Canadians and a fundamental characteristic of Canada. Those who are accepted via the formal immigration process are considered deserving and are permitted to enjoy the prospers of development in Canada. However, to belong requires the erasure of difference. **Difference** is that which is *not* the norm. In Canada, the norm is a homogenous national identity that is white, able-bodied, English-speaking, heterosexual and hailing from the Christian faith. Multiculturalism claims that differences from whiteness are respected and valued (Badwell, 2015). Even in social work, respect for difference becomes uneven, conditional, fabled, and imaginary. One example is practicing some customs and traditions for immigrants/forced migrants (e.g., specific foods and celebrations), which multiculturalism is intended to respect in Canada, but this acceptance is tenuous at best. For example, celebrations involving traditional foods are welcomed in specific spaces such as Multiculturalism Week but regulated (i.e. scent policies) in others.

Social work began as a way for upper-class white women to 'help' the poor, alleviate suffering, and reduce social ills – eventually known as the charity model. Help was given to those who were deserving. In these decisions of who was deserving, social work developed its foundational elements of surveillance – determining who is *deserving* of help. Surveillance has allowed some regulatory components of the profession to collude with and/or become an arm of the state. Early notions of deserving were a companion to who **could** be helped. The goals of 'help' were assimilation, productivity, and the ability to fit into the mainstream notions of being a Canadian. Early social work was intertwined with the advancement of the colonial project and the production of whiteness (Fortier & Hon-Sin Wong, 2018; Saraceno, 2012). As the traits of 'goodness' and 'caring' are valued in women, the white female body has become a natural fit with social work (Carranza, 2021). Social work practices of help are rooted in **'savage-to-civilized**' narratives inherited from European colonization (Badwell, 2015). Working towards achieving 'white civility' has been the cornerstone of success. Social work has promoted these values of belonging and productivity through various interventions, from poverty work to policy analysis (Jeyapal & Bhuyan, 2016). Regarding migration, assimilation is the primary driver of interventions (Sakamoto, 2007). Current approaches to working with immigrants/forced migrants have evolved from positivist frameworks, including the medical model. Social work is still, in some ways, beholden to its roots in positivism and its efforts to be more 'scientific' with its established standards of service and care—for example, the use of 'best practices' (Abramovitz, 1998).

Positivism is the idea that facts and knowledge can only come from scientific research. Scientific research and the researcher are objective and not influenced by outside factors. All knowledge should be

value-free, trustworthy and can be replicated. The **medical model,** rooted in positivism, helped establish social work as a reputable and standardized profession (Yan, 2008). Professionalization helped validate social work as a profession and social workers as ‘knowers.’ In helping, the social worker acts as the ‘knower’ of ‘how-to. This could be ‘how-to’ raising children, accessing programs, or applying for housing – all of which are uniform versions of achievement and symbolize a good work ethic, employability, ability to maintain housing and exemplifying good Canadians (Carranza, 2021). While practice areas have branched out into community-orientated settings, the governing body and professional practice standards continue to structure the work of social workers. Social work is predicated on the ability to be seen as having the capacity to understand people’s issues and respond. Responding to migration has been a core area within social work and woven into mental health, child protection, and schools. Social work has courses and specializations in immigration at the community, college and university level. Much of what is taught arose out of a desire for cultural competency. Cultural competency, the idea that social workers can ‘know’ how people navigate the world, has been essential to practice and understand the Other or Stranger (Carranza, 2021; Garran & Werkmeister, 2013). Scholarly work challenging migration, assimilation, and integration frameworks has flourished in the past two decades. However, mainstream social work remains trapped in the remaking of whiteness as the ‘knower.’

In this book, the **social work encounter** (the encounter) describes when social workers and other helping professionals engage with people and includes clinical, counselling, community work, and policy. Examining the encounter centres, the idea that social workspaces have been visibly white and, over time, this whiteness has been embedded in relations with migrants. So, as faces change, we remain bound to history, meaning spaces often mirror colonial relations. Unresolved historical violence haunts social work models that no amount of cultural competency, sensitivity, and anti-oppressive practice can fully mitigate (Bermúdez et al., 2019). Anti-oppressive, feminist, critical race, and queer theories have advanced knowledge of structural inequalities; however, to truly decolonize the work, we must look through the lens of history. The modern-day constructions of power and privilege that social work attempts to deconstruct and distance from are not yet “post” (Salazar, 2012). Relationships remain predicated on the ‘knower’ and the ‘known’ and are similar to the rescuer or hero narratives and assume progress, mobility, and achievement are possible – with the ‘right’ help. Key ideas about how social work encourages and enforces progress are explored in this text, as well as how the encounter both supports/is supported by encouraging immigrants/forced migrants to ‘become,’ ‘align,’ or ‘act’ Canadian.

The notion that social work is synonymous with helping, as Canada is welcoming, must be problematized. This book aims to understand how families, as a whole and individual members, negotiate their placement on the colonial grid through re-settlement in Canada. We will traverse the history of social work and migration to understand the complicity of the profession in producing and reinforcing the Other. **The Other** is the person or group that the dominant defines themselves against. The dominant belongs because the Other has been constructed as not belonging due to their foreignness (Spivak, 1985). Of crucial importance is how Canadians, including social workers, are conditioned to believe that racialized people arriving unilaterally need to be thankful and feel safe because they have arrived. Social workers, depending on their history with migration, have been conditioned to understand immigration as ‘moving up,’ the search for a better life”, and Canada as a ‘safe-haven.’ Current portrayals of migration focus on ‘arrival,’ indicating that trauma is negated by achieving safety in

Canada. Current understandings of trauma in migration are not reflective of the lived reality. This book documents and understands the global migration of people as the result of imperial conquest and ongoing modernity while challenging notions of 'safe' and 'unsafe' geographies. This book also seeks to counter narratives popularized in the Global North of migration, resulting in stealing, invading, and resource-draining. It also brings into the discourse the ways that globalized coloniality is not always international but occurs within national borders.

Chapter One starts briefly with the history of multiculturalism in Canada, which is discussed further in subsequent chapters. This introductory chapter sets the foundation for this text and begins to sort through the key questions that frame each chapter and the following questions:

How have social work practice theories constructed the immigrant/forced migrant Other and the colonial encounter?

How do people learn to be a colonial subject?

How does social work mirror and engage with this conditioning?

How are belonging and exclusion animated in the social work relationship?

To answer these questions, the following theoretical frameworks will act as a guide: the Coloniality of Power (Quijano, 2007), the Coloniality of Gender (Lugones, 2007; Salzaar, 2013), and the Colonial Grid (Carranza, 2016). This chapter provides a summary of each in plainer language. Subsequent chapters will apply each theory and put it into action to challenge how we think and the interventions used in social work. The theoretical framework of coloniality and mapping the colonial grid offers the opportunity to discuss the roots of the *colonial relationship* in social work. Coloniality encourages us to interrogate knowledge, such as social work knowledge – including geographical and political influences. Alternatively, we risk reproducing violence by contributing to the belief that knowledge produced in the Global North applies to everyone (DasGupta, 2011). This is not a history lesson; instead, a philosophical un-doing.

This book focuses on immigrants/forced migrants and social work practice. As a reader of this text, you are acutely aware this is relevant to all areas of social work: individual and family counselling, child protection, healthcare, justice, etc. Migration shapes people's employment experiences, education, and daily lives. Understanding how migration shapes so much reinforces how this knowledge must be included in our work, from individual to community engagement to policy analysis and advocacy.

Working from a decolonial standpoint can be used in placements and employment, often as a companion to the organizational approach. Ideally, understanding and integrating the theoretical frameworks will assist in shifting the current practices to enact change at the structural levels to reproduce fewer threads of colonialism in day-to-day practice.

Positionality and Social Location

Positionality and social location are relevant in reading coloniality and social work as these are tools to 'know ourselves' by naming our access/barriers to power. These tools can help social workers understand our influences, how we know, what we know, and how we approach help. As social workers, it is imperative to think through how we are placed on the colonial grid and how our positions are shaped amidst privilege, power, and marginalization. Being a social worker does not automatically afford or negate privilege. For example, who is assumed to be a 'knower'? How do encounters with racism or xenophobia intersect with the social work encounter? As social workers, positionality and social location require scrutiny of how we are viewed by those we work with (consumers, service users, etc.) and how this view frames the social work encounter. It is important to note this scrutiny should not just be a reflection of social work at this moment but also applied to how our personal histories and the history of the profession come to position us.

Positionality

is how social workers identify *themselves* in relation to various identities and groups. This positioning is often in relation to insider/outsider. While identity is the focus for both the social worker and the groups, it is necessary to unpack the underlying power relationships and structural privileges shaping the encounter (Grigg, 2023). For example, a social worker who identifies as female can experience 'insider' knowledge as a woman but can be an 'outsider' to the specific issues presented. Positioning is complex, as identities are never singular, unifying or fitting into a binary of insider/outsider. Many identities shape experience, for example, racialization and experiences of geographies and migration, particularly citizenship (Bransford, 2011). Positionality is rarely uni-directional, and social workers may take up several different identities and relationships to power within their work.

The Coloniality of Gender sees the construction of "men" and "women" as a tool for colonization. Gender, was implemented to fracture social structures, including family. Looking from this lens challenges binary categories, with implications for insider/outsider at the axis of race + gender.

Social Location

is the articulation of identity amongst the overlapping social constructions within the power relations and how they are positioned concerning the dynamics that shape social categorization. The concept of social location is intended to allow individuals to speak to their historical and current engagement with the co-constituting categories that have provided them with or marginalized them from positions of power and access to privilege (Hankivsky, 2014). When social workers speak to their identities it incorporates the political and historical context of their positioning. Ideally, this opens up space for a glimpse into the social forces at play when constructing their reality (Grigg, 2023).

Positionality and social location are vital components in social work in moving toward equity across

identities. Understanding the relations between power, privilege, and who is 'valued' connects to historical processes and present ones. When identifying social location and positionality, social workers run the risk of reproducing power and privilege (Jeffrey, 2005). Who has access to naming whiteness, and who can do so without repercussion? What happens after privilege has been named—how does this add to its deconstruction?

Multiculturalism and the Mosaic

Canada has national identity currently promotes a welcoming, friendly brand that embraces everyone (Carranza, 2017; Jeyapal, 2018). Who is Canadian and who is not has a complex relationship to this branding, which goes beyond, as Razack (2005) points out, Tim Hortons and hockey. The national identity is built on a curated process of claiming 'multiculturalism' and a cultural mosaic. The following introduces this national narrative, picked up in *Chapter Two.*

The faces of people migrating have been changing since the post-WWII era, yet Canada's immigration system has not kept pace. Canada has historically enacted racist measures through its immigration policies as a way to keep the population looking, speaking, and acting Canadian (Sakamoto, et al. 2013). Strategically excluding some populations has long been a strategy for nation-building. In the post-WWII era, while refugees were being accepted and selected "like good beef cattle" (Holmes, 1979. p 6), decisions were based on the intertwining of economic interest and racial bias. This means that considerations based on income attempted to prevent impoverished people from coming to Canada under the guise of preventing risks was an accepted practice. Race and class have multiple intersections, so the government's direction around excluding those who experience poverty is seemingly race-neutral; it was steeped in whiteness (Narayan, 2017).

During this era, European and non-Jewish migrants were believed to share the same values and political and economic structures as Canada. Many were met with a host of privileges in the newly emerging multiculturalism of Canada – most notably, living amidst people who looked like them and an immigration system designed for their re-settlement. During this era, planning for receiving people's arrival was more of a transition between geographies and cultures. While there may be differences, the core elements were the same. European communities were encouraged to enjoy their new lives and share pieces of their culture with others, such as traditional food, dance, and customs. As a result, citizenship and legal belonging, access to a passport, and residency were accessible. There are clubs in many cities across Canada to honour and preserve heritage for those from Europe, such as 'Italian-Canadian clubs' and the like. The goals of re-settlement were often to learn English, secure employment, and enjoy the rights and entitlements of being a Canadian.

This does not suggest that European immigrants did not struggle or deny their experiences. There are always struggles associated with migration, which were often more pronounced for those from the 'Eastern Bloc' or the former Soviet countries, sometimes called "the poor North" (Krivonos & Nare, 2019). Whiteness has been historically contested in Nordic countries, Russia, and the Eastern bloc, with evidence to suggest that those migrating have been locked out of economic success when migrating. However, the global nature of coloniality and visual categorizations of race have positioned these countries as a part of the Global North or the West, including them in whiteness (Krivonos & Nare, 2019; Narayan, 2017). However, from the perspective of arrival, Europeans and those who look white nicely fit the narrative of upward mobility, achieving economic security and adding to a multicultural mosaic – with no structural changes to Canada. In 1978, despite resistance, the shift from European origin – white, nuclear families to those from the Global South, non-white, separated families began in

Canada (Lam et al. 1987). This shift is symbolic of the historical process of coloniality – those who have been race(d) as Black, Indigenous, and Racialized intentionally displaced from their lands and ways of being.

One Woman Immigrant said:

"Canadian immigration, they have a three-word logo, *"Welcome to Canada".* I think they should change this, it's not true".

The shift from settlers on the move to those from previously colonized territories forced into the diaspora has presented a new opportunity for Canada to push its 'friendly' brand of 'saviour' – especially on the Global stage. The slogan "Welcome to Canada" is intended to encompass the national essence of a nation that welcomes people from all over the world from all walks of life – a feel-good, inclusive approach to immigration. *Multiculturalism,* the founding philosophy of much of Canada's social policy, promises respect for diversity, equality, and freedom. The symbolism of the mosaic, where the pieces fit together but stay the same – claims to offer *new* Canadians the ability to reconfigure their traditions, customs, values, and everything labeled as 'culture'. Culture symbolically plays several roles in policy and Canada's collective imagination of whiteness. The mosaic symbolizes what is not required to change, such as ethnic foods, music, and (some) fashions, and is an acceptable expression of diversity. There are several initiatives in Canada on both the government and community levels that intend to promote diversity and advance representation and inclusion. What has gone unquestioned is the ideas and outcomes of diversity, inclusion and equality. Diversity, from what? Inclusion into what? And equality, with whom?

For Canada to remain a 'safe-haven' where people can find a better life, there must be people, places, and things classified as dangerous. For example, the "War on Drugs" in the United States, which has influenced Canadian discourses, constructed people from Central America and South America as Narco traffickers. People, intertwined with their geographies, are constructed as a threat—the stranger (Ahmed, 2000).

The stranger is not someone that we do not recognize. Instead, the stranger is a person we recognize, socially constructed to embody difference. Strangers are known through how they are constructed. These identities are intentionally constructed as different and differences are made **strange**, with some stranger than others. Strangeness is made by increasing the distance to the dominant, everyday and *normal* ways of doing and being. The stranger strangers are those who are 'too' different. Those who cannot be accepted as simply 'culturally diverse.' As Ahmed (2000) argues, the dominant culture and citizens come to know themselves as members of the in-group because of, or in relation to, strangers as not belonging. Because *they* are (e.g. not born here, racialized), it makes the *'we'* in the collective of the dominant group whatever they are/are not (belong here, are rightful occupants of this space, white). Importantly, the stranger is not unknown; we recognize them through these traits and know they do not belong and are, to some degree, threatening (Ahmed, 2016). The figure of the stranger rests on recognition, those that encounter the stranger already have knowledge of the strangeness. The stranger is someone who is recognized in day-to-day life as 'out of place.' Ahmed (2016) explains the stranger is a reminder of people, a place, and a culture that Canada is not – such as narco-traffickers. The stranger and their country of origin, as signified by their culture, are not advanced or modern – backward. Culture, in this instance, is a blurred and far-reaching moniker that can be widely applied. The blurrier the lines, the more bodies can be included (Ahmed, 2014). It is not about becoming familiar, getting to know people or their culture in an effort to reduce differences and increase desirability and acceptance.

Multiculturalism is dependent on the presence of the stranger, and it is an image of the nation itself, a way of 'living' in the nation, and a way of living with difference. Living together is an acknowledgement of being aware of 'cultural' diversity. Racial differences are often coded under ethnic differences, which are redefined in terms of cultural diversity. Much of multiculturalism in practice serves to erase diversity or have broad overarching categories that minimize non-dominant identities and intergroup differences. Canada maintains a white, Anglo state and nationhood (Ahmed, 2000).

White people migrating are often perceived as 'moving up' whereas those migrating from the Global South are 'escaping'. Immigration narratives rely on the dichotomy of civilization vs. barbarism, a nod to the justifications of European advancement, imperial conquest, and colonization (Gutiérrez-Rodríguez, 2018). Of course, these narratives have changed over time into terms like 'failed state', third world vs. first world, and underdevelopment. Modernity is linear. This means that advancement and progress happen sequentially. Those in the Global South are perceived as yet to advance or become civilized in the ways the Global North has, with one benchmark being the degree to which Human Rights are valued. The Global North's progress hinges on producing the idea that the South is stuck in a more primitive time and has "evolved" through laws governing its citizens, economic structures, human rights, democracy and the idealization of civilization, progress, and modernity. It is this same nation-building project that has historically created the destruction, intentional violence, and exploitation of the lands in the Global South that contributes to forced displacement. The Coloniality of Power helps social workers understand the cyclical nature of colonization in Canada, the role displacing Indigenous people had at the global level, and the continued disenfranchisement within and outside its borders.

The Coloniality of Power

The 'Coloniality of Power' (CoP) traces the violence of colonization as the origins of the current configurations of power. Coloniality is the long-lasting and durable 'remnants' of colonialism that sustain the current racial hierarchy. The CoP begins an analysis of the pathway to understanding the non-linear ways colonization continues to seep into contemporary times – through laws, policies, practices, and ways of thinking. These are known as colonial continuities. Ongoing coloniality maintains the visibility of race while attempting to hide the invisibility of whiteness. In this school of thought, 'post-colonialism' does not exist – as it is not a thing of the past (Salazar, 2012). Colonialism has simply been 'reworked' to increase the power and privilege between people within and between nations – based on race (Quijano, 2007) and the hetero-patriarchal system of sex/gender (Salazar, 2012). Colonization is the method of European advancement and is the groundwork for contemporary violence – this ranges from school policies that negatively impact Black youth to Canada's ongoing genocide of Indigenous peoples.

Coloniality shapes everything from our individual thoughts to how Canada operates on the world stage as a humanitarian nation and in the global economy. This may seem like a big leap, but the learnings in this book will demonstrate how Canada's history of colonialism extends to our present-day reality and highlight how violence still exists within its structures and citizens.

The originator of this theory is Aníbal Quijano, a Peruvian Sociologist who cites the creation of race, Blackness and indigeneity as a tool to classify people. This was the centrepiece of colonization. In his seminal work, he notes the term id-entity (534)—people's ID (race) as their entity – their distinct and independent existence. Quijano (2007) explores the ways that colonialism not only violently marginalized people but also the ways that colonizers demarcated the conqueror and the conquered. Through specific processes of creating race – coding people as Black or Indigenous – while attempting

to make White invisible, these categories legitimized domination and oppression. This was an exercise in meaning-making and a justification for the dispossession of lands from Indigenous people and the creation of slavery. According to Quijano (2007), this was how the world was reordered through colonization – what would later be labeled Black and Indigenous Peoples were reconstructed as the 'conquered'. In this reconstruction, Indigenous people were deemed weak and inferior. The creation of race became a symbolic expression of the hierarchy of who is considered fully human (Wynter, 2003). This is an important distinction here as it disrupts historical narratives on being equal upon first contact. Europeans did not consider those Indigenous to the lands of Turtle Island or Africa as equals. They had to find a way to justify their violence, positioning themselves as the pinnacle of humanity. Dehumanization cemented superiority vs. inferiority in all the relational patterns that followed.

The centrepiece of achieving control over labour and the economy required the violent dispossession of lands, including natural resources and the people. Understanding the intentional creation of race is inseparable from land and resource seizure. Mignolo (2008) draws our attention to the shift in lifeworld that occurred for Indigenous peoples. Land was a part of the ecological habitat and way of life. One did not live on but with the land. In this worldview, lands and resources are not a source to produce profit. Colonization turned lands into sections and transformed them into property. Dispossession occurred in the physical sense, philosophically and epistemologically. The creation of 'race' as a tool to determine worth in relation to labour is inextricably tied to the commodification of the land – where the dehumanization of non-white bodies was needed. Creating race as a hierarchy determined who owned land, who worked on it, and how people could be commodified as property. Simply put, white Europeans wanted to expand their empire of wealth and created a system of justification.

This process evolved into the globalized structure that roots identities into a geo-historical place. One such example is how Indigenous identities are locked into a settler nation-state, such as Canada. The term "Indigenous Peoples of Canada" negates that people were/are connected across the 'Americas' before the colonial implementation of borders (Braveheart et al. 2011). The outcome of this is Indigenous peoples are forced to negotiate their rights within the settler nation-state instead of an identity that expands across Turtle Island.

The categorizations of race and identity were embedded into every aspect of life, *legal* – in laws and policies, *aesthetic* to determine whose features are considered attractive and *labour* – what work people are considered for. Categorizations were embedded in science via biological determinism to cement inferiority. This is the system of colonial differentiation. CoP has defined culture, labour, intersubjective relations, and knowledge production (Maldonado-Torres 2007). In turn, this control has shaped and maintained the domination of the Global North towards the South (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2012), which extends to the relations between immigrants/forced migrants and their country of settlement (Carranza & Grigg, 2022).

Key Points: Colonialism never ended. CoP (theoretically) cites that postcolonialism falls short of encompassing the current configurations of power and exploitation. Coloniality sees that those who are considered human, which is protected by force, have economic power and are those with privilege – via race, class, and gender. Those with humanity decide who counts as human and who is *deserving*. Those born in the Global North [and are visually coded as belonging] are considered 'deserving' of rights, entitlements, and access to civilized and safe spaces. It also determines who deserves life and choices and which people or scenarios are worth grieving and mourning. We pause here to note what this means for migration. When people are forced to migrate, the idea of 'luck' dominates how people see them, and upward mobility supersedes the grief and loss that accompanies leaving one's homeland (Carranza & Grigg, 2022). The geopolitical categories of who is human created for colonization have translated

into a vision of the modern-day Global North as a modern and advanced society, where people 'want' to live. It is the measurement of progress, including equity and human rights. People who migrate are 'given' access to these human rights, but such access can also be taken away, as demonstrated in militarized detention centres. As colonialism morphed into coloniality, notions of 'underdevelopment' and 'third worldism' have evolved as new ways of constructing the image of uncivilized and savagery. Civilization = rights. Rights ensure safety and order. The Global South is understood as yet to achieve civil society and democracy. People from the Global South do not yet deserve safety, human rights, social capital, and the humanity that gives people a choice to stay in their country. Their loss is not valid because living in the Global South is not 'worth' grief (Carranza & Grigg, 2021).

The Coloniality of Gender

The gender binary is based on European male and female classifications and was intertwined with the class-based division of labour. Patriarchy is a binary system of gender that was created in Europe to define and enforce social roles in a hierarchy within whiteness to define worth in the capitalist economy. As capitalism flourished, so did the need for various classes of white men (i.e., working-class, middle class) who could advance the economy, and women played a crucial role in social reproduction to maintain this system (Hage, 2005). Men are the economic providers, and women are the nurturers. Women were to manage the home and everything associated with the private sphere/social reproduction, to support men to earn in the public sphere. Men were classed as the strong protectors and providers, contrasting women's classification as fragile and weak. Intersections of class are essential here – women, as nurturers, were expected to give birth and care for children, continually creating a viable workforce. Also, they were expected to manage their husband's needs outside of the workforce by supporting them to continue working – cooking, cleaning, and other duties of social reproduction. Therefore, men's success depended on women's support and struck a balance that kept the economy going (Valverde, 2016). Reproductive labour was both denigrated and invisibilized by men's productive labour (Yuval-Davis, 1993).

The economy of Europe at this time was deeply racialized and gendered to form the significant class demarcations that exist today – amidst white and non-white people. Women who needed to work were employed as nannies, cleaners, and other domestic labourers (Oliver & O'Reilly, 2010). Those living in poverty were expected to 'care for' other families. This classification awarded value to upper and middle-class white women. Those who provided care were determined to be paid less, undervalued and exploited (McKenna, 2018).

The continuum of white male violence against white women cannot be understated as it is symptomatic of patriarchy and the violence of the hierarchy – yet whiteness and the intersection of gender-based violence remains understudied. This system has been the basis for white women's struggle in the waves of feminism and manifested as the quest for, amongst other things, equality, equal work for pay, and reproductive rights (McKenna, 2018). The attempt to universalize [white] womanhood represents a colonial desire to naturalize and group all genders under the same rubric – to invisibilize whiteness and mark the Other/stranger. This explanation may seem reductive, and it is and is only intended as a brief introduction to the desired gender roles that have marginalized Black, Indigenous, and racialized women and men.

This system of gender provided predictability and structured the social order via a hierarchical relation of who was more critical to the economy and, therefore, socially (McKenna, 2018). It also determined the quintessential desirable characteristics of each gender for whiteness. White men were, therefore,

considered citizens and nation-builders, which awarded privilege to their gendered characteristics. Whiteness and maleness were intended to be universalized and bestowed the ultimate humanness in human rights (Yuval-Davis, 1993). The masculine and feminine gender roles are based on the structures of the bourgeoisie, middle, and upper class (McKenna, 2018; Narayan, 2017).

It is important to note that the goal of violent recreation of sex was to reorder society and enforce (raced) gender roles. This process was far more complex than described in this summary. As a tool of colonization – changing how societies were organized was intended to disengage people from their ways of being – including relationships with the lands, the family and caring for children/elders. In this process, the modern sex/gender system was implemented, tethering gender to biological sex and enforcing heteropatriarchy as a method to erase ways of being and knowing pre-colonization (Lugones, 2007). All of which were intended to destabilize, disenfranchise and destroy, rendering inferior and exploit.

Example: The standard of the feminine for the gender binary was white womanhood. During colonization, white women were the site of nationhood, purity, virginity, and caring (McClintock, 1993). Paradoxically, the land was 'conquered,' penetrated and taken symbolically in the image of white womanhood (McClintock, 2013). This purity could not be tarnished or invaded by 'adding' non-white women. As Lugones (2007) indicates, Black, Indigenous and Racialized women were not racialized and forced into the European gender system; they were reconstructed as genderless and outside of womanhood. Throughout history, Black, Indigenous, and each form of racialization for women and men have been marked to maintain the invisibility of whiteness. Racialization has a geographical element that creates historical and current tropes related to fabled national identity and transcends borders. This unpacks why women are feminized differently – to simultaneously draw them into femininity while locking them out of the pinnacle (white) of womanhood. These tropes are created to be both foreign and exotic, meeting the standards of womanhood but Othered as non-white (Jeyapal, 2016). Racialized women are never given the reverence of female fragility, especially for Black women (Lugones, 2007).

Important note*:* Colonization did not follow a classic hierarchy wherein each racial category reproduces the European gender binary. It is not white men/white women; adjacent or under is Black men/Black women. These categories were introduced and exist within communities amidst a complex colonial matrix of relations (Carranza, 2016). CoG challenges common tools used in social work to teach about race (i.e., the Flower Power exercise and unpacking the invisible knapsack). These exercises see privilege and power as a summation of identity – white, cis-gendered men, heteronormative, as having all the power, and each identity removes a degree of access. In this approach, white women are one category away, and Black cis-gender men are different but closer to the power epicentre. Coloniality sees how, via race, gender(s) and sexuality, were structurally non-white, embedding a colonial grid that people move along the axis of power.

The Colonial Grid

Carranza (2016) conceptualized "The Colonial Grid" to exemplify how 'we' in the everyday ascribe worth and discern who belongs and who does not belong in specific spaces. The colonial grid provides insight into the multiple axes, lines, striations, overlaps, and intersections that determine the worth of the **assemblage** of identities – reminding us that historical oppression and marginalization inform our contemporary subjectivities. Thinking about assemblages recognizes that categories of identity cannot be separated or have a zero-sum. Here, we arrive at the current landscape of social work and some of the axes of power and belonging that demarcate the encounter.

Sa'ar (2005) discussed how the historical consciousness is the greatest resistance to postcolonial and decolonial feminisms. Maleness and whiteness emerged as intertwined ways of being to set the foundation of the *"historical consciousness"* as an organizer of regimes of power and dominance. How do we understand this consciousness in ourselves and the structures that we operate within? The colonial grid exemplifies how people in specific geographies navigate their lived reality, from how gender intersects with re-settlement which impacts how classism and the labour market structure in/exclusion. The Colonial Grid (Carranza, 2016):

The colonial grid refers to the direct and subtle, covert and overt ways people are organized along the lines of power and privilege that exist in our psyches. Difference, from whiteness or maleness, as an example, is originally structured on the boundaries between the colonizer/colonized and represents the hierarchal logic of race, gender, class, and abilities. It speaks to our 'common sense, meaning-making process and people's worth or lack thereof, which shapes how we in social work perceive the intersections of race, gender, ethnicity, class, ability, and sexuality.

The remnants of colonialism – coloniality, the structures we exist in today, inform and are informed by identity(s). This includes orientations (Ahmed,2000), how some bodies come to take up space and are perceived as belonging (white women in social work) while others are considered strangers. These structures have power, bestow privilege, and overlap, providing insights into how the colonial grid structures day-to-day life. For example service received in the fields of healthcare and medicine. Under colonialism, the male body was the pinnacle of functioning and health, whereas bodies marked as the stranger, or those constructed as disabled, were investigated as deviant. Privileging the white male body meant that the modern medical model is based on their physical and biopsychosocial experience (Joseph, 2017). This extends to psychological theories and interventions (Abramovitz, 1998). What is considered the *healthy body* has access to more jobs, financial security and mobility. Coloniality propels the colonial mentality of **one right way** (Okun, 2021); therefore, the Western healthcare model is considered supreme.

The lines of the colonial grid and the axis points, where more than one meets, are power, privilege and the colonial difference **in action.** Colonial difference(s) are the elements of identity in cultures, places, and societies intentionally made *strange* from those with access to power and privilege, who are viewed as belonging and not a threat. The body is made strange via race and/or disability, languages, culture, and customs – based on beliefs about that body. In the remnants of colonialism, strange-making and Othering are part of a larger process of who is of value to society, the economy and politically. Due to our incorporation of the colonial difference into our thoughts, actions, and behaviours, the colonial grid speaks to our 'common sense', meaning-making processes, and people's 'assigned' worth or lack thereof (Carranza 2016). This worth shapes how we perceive race, gender, ethnicity, class, ability, and sexuality. Identity informs the assemblage of the parts and where we have been conditioned to assume people belong.

Conclusion

Canada has used immigration policy to determine who is 'deserving', and who is not based on racialization, worth, economic power along the lines of the colonial grid. The determinations of 'deserving' exist in a long history of colonial roots. Colonial roots have been refashioned into modern-day coloniality that shapes how Canada and Canadians determine who is afforded rights and freedoms both locally and globally. Deservingness extends to emotions, on who can and should experience grief

and joy. Citizenship and legality are some of the foundational elements of belonging. Legal status determines eligibility to work, access services, and move freely within Canada and abroad.

Questions:

What is the Canadian brand, and how have social work and its workers engaged in this ongoing nation-building process?

What structures are most relevant in social work and for you in the helping professions?

How does this impact or shape the assemblage of your identity?

2

Chapter Two: The Colonial Grid and Colonial Conditioning

Abstract: The image of the migrant is a political concept that signifies the beliefs created about people in motion related to place. The 'migrant' is understood through many tropes of expulsion, dispossession, and the illusive search for "a better life." The newcomer, immigrant, refugee, asylum-seeker, displaced person or migrant is often imagined as a fixed category and objectified. Migration status and country of birth act as one of the axes of the colonial grid. The assemblage or convergence of these axes tells a counternarrative to the stranger. This chapter expands on the **colonial grid** and discusses the colonial difference(s) and colonial conditioning. Further, the case study method is introduced.

Key concepts: colonial grid, the colonial difference and colonial conditioning

Introduction

The ***colonial grid*** is produced locally and globally by the interplay of formal and informal structures in a society and is an outcome of colonial differences and colonial conditioning. People's identities and day-to-day experiences exist on the colonial grid and are shaped by it. As people are on the move, so is their colonial grid. As people take their identities with them, they change, and so do their positions, belonging and worth. Different places, geographies and structures remake identity – we may belong in one place but not so much in another. Globalization at all levels impacts the systems of almost all societies across the globe, which play out at the local level – the Glocal (Carranza, 2018). Intentionally uneven, globalization opens new spaces for some, bringing about new connections while further marginalizing the Other. This ongoing marginalization is coloniality in action – favouring advancement in ways that are only accessible in the Global North.

The **colonial grid** refers to the following:

> The direct and subtle, covert and overt ways people are organized along the lines of power and privilege in our psyches. Difference, from whiteness or maleness as an example, is originally structured on the boundaries between the colonizer/colonized and represents the hierarchal logic of race, gender, class, and abilities. It speaks to our 'common sense, meaning-making process and people's worth or lack thereof, which shapes how helpers, including social workers, perceive

the intersections of race, gender, ethnicity, class, ability, and sexuality.

This interpretation of identity (and assessment of worth) shapes how we perceive and interact with people, locating their race, gender, ethnicity, class, ability, and sexuality – in terms of how we understand value and worth. The ways people are organized along the lines of power and privilege that organize the grid necessitates how they engage with their social world and the structural access or exclusion they may or may not encounter. The striations of the grid are the intentions of and maintain the goals of colonialism in the newly formed coloniality. The grid, in part, determines who is successful and allowed to rest, experience pleasure, and even grieve leaving their country of origin.

Due to the constant exposure and ways coloniality seeps into epistemology [knowledge and what we know] and ontology [how we know it], the colonial difference is incorporated into thoughts and meaning-making processes enacted in the day-to-day. What emerges is our 'common sense' and people's 'assigned' orth or lack thereof (Carranza, 2016). Common sense is not neutral; it is the Western gaze embedded in our psyche. According to Matias and Aldern (2021), common sense wields its power through operations of invisibility and normalcy. Under the guise of the ordinary, this way of thinking goes undetected and unchecked. At one point, it was common sense to think that men were more intelligent than women. Common sense was reinforced in scientific and social science research in popular media (Dyer, 2007; Raty & Snellman, 1992). In this way, women's worth was *lower,* which showed up in consideration of their skills, jobs, and pay. Being of less worth prevented women from belonging in specific spaces – management or doctor.

This analysis, while basic or dated in terms of social work discourse and white feminism(s), reveals something in the fluid nature of the colonial grid – race is not mentioned, only gender. The work of the feminist movement, now referred to as white feminism (Carglye, 2018), reified white as the dominant, with Othered identities as add-ons, such as disability and sexuality. As we see the movement of theory – Critical Race (2002) and Intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1992) evolving and influencing discourse, these ideas remain remnants and influence common sense. W.E.B Du Bois (1970) and later Ahmed (2009), along with many scholars of various disciplines, write that while people outside of the self-proclaimed dominant space have been critically engaging with whiteness for decades, it has only been moving towards the centre for a short time – since the late 1990s. While writing about race (DuBois, 1970), race and sexualities (Ahmed, 2009), disability and migration (El-Lahib, 2016) have reinforced the maintenance of colonial logics in people's lives. The disabled body, for example, is not entirely white or the pinnacle of health – which structures entrance to and belonging in Canada (El-Lahib, 2016). (Re)making the immigrants/forced migrants as the stranger in these ways via country of origin, race, and disability fuels stealing, invasions, resource shortages and other narratives amidst encouraging 'Canadians' to want them to *catch-up*. This example is fruitful for analyzing the colonial grid – the systems and structures of immigration regulating who can enter, for how long and their status, with the narratives that influence common sense.

When structures and systems have a clear link to colonization or an extension of (coloniality), this is sometimes easier to identify in some spaces but remains challenging to dismantle (Blackstock, 2009). One reason for this difficulty is related to the co-construction and maintenance of systems that marginalize and organize Canada – education as linked to healthcare, for example. Child protection has been named as a refashioning of residential schools for Indigenous people (Blackstock, 2017), disciplining "the poor" (Jeffrey, 2005) and enforcing assimilation for immigrants/forced migrants (Carranza, 2022). Some families may not have contact with Child Protection, but other families, predominantly Indigenous and Black families, are more likely to; these systems exert powerful control over parents and caregivers. These systems influence how parenting is regulated and what is considered

"good" parenting in Canada (Carranza, 2022). The complexity of child protection/welfare is unparalleled; this example highlights how formal structures form an axis on the colonial grid and seep into 'common sense.' For caring for children, research has found that 'common sense values' is based on the model of the white heteronormative family, age and gender-appropriate behaviours and discipline measures were established during colonialism (Carranza, 2022).

Identities are race(d) and gender(ed) through processes that act as if whiteness is the standard, natural order of the world as if it is common sense (Matias & Aldern, 2020). Operationally, 'common sense' allows privilege and power to go undetected, masking inequalities and marginalization. White men in leadership positions have been normalized. Colonization and modernity created both leadership, or the idea of a hierarchy, and the pursuit of "moving up" or progress, in the image of whiteness and maleness to ensure they seemed better suited to the role; this is the rationale that covers up the well-worn pathway of coloniality that brought them there (Carranza et al., 2023). These processes establish the identity that the stranger is different *from*—the **colonial difference**.

The Colonial Difference and Identity: The colonial difference refers to our collective memory and trauma due to historical oppression and privilege, the resulting wounds, and how these play out in daily life. This difference is structured initially on the boundaries between the colonizer/colonized and is a representation of the hierarchal logic of race. This difference is ranked via ethnicity, shade, gender, class, ability, and others, which are patterned on this difference (Carranza, 2016). How are these concepts central in forming an identity as a "migrant," "forced migrant, "immigrant," "asylum seeker," or "refugee" – when coming from countries of the Global South?

For example, what is known under the colonial moniker – Latin America and the Caribbean are united by what Mingolo (2000) has called the colonial difference. That is an attempt to forge a geography arranged along the axis of exclusion – the violent enforcement of capitalism race logics that hinge on a gender binary. This colonial arrangement attempts to enforce the axis of the colonial grid at the glocal level – where the global meets the local. Despite the end of colonialism, this difference mirrors the colonizer/colonized binary and lives in the collective memory of the Global North – enforced in the South. Historical privilege is cloaked in invisibility, and it informs collective memory, resulting in these injuries being wounds that played out in daily lives. What has emerged from this global design of stratification is the occupation of the "self" or the "Other" – the colonizer/colonized. This binary is never neat.

Colonial Conditioning: Refers to the psychological, conscious and subconscious responses to historically privilege(d) and marginalize(d) contours of the colonial grid within a specific geography at the intersections of the glocal. Further, it relates to individual interpretations of identities – informed by the colonial relationship. Colonial conditioning references how people respond both consciously and unconsciously to and maintain the ideologies of colonialism and colonial identities. Each of us, depending on our axis on the colonial grid, experiences identities based on the colonial difference. There are processes or steps taken to translate contemporary identities (i.e. race and gender) to make meaning, by which people are conditioning us in areas ranging from school to media.

This meaning-making refers to how the "receiver" or viewer perceives the specific position of a person based upon the assemblage of their identity along the colonial grid. The 'colonial condition' – speaks to how we are programmed to perceive people based on our location and theirs. The internalized understanding of who is of 'worth' and what is valued is embedded in the mind. It is a conditioning that creates an inferior understanding of whiteness or the Global North/Western culture. It can manifest as a rejection of ways of being associated with the Global South and a preference for anything from the West

– including customs, cultures and dress that is considered appropriate. How and where people are located is organized by ongoing coloniality, which affects day-to-day life and, in turn, structures social, economic (including labour) and political status. These positions are not stable or fixed and shift depending on the context and system. Under the coloniality of power, identities are continually conditioned to replicate the colonial relationship.

Colonial conditioning in the Global North is considered common sense. Matías and Aldern (2021) posit that common sense wields its power through operations of invisibility and normalcy. Operationally, 'common sense' allows privilege and power to go undetected, masking inequalities and marginalization. At one point, it was common sense to think that men were more intelligent than women. This superiority was reinforced in research, both scientific and social science (Dyer, 1997; Raty & Snellman, 1992). In this way, women's worth was considered lower in skilled jobs, and pay – reflected in their placement on the colonial grid. This ascription of gender prevented women from belonging in specific spaces – management or the medical field. One persistent example is that racialized women, including immigrants/forced migrants are usually not considered leaders (Carranza et al., 2023) and have their belonging constantly challenged in academic spaces (Carranza, 2022).

How these thoughts manifest in tangible outcomes can be seen in behaviours, responses and engagement with people, communities and systems. If we think about our ways of being – making ourselves smaller or softer (often for women, femmes), less loud, or in any way of remaking ourselves as palatable – it is related to colonial conditioning. Masculinities and those identifying may feel/think they need to align with codes of manhood valued in the Global North to fit in and not reproduce stereotypes. Oftentimes, people engage with these roles to fulfill expectations, reduce visibility, and stay safe. Maintaining the colonial relationship. Two of the key concepts that showcase the colonial grid are starting over and experiences of marginalization.

*Starting over: Lack of foreign credential recognition/Canadian Experience***.** The discussion of the lack of foreign credential recognition goes beyond the individual experience of starting over and navigating a new labour market. It is one of the central organizing principles for the colonial grid in Canada. Labour market exclusion hinders re-settlement beyond the economic implications to consequences for citizenship, housing and family functioning. It also maintains Canada's position in the Globalized economy as a place of privilege, marginalizing education and experience in the Global South – demanding people have Canadian Experience in employment and education.

Discrimination, Marginalization and navigating the myths of newcomers: The idea that people came to Canada to 'steal jobs' is a myth experienced by newcomers, as they themselves clearly articulate the struggle to find even survival-based employment. Canadian citizens are noted to be misinformed about the reasons for migration and the processes encountered upon arrival. Forming views on newcomers based on outdated and incorrect misinformation contributes to marginalization and discrimination, leading 'regular' Canadians to engage in racism.

Another example is the protestant work ethic. This method of labour has been galvanized in the Global North, and it emphasizes that diligence, discipline, and frugality result from a person's subscription to the values espoused by the Protestant faith. While there has been a move away from this religion, it remains a capitalist expectation to 'work hard' and 'forgo rest' in favour of financial accumulation. This, too, is a part of colonial conditioning.

Colonial conditioning is a learned process that influences thoughts and, in turn, how people interact. This thinking shifts but is reinforced over time. As a learning process, it can be undone and is often the

focus of decolonial work and critical theories. One way to do so is by examining case studies using the theoretical frameworks of Coloniality of Power, Coloniality of Gender and the colonial grid.

Background: Why Case Studies?

The social work encounter is uniquely political and promises to work towards social justice (Kovach, 2015). Macias (2015) reminds us, when doing and working towards social justice, that the best place to start is in **the materiality of our lives** – our position on the colonial grid – the historical, political, and economic conditions that situate us. Heron (2005) indicates that we must all get uncomfortable examining inequality as we live and work at the juncture of history and socio-political structures that sustain these systems and structures of the ideal body. In this way, we are implicated in social relations (Macias, 2015).

Case studies provide unique insights into both unique and everyday situations from afar. This method allows the reader/learner to critically engage with the scenario while understanding their lens and position on the colonial grid. One of the benefits of case studies is the capacity to explain phenomena and how they emerge in the day–to–day, seek patterns, and make sense of this reality.

The case studies in this book are from my work as a practicing social worker/therapist, researcher, and Professor. I represent discounted knowledge from a marginalized standpoint, entering academia, acting as a therapist, doing research, and working in a leadership role in the community. Elsewhere (Carranza, 2021), I have written about navigating the colonial grid in the classroom. In the social work classroom, whiteness' invisibility makes this analysis challenging, especially for a profession built on tropes of helping and kindness, which is the subtext of teaching. Privilege and whiteness are made visible by the responses to strangeness when encountered. Using reflexivity and story-telling (albeit brief) methods combined with coloniality, I present case studies to learn and challenge the colonial conditioning embedded in the social work encounter.

We disrupt narratives of race and coloniality by telling and learning from these stories. We then resist the silencing effects of whiteness and the visibilization of racialized experiences. Each case represents the stranger – which has implications for learning and working in the area of immigration. By making visible the nuanced day-to-day practices of the colonial grid, we explore how our identities are taken for granted as teaching tools or illuminated within the logics of whiteness as "an exemplar." Our expectations of a particular experience – in this case, the social work encounters – are structured through colonial conditioning in a fundamentally different way based on our assemblages of gender, sexual orientation, and race identity.

To position myself and provide context and nuance to the following case exemplars – I am a member of the Central American diaspora. My identity has historically been a site to know and control – as the Other, the stranger, and the colonial migrant. As a woman in the Central American diaspora, I am connected to the legacy of the "third world," poverty, gender-based oppression, and violence filter the ways that I am seen and engaged with. Within these complexities, I, a racialized female professor, occupy spaces at the margins and the center, which animates the interwoven nature of identities along the colonial grid. As I negotiate this identity – that has access to some privilege, I embody the colonial narratives of my gender and race, which serves to unsettle coloniality. My voice is not represented in mainstream social work, from the classroom to community development work. I teach and challenge historical and current knowledge(s) by questioning and explaining whose voices are represented and who have been excluded when using these practice approaches. Our ongoing colonial conditioning influences my engagement with people as a practicing social worker. In these case studies, we can trace

the governing technologies of the social work encounter. These themes work as ways to respond and determine what needs to be done, which codifies how 'we' engage in all encounters as social workers. Over time, these operating methods become regulatory, a well-worn pathway – the 'right' way to think and act.

Case: Luca

Some guiding questions:

How do you understand the colonial grid in Luca's narrative?

How would you name and describe your (as the helpers) position on the grid and Luca's?

What are the historical factors at play?

Luca came to Canada from a country in Africa (name withheld for confidentiality). The political turmoil in his country and his affiliation with a political group forced him to flee his country and seek asylum in a neighbouring country, leaving behind his wife and three sons. Due to the extensive networks of such political groups, his life was threatened while in the refugee camp. Once again, he found himself running for his life further away from his family. What he thought would be temporary turned into a permanent state of liminality. While in Europe, he moved from country to country, living in various refugee camps, as he remained afraid his enemies would find him again. After 13 years, he made his way to Canada. He was able to sponsor his family after three years. However, the family reunification was not as smooth and easy as he had hoped for. He had not realized he was not the same man, husband and father that his family remembers. His children were now teenagers, and his wife was not the same woman he remembered.

While living in various refugee camps, he learned Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, French and Turkish. He worked as a translator for a settlement organization and became highly respected as a leader in his community. He stated that his wife did not like the time he spent with community members. He reported that during his time away from the family, he learned to look after himself and live independently, which she intensely did not like. His culinary skills developed quite well. So did his abilities to keep a household running. He reported that his wife accused him of 'not being a man a more'. He reported finding himself feeling lost and not knowing how to respond to her.

He added that he felt very stressed due to his home situation and because he was passed down for permanent employment very often. He was still determining the reasons. His reference letters were strong. So, was his performance. He worried about his accent, as one of the professionals he provided translation services to complained to the agency that his "accent was too heavy and it was difficult to understand him." He noted that since then, his assignments have decreased. He is now worried that he will not be able to provide for his family. To remedy the situation, he was working very hard to "drop" it. He was attending some enunciation classes at a local college.

Conclusion:

The axis of the colonial grid suggests a grand narrative of the 'proper' way to live, love and flourish in Canada and the Global North. Established during colonization, the colonial grid provides insights into who can more freely and be accepted in various spaces. Reflexivity, social location and unpacking our identity serve to acknowledge privilege and develop new ways to navigate the spaces of the Other.

Coloniality and the making of the colonial grid force us to confront the historical logics of race and gender and where it has placed us today.

The next chapter provides an exemplar of placing oneself on the colonial grid. Haleemah Shah explores how a critical part of fulfilling our roles as social workers is engaging in continuous self-reflection, learning, and locating ourselves in the contexts of our work and environments. Especially in a profession where whiteness has been and continues to be an organizing principle, understanding the colonial processes that permeate present-day practice is a necessary part of entering social workspaces and approaching interactions with other practitioners and service users.

3

Chapter Three: The ability to assimilate: Understanding myself through the colonial grid

The ability to assimilate: Understanding myself through the colonial grid

Haleemah Shah, B.S.W

Introduction

A critical part of fulfilling our roles as social workers is engaging in continuous self-reflection, learning, and locating ourselves in the contexts of our work and environments. Especially in a profession where whiteness has been and continues to be an organizing principle, understanding the colonial processes that permeate present-day practice is a necessary part of entering social workspaces and approaching interactions with other practitioners and service users. The colonial grid offers a map to locate oneself in relationship to coloniality and speaks to colonial differences, informed by "people's 'assigned' worth or lack thereof" (Carranza, 2022a). It exemplifies the manner through which coloniality impedes our consciousness, the interpretation of our and others' identities, and whether they do or do not belong. It delineated normative understandings of power as unidirectional and reminds us that we arrive to the profession differently, and our identities are taken up according to our locations. In the following discussion, I will locate myself on the colonial grid and discuss the processes that have informed my access and proximity to power. While there are a number of historical processes that have shaped mine and my family's life chances and outcomes, I will focus on my belonging as measured through my family's migration journey and participation in the Canadian labour market, and my life experiences and interactions as a visibly Muslim woman.

The belonging of migrants as measured through labour and skill valuation

Ideations of my belonging can be traced back to the British Crown's rule over the Indian subcontinent which is significant to how my family has organized themselves. Following the Great Partition of 1947, my mother's family remained in Hyderabad, India, while my paternal side lived in what had been the Indian state of East Bengal, which separated into East Pakistan after Partition.

For an in-depth discussion of **The Great Partition of 1947** see the work of Dr. Haimanti Roy *The Partition of India, Oxford India Short Introductions* 2018; Dr Gyanendra Pandey *Remembering Partition* 2001.

My father's family would live through another 20 years considered Pakistani before achieving independence in 1971 as the nation of Bangladesh (Pandey, 2001). Meanwhile, my maternal family reconciled with new identity conflation as Indian Muslims and experienced significant loss in social capital and patriarchal figures due to violence during Partition

The term 'social capital' is a way of conceptualising the intangible resources of community, shared values and trust upon which we draw in daily life. From a political economy standpoint, these networks and relationships facilitate access to opportunities, knowledge and networks that build economic and financial resources.

My maternal grandmother was encumbered with the responsibility to find a viable *rishta*, or proposal, to secure her future. She was successful, and following her marriage to my grandfather, she became the first of her family to immigrate to Canada in the mid-1970s through the newly introduced Canadian **points system**.

Decades before my grandparents arrived in Canada, a rise in Punjabi Sikhs settling in British Columbia led to the Canadian government making amendments to their *Immigration Act* in 1908 with the "*continuous journey regulation*", prohibiting any people from entry who did not arrive in Canada directly from their country of origin. Direct passage meant that there could be no stops for any reason along the route (Ralston, 1999). This change heavily impacted South Asians as no through trips from India to Canada were available. Canada would further regulate through a quota system in 1951 limiting South Asian immigration to 150 Indians and 100 Pakistanis per year (Ralston, 1999, p. 36). In 1962, race-based criteria was eliminated as well as classifications of 'preferred' and 'non-preferred' migrants. A human capital approach – or the point system – was adopted to advocate for immigrants with higher education levels and professional experience (Ralston, 1999).

Human Capital consists of the knowledge, skills, and health that people invest in and accumulate throughout their lives. In immigration is viewed in terms of a benefit to the receiving country.

The points system would eventually also determine my then-teenage father and his family as eligible to come to Canada from Bangladesh in the mid-1990s. While the points system claims to avoid measuring value based on race or ethnicity, it has disproportionately disadvantaged migrants from the Global South whose qualifications are considered less valuable than western credentials. The colonial grid is understood as organizing belonging and distinguishing between dominant and non-dominant groups; a distinction justified through the logic of race, gender, class, and ability (Carranza, 2022a). This distinction is designated through the classification of people who share similar or identical genotypic or phenotypic traits as inferior or superior to people who share other traits: it is a logic that perceives all difference as digressive. Through this, people who deviate from the dominant group can be categorized as anomalies and threats to a supposed natural order; their "deficiencies" are perceived as direct products of their deviance. Racialized, female, gender-diverse, disabled, and folks who share lower socioeconomic status are labelled as inferior based on these characteristics that are assumed to predispose them to less aptitude, intelligence, and power. These assumptions allow for the dominant white society to categorize non-dominant groups as their subordinates and justify their own sovereignty by suggesting all other groups are naturally inclined to ineptitude and would threaten to expose the rest of society to precarity. The immigration process upholds these attitudes by suggesting that in order for

migration to Canada – a settler-colonial state – to be permitted, migrants must indicate an acceptable proximity to whiteness and a distance from any possible deviance.

The **points system** is an example of this supposed logic that organizes education, professional experience, and skill inside or outside the margins of whiteness. It is a form of knowledge-making that ranks white knowledge as infallible, while other forms of knowledge are rejected to maintain Canada's colonial and capitalist character. Proximity to Eurocentric ways of thinking and knowing is further considered reflective of the migrant's ability to assimilate, strengthening their access to economic and social advancement (Carranza, 2022b). People with disabilities are further excluded and marginalized in the immigration process and seen as economic and social burdens (El-Lahib & Wehbi, 2012). Tangible cases brought forward to the Supreme Court of Canada demonstrate situations where families with children who had intellectual disabilities were denied application only after the medical examination. Disability rights and advocacy groups appealed to the Court on the basis that Citizenship and Immigration Canada had made their decision based on an assumption that these children would pose a burden on medical and social service systems, eventually winning a victory (El-Lahib & Wehbi. Disabled folks' bodies are constructed as worthless due to limitations exacerbated by the Canadian state, often preventing them from attaining secure employment or accessing accessible educational and skills training. Since migrant belonging is assessed according to labour contribution, disabled migrants are positioned on the outskirts of the colonial grid and made less likely to be approved for residency.

As I follow the path to becoming a third-generation university graduate, I am cognizant of the fact I am considered a product of 'deserved' migration, with my life trajectory having been shaped by my paternal grandfather's access to western education, receiving his Ph.D. from a British university. My proximity to **professionalism**, a product of whiteness, is directly linked to his and my parents' ability to complete post-secondary and their avoidance of the same labour market exclusion used to organize the colonial grid in Canada.

Professionalism is a standard with a set of beliefs about how one should operate in the workplace- a culture of perfection, conformity, and homogeneity. While professionalism seemingly applies to everyone, it is used to widely police and regulate people of color in various ways including hair, tone, and food scents (Goodridge, 2022).

They create a space built for the progression of only one type of person. Attainment of western credentials and western knowledge suggests that the migrant is less likely to deviate from the status quo or "misrepresent" the dominant population. According to the colonial grid, I am allowed to belong based on my lack of disability, my academic attainment, and my involvement in the 'skilled' labour market. The burden to prove 'deservingness' often placed on 'unskilled' migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers is not offloaded onto me, with an external assumption that my family deserved their entry into Canada and socio-economic advancement through merit. In reality, we have simply had access to forms of training that other migrants have not, allowing us access to power and privilege through conformity to western knowledge and labour systems – recognized in policy.

The victimization of Muslim women and our belongingness

According to the western gaze, a product of colonialism that has since expanded to reflect present-day meaning-making, the white body is assumed to belong, is heteronormative, and unmarked by race or disability (Carranza, 2022b). I speak to my belonging as somebody who simultaneously occupies three visible identity markers: racialized, Muslim, and a woman. These three intersections produce all my

interactions and cannot be separated from each other when exploring my belonging. As a child, the frequent inquiry of "where are you from?" confused me, having been born in Canada and never left the country. When I first chose to put on the *hijab* at age 11, discomfort became a familiar companion as I participated in extracurriculars, often being the only non-white and almost certainly the only visibly Muslim person in the room. Growing up in Alberta, it became commonplace for adult, white men to approach me in public and ask, "why are you wearing that?" I recall being 12 and a man on a park bench calling after me, "do you like Canada?" to which I had said nothing, confused as to why he was asking *me*. I look back on these queries and recognize them as accusatory: an expectation that I should justify my existence in shared space with them and an entitlement to know why I deviated from what they felt people should look like. As Muslim and racialized women fail to conform to white ideals of femininity and self-expression, they are considered 'deviant' and are not welcomed in a variety of spaces.

In a post-9/11 world, the Muslim body has been constructed as a challenge to the dominant, white one and fear and loathing of Muslims has become embedded in the western psyche to frame Muslims as direct oppositions to democracy, civility, and peace. While Muslim men are positioned as hypermasculine, aggressive, and prone to violence, Muslim women are positioned as passive, vulnerable, and in need of rescuing from western entities (Nayak, 2006). As argued by Edward Said in his articulation of orientalism, the distinction between the west and the 'Orient' or 'Other' is

According to Edward Said (1978), the "Orient" is a colonial invention. Orientalism is based upon binaries that define the "East" (the Orient) as in opposition to the "West" (the occident). Foreign and familiar, uncivilized and civilized, primitive and progressive, colonizer and colonized, self and Other. It is a system of representation through which the West produced the image of the East as its opposite — a strange, backward, barbaric land, steeped in mysticism and danger. The West hinges on the East to signal what it is, through what it is not.

distinguished through the 'Other's' lack of rational and humane practices and culture (Nayak, 2006). In the west, this has culminated in a necessity to protect 'Other' women from 'Other' men and Islamic – or 'Other – practices, such as *hijab*-wearing.

As belonging on the colonial grid is measured through ascribed value and assumptions of who deserves privilege and pleasure, those who deviate from dominant hegemony and presentation are perceived as 'alien' and in need of assimilation to achieve those comforts. Assimilation is an integral colonial process that defines all identities as either parallel or in opposition to whiteness (Carranza, 2022b). Failure to assimilate has led to the victimization of Muslim women, especially *hijabis*, preventing them from being seen as claimants of their individual experiences, instead becoming assumed sites of violence and paternalism. The colonial grid organizes people along boundaries of power and dominance (Carranza, 2022a), and for Muslim women, power and authority are seen as unattainable by dominant groups who have historically had unobstructed access to power. Muslim women are construed as unable to belong or discontent in their bodies, but beyond that, they should not *want* to belong in their bodies: they should instead want to be rescued and liberated from 'Other' practices. When Muslim women exist in spaces occupied by dominant groups, such as sport, academia, art, and more, they are often required to prove their agency and discount accusations of oppression. For Black, Indigenous, visibly racialized, disabled, and queer Muslim women, the spaces they are welcome in constricts even further. Our very existence is perceived as direct opposition to the ideals of whiteness and Canadian assimilation.

Conclusion

The colonial grid can be understood as the ways historical and colonial processes have impeded our consciousness to construct interactions with others and our valuation of their worth and belonging in shared spaces. While the ability to assimilate to labour, class, and professionalism has been achieved by myself and my family, assimilation to cultural and religious norms has not been. I am well aware that I will never enter an exchange without the other person observing me based on previously constructed assumptions and biases. In the same way, my meaning-making impedes my interactions with others and the expectations I hold of them. As I move forward in social work, constantly unpacking my location on the colonial grid and how this impacts the spaces I enter is essential to fulfilling the role of a social worker and striving for social justice.

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4

Chapter Four: A Cultural Mosaic: Canada's Multicultural Policy Then and Now

Abstract: This chapter focuses on the philosophical underpinnings of citizenship and belonging. It further explores how social work engages with immigration by embracing multiculturalism, rooted in liberalism ("respect for difference")

Key concepts: Multiculturalism, monoculture, medical model, 'professionalism' and the stranger

Introduction

Countries of the Global South are constructed as not advanced in domains of the economy, politics and human rights. The story of the Global North depends on the belief that the lack of advancement has led to human rights abuses and other events, such as civil wars, rendering them as needing to be saved. At the same time, “needing to be saved” does not automatically translate to deserving. Individuals must be scrutinized to ensure the validity of their claims and the appropriate use of Canadian resources. This scrutiny contributes to the oversimplified idea that the Global South lacks economic advancement, education, opportunity, and safety, which **pushes** them out, and the Global North **pulls** people in with promises of a “better life.” Governments, organizations, and individuals position themselves as ‘helpers’ who move people and countries along the linear pathway of advancement. Terms such as ‘backwards’ and ‘uncivilized’ have been used to signal the starting point of modernity and civilization. This idea has one pinnacle or standard for success – capitalism, individualism, and a focus on human rights. Social work, as a profession, has been guilty of this imperial knowledge and pushing the modernity agenda (Carranza, 2021; Razack, 2009).

Despite the violent settler history that remains today (Blackstock, 2012), Canada has attempted to popularize a multicultural image of “protection and tolerance” for immigrants/forced migrants (Johnstone & Lee, 2020.p. 71). The image of ‘protection’ was built up by claims that Canada was a ‘safe’ destination for the underground railroad, draft dodgers, and those forcibly displaced (Johnstone & Lee, 2020; Carranza, 2017). Canada has claimed to be a ‘nation of immigrants’, arrogantly claiming worldliness and positive resettlement when reception is tolerant at best (Bhuyan et al., 2017, p. 17). The Canadian brand is crafted as a beacon of safety, hope and opportunity and has very publicly claimed to welcome large scale amounts of asylum seekers from El Salvador in the 1980s (Carranza et al., 2022), Syria in 2016 (Jeyapal, 2018) and at the time of this writing, those fleeing Afghanistan.

Social policies on immigration depend on understanding those arriving in Canada from the Global South as ‘the stranger/Other.’ As the stranger, knowledge, habits, customs and other non-Western ways of life are known and marked as different. The descendants of British and French settlers and other white countries are positioned as Canada’s natural inhabitants and citizens. The goal is to create an environment that encourages some (adopting Canadian social expectations) and demands (learning English or French) from others. Racialized immigrants/forced migrants the Global South are required to adapt, resettle and/or assimilate into the mainstream and dominant space which means, giving up markers of difference. This chapter explores how selective immigration advances nation-building and how Canada arrived at the official policies of multiculturalism. For Canada, multiculturalism is not just a policy approach. It is a national identity: difference is welcomed and celebrated here. What needs to be addressed is that there remains an idealized norm, mainstream or the dominant.

The landscape of multiculturalism is embedded in the Canadian psyche and a one-dimensional image of Canada as a ‘friendly’ nation of people that say ‘eh!’. However, strangeness is crucial in maintaining notions of Canadian-ness [white] as the norm and the ideal citizen. Building and relying on this image allows Canadians the capacity to shift and grow amidst an evolving world. They can be drivers of international business, peacekeepers, and innovators. Migration and arrival freeze the stranger as a stable identity – meaning those from the Global South are always ‘in need’ (of safety, economic security, or human rights), which Canada can provide. This discussion focuses on how multiculturalism hinges on the concept of ‘the Stranger’ (Ahmed, 2016).

Policy in Social Work

Social policy is a regulatory force in Canada. Diving into the philosophical underpinnings of citizenship and belonging shows that social policy does not exist in a vacuum. Public discourse and opinion, along with economic policies and other considerations, play a dominating role in deciding which factors are brought to the political arena and who is chosen to represent them. Intertwined, public discourse and social policy shape who is and is not 'deserving' of legal and social citizenship. Further, policy determines which countries and citizens have met the threshold to be considered 'in need of protection.'

The metamorphosis of policy into practice is not the focus; instead, it is how the policy *environment* shapes policymakers' perceptions and how Canadians view it. Carrier and Sethi (2020) discuss the importance of challenging the divide between policy and practice to engage in social justice work. Sourcing the structural roots of oppression and marginalization can inform the work with individuals and communities by locating the context of their experience and direction for advocacy work (Carrier & Sethi, 2020). Values in policy are never neutral. These values were demonstrated by the violent dispossession of lands, enacted through policy when British settlers arrived in Canada (Lawrence, 2002). Jeyapal (2018) notes the importance of policy in immigration discourse as reproducing ongoing coloniality, maintained through instruments that are race(d), gendered and class-based. The examples include the points system, temporary foreign workers (targeted to farm workers from the Caribbean or Central America) and caregiver programs (often women from the Global South providing childcare). These mechanisms determine who can enter (legally), gets a pathway to citizenship, and can/cannot belong.

The profession's history is intertwined with maintaining the structural roots of oppression and claims to social justice. Understanding immigrant/forced migrant reception and the role of 'the stranger' sets the stage for discussing how social work has worked within and against the projected image and actual practices of Canadian multiculturalism. As social work has many areas of practice, some of this engagement strengthened the image of 'the stranger,' while other efforts shifted the discourse to discuss the whiteness of Canada.

The '*discourses of immigration*' will refer to the policies about resettlement, those living the process, and how immigration is spoken about. An important note is that part of this discourse uses current and historical legal terminology such as 'refugee,' 'newcomer,' asylum seeker,' or 'immigrant' to classify people within the migration process. It must be recognized that these terms impact how people are viewed and engaged with and in their own lived processes of migration and navigating belonging (Carranza, 2017).

Terminology also dictates access to services, identification, housing and work. For example, social service organizations provide supportive housing to refugee claimants for a time-limited period during their resettlement. Access to supportive or geared-to-income housing is more complex for other immigration categories, such as "Humanitarian and Compassionate ground" applications.

Immigration discourse in policy and public consciousness often recreates the colonial encounter in ways that frame Canada in an 'us' (safety and security) 'them' (violent and threatening) binary. Canada/ Canadians' friendly ways are known and thought to be globally celebrated. Meanwhile, those migrating are considered foreign, defined by the stereotypes of their country. Usually underdeveloped and/or a geographically specific type of violence. One way 'foreignness' is codified in policy is the racialization process via categorizations of 'visible minorities' and blanket categorizations (i.e. South Asian). This racializing process is combined with how legal status defines immigrant/forced migrant belonging. It is vital to explore how the policy landscape shapes who is normalized, who can become

a citizen, and, more importantly, a Canadian.

Notions of the Stranger

Jantzi (2014) contends that throughout history, Canada has sought to maintain a white European national identity. Building this identity required an 'in'/desirable and an 'out'/undesirable group that has been fluid, with some stable elements. One method was to manufacture the narrative of immigrants as, at minimum, not adhering to Canada's 'way of life' and, at worst, a danger to public safety. This idea of pending dangers creates the need to securitize borders to maintain Canada as a safe haven – keeping violence out (Bannerji, 2000; Jantzi, 2015; Jeyapal, 2015). Constructing the colonial grid along the axis of belonging has been foundational to Canada's colonial narrative (Carranza, 2016; Jeyapal, 2015). Exclusion is justified by the stories of 'other' countries, people, groups and identities, as dissimilar to 'us' and strange.

Markers of difference across policy, cultural, social and economic domains are known *as* strange, not welcome, threatening and dangerous (Ahmed, 2016). The definition of strange shifts, moving from violent, over-sexualized to terrorist and/or lazy, is rooted in geopolitical and historical realities.

According to Bannerji (2000), to maintain the hierarchy of race, Canada has cemented identities by establishing definitive differences on a 'moral,' 'cultural,' and 'ethnic' level. Culture is idealized as a group's shared identity or identities based on shared traits, customs, values, norms, and behaviour patterns that are socially transmitted and highly influential in shaping individual and collective beliefs, experiences, and worldviews. However, culture is often limited to the one-dimensional characteristics of race and ethnicity shared by members of a specific group, which are often delineated into coded visual markers (Azzopardi & McNeill, 2016). Critiques of policies that hinge on culture as a marker of difference suggest that these perceptions 'freeze' those from the Global South in their constructed cultural traditions (Bannerji, 2000). Racialization and securitization conjoin in constructing and maintaining these constructions of the 'foreign' characteristics of immigrants and refugees from the Global South.

Welcome, or not, to Canada

The 2016 image of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau with a family seeking asylum from Syria stating, "You are home now," and the tweet, "To those fleeing persecution, terror & war, Canadians will welcome you, regardless of your faith. Diversity is our strength #WelcomeToCanada"

This rhetoric represents the warmth and acceptance of Canadian

resettlement while blanketing the less-than-welcoming reality (Harding & Jeyapal, 2018). Migration has always had a place on the political agenda and is increasingly constrictive and militarized to keep people out. Opinion surveys may not be wholly representative of the Canadian public. However, opinion surveys indicate a discrepancy between abstractly held values and beliefs of multiculturalism and its practical application (Walker & Zuberi, 2019). What the data suggests, to a certain extent, is that Canada is not fully committed to multiculturalism in practice and not wholly accepting of racialized immigrants/forced migrants. This, too, is felt in the unactualized promises of migration for those who may not choose to be on the move (Walker & Zuberi, 2019).

Public discourse on immigration – the formal acceptance and informal belonging processes – occur along the colonial grid. The idealized white body (that conforms to Anglo norms) promoted for migration is not just unmarked by race. Canada has a long history of denying entry to people with disabilities/disabled people, Transmen and Transwomen and 2SLGBTQIA+ people. In immigration discourses, bodies are assigned worth. To be 'of value,' one must be aligned with gender and heteropatriarchal norms, healthy, and most importantly, productive in the capitalist economy. One example is the enforcement of policies that deny disabled people/people with disabilities entry to Canada, especially those coming from countries of the Global South (El-Yahib, 2015). To be considered desirable, one can advance the economy and can quickly adapt and 'fit in.' Whereas those who are racialized are constructed as needing time to 'catch up.' Catching up is a code for various resettlement tasks, from learning the language to re-establishing their profession. According to some, it also means doing the most to adopt 'Canadian values' (Walker & Zuberi, 2019). Migration streams have also ensured segments of the population are easily deportable – from temporary foreign workers whose status depends on their employer to those convicted of crimes. The following discusses some of Canada's policy roots and public discourse that have led to the image of multiculturalism popularized today.

Policy roots of immigration. Immigration favoured white men, providing access to citizenship and belonging (Thobani, 2000). European White women were welcomed as wives and mothers. Racialized men were restricted to physical labour while being forced to assimilate in areas of language and customs. Women from "not preferred countries" were almost entirely excluded (Thobani, 2000). These early practices were connected to the ongoing colonial violence towards Indigenous people and attempts at erasure of any perceived 'difference' from whiteness. McLaren (1990) indicates this was termed 'race betterment' and the avoidance of 'race suicide.' Embedded in policy, immigration workers denied any persons deemed unlikely to assimilate (Henry et al., 1995). The framing of immigration has always been to meet the needs of those migrating – providing opportunities for moving up, safety and 'a better life'. From its inception, immigration has been viewed as a process that must be controlled, with the thrust of resettlement being assimilative (Jakubowski, 1996). Looking back highlights how policies provided the foundation for the colonial grid in Canada. Initially, the goal was to create and maintain a white, Christian, monocultural identity in what would become the imagined community of Canada (Anderson, 2016; Carranza, 2021; Johnstone & Lee, 2020). Control did not end at the border. Nations, cities and even small towns were to build upon a shared identity of whiteness, Christianity and individualism.

Canada established itself as a nation-state by welcoming 'preferred' immigrants from Great Britain, the United States, France and some northern European nations over 'non-preferred' countries (Italy, Poland, Greece) or historically excluded groups (those from Japan, China, India and people who had been enslaved) (Bhuyan et al., 2017). Race and immigration are locked into capitalist expansion. Canada's immigration and refugee policies are shaped by the economic needs within which they emerge (Simmons, 1992). In the first iterations of the *Immigration Act* of 1869, Canada claimed an

"open door policy" with the goal of being a European farming country. *The Act* prevented "the landing of pauper or destitute immigrants" (Atkey, 1990, p. 59) and explicitly excluded those with disabilities, illness and people who had been convicted of a crime. Overt measures were spread through the Act to ensure that 'undesirables' were excluded on legal grounds (Jeyapal, 2018). These exclusions fueled Canada's economic competitive edge. Migrants were considered a good fit, partly due to their adherence to the protestant work ethic and ability to advance Canada economically. Most importantly, their whiteness (Bhuyan et al., 2017). The insistence on British 'stock' and traditions was central to the (imagined) nationhood of Canada – codified in the "Nationality Preference System" (Simmons, 1990).

During economic expansion, immigration was broader applicants of workers and middle and upper-class applications. For example, during the late 1800s, when recruitment efforts failed to produce the large numbers of British and preferred nationalities required to settle the prairies, the boundaries of 'desirable' were expanded. The economic need expanded acceptance to include people from Ukraine, Italy and Poland (Jakubowski, 1996). In this iteration of policy and public imagination, white immigrants from previously excluded countries were labelled 'superior stock.' Superior stock was code for being apt to assimilate and be accepted (Elliot & Fleras, 1996, p.290).

The '*white only*' clause in the Canadian Immigration Act gave the parliamentary cabinet the authority to prohibit any persons based on race or country of origin from coming to Canada (Johnstone, 2015). Prohibition was to avoid "their peculiar customs" and "an inability to become readily assimilated," saturating Canadian public discourse. The fear was that if the difference was normalized, it would challenge what is and is not whiteness in Canada (Bhuyan et al., 2017, p. 67). In 1911, the government implemented a policy restricting Black people from the United States from coming to Canada, placing sanctions on any person or company assisting them. The word 'race' has strategically appeared and disappeared in legislation since its inception (Jakubowski, 1996). "Race" first emerged as a prohibitive/restrictive legal category in Section 38(c) of the Immigration Act of 1910 and amended in 1919 to include "nationality" (Hawkins, 1989, p. 17). Jakubowski (1996) identifies this inclusion as the first policy iteration of xenophobia.

When migration streams were needed to meet the needs of the workforce capacity, the urgency of the shortage overrode the desire for a monoculture. Recruitment began for expendable workers who could be exploited for manual and domestic labour. Beginning with those from China, migration included the $25 entry fee (sometimes more), known as the "Head Tax." Canada collected $22 million from 1886-1923 (legislation abolished in 1947), preventing those without the financial means from migrating. Despite European migration dwindling, labour shortages and international pressure to accept humanitarian and refugee applications, this policy continued to prevent non-white immigration. However, it was edited to be preventative but in a more cloaked fashion (Irving et al., 1995).

Exceptions were made for 'non-skilled labour,' later deemed indentured. One example is those from Japan arriving to work on the TransCanada railroad. This form of labour remains today, with time-limited work programs like the Seasonal Agricultural Program or the Caregiver Program. People are tied to one employer and have limited to no benefits despite paying taxes and almost no pathway to citizenship. Productivity and participation in these programs depend on physical ability, and gender is targeted towards people from the Global South. Each program creates a category of migration that is easily expendable and can be revoked at any moment (Jeyapal, 2018).

The Canadian Pacific Railway became a significant driver of race in law and policy (Henry, 1995).

The Chinese Immigration Act of 1922 (until 1947) prevented anyone from Asia from coming who did not respond to labour needs (Johnstone & Lee, 2020). During this time, over 15,000 labourers from Asian countries were admitted to build the railway. In public discourse, workers from China were marginally accepted because of the shortage and low-cost labour – but were heavily controlled in work and personal lives (Triadafilopoulos, 2007). Once the railroad was complete and workers were looking for new jobs, competition rose, and the 'acceptance' of racialized immigrants/forced migrants went drastically down (Jakubowski, 1996). Further, they were surveilled, housing restricted to certain areas and experienced racism in their daily lives (Triadafilopoulos, 2007).

These clauses were not the only ones. Before 1967, when the points system was implemented, numerous exclusionary race-based clauses existed. People from India and Pakistan were limited to 100-150 entries per year until 1962, and the "Gentleman's Agreement" with Japan was limited to 400 people per year. The racist beliefs of Nazi Germany also fueled who was allowed entry, despite Canada's fight against fascism. As Gaudet (2001) indicates, during the years when the Nazis were in power in Germany (and immediately afterwards), Canadian immigration policy was actively anti-Semitic. Canada's record for accepting Jewish people fleeing the Holocaust is among the worst in the Western world. One official summed up Canadian policy towards Jewish asylum-seekers: "None is too many" (Gaudet, 2001).

An 'out' group mentality has been achieved through policy – based on race, geography, religion, and other shifting 'undesirable' characteristics. One example is in 2001, post 9/11 attacks in the United States, Canada reformed the *Immigration Act* to provide new powers to border and law officials to detain landed immigrants as security threats. In 2004, the method of arrival was further securitized, preventing refugee claims from those who arrived on a travel visa. By exclusion, the borders of the 'in' group are established around the degree of integrating visually, culturally and linguistically and follow the rules of the arrival and application process. This marks the 'out' group based on race, geography and other 'non-preferred' elements – defining their characteristics and re-making their strangeness while favouring the 'in' group (Thobani, 2000).

For asylum claims prior to WWI and WWII, Canada chose to keep the definition of a "migrant" ambiguous and delayed signing the UN Refugee Convention in 1951 (Sana, 2019). By prolonging signatory status, Canada did not have to adhere to Convention definitions and allowed the provision of temporary status for migrants – making people easily deportable. Signed in 1969, Canada was forced to broaden immigration from a nation-building and economic focus to one that included humanitarian efforts. Canada was now responsible for protecting migrants seeking refuge and asylum as a requirement of their signature (Bissett, 1986). The Convention simplified the definition of a refugee and clarified who was to be protected.

The post–World War era of the 1960s marked a decisive shift in Canada's maintenance of an 'out' group from a legal and appearance standpoint. The global economy shifted, and the international focus was on human rights (Triadafilopoulos, 2007). Thobani (2000) noted that race exclusion became challenging to sustain for several reasons: the dismantling of colonial rule in formerly colonized countries of the Global South; scientific racism was losing ground due to the horrors of the Holocaust; the Civil Rights movement(s) in the U. S and around the world; and racialized people in Canada organizing against racist immigration discourses (p.17). According to Hawkins (1989), changing to a non-discriminatory policy approach did not promote an anti-racist Canada. Instead, to maintain status in the United Nations, which, without this adoption of policy, Canada's interests would eventually be at odds. Claiming a non-discriminatory approach while controlling who can enter, the "Comprehensive Ranking Systems" (known as the points system) came into force in 1967

(Hawkins, 1989). The points system [in theory] determines eligibility for those who 'choose' or are not forcibly displaced to move to Canada, namely economic migrants. In 1971, in pursuit of making all Canadians feel valued, the government promoted the policy of multiculturalism to ensure cultural freedoms, break down stereotypes, and reduce discrimination. This policy drove forward an idea of equal but different, which came shortly after the race 'preferred' system was transformed into the universal points system (Nupur & Slade, 2011). For those seeking asylum, legislation has followed a different course.

The legal terminology for people seeking asylum in Canada has changed throughout legislation, including refugees and people applying on humanitarian and compassionate grounds. Canada previously had a framework related to human rights for defining which countries do and do not produce refugees, as seen in previous policy iterations of *Designated Country of Origin* (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2021). Increasingly, people are being forcibly displaced in ways that are not recognized in national policy and on the international stage – for example, climate change, gang-related violence, criminality and gender-based violence. However, each of these is related to colonization and ongoing coloniality globally. Immigration discourse in Canada – both policy and public opinion – has categorized refugees as 'deserving' and not deserving based on a range of factors such as nationality, ethnicity, race, country of origin, gender identities and sexuality. Deserving has meant that they are 'worth' safety and public funds. To be an 'authentic' refugee, one must be in dire need, vulnerable and without agency (Sana, 2019). This assessment is complex and lacks an understanding of how 'refugee-producing countries' are often previously colonized and continue to be exploited by the Global North. Canada's immigration and resettlement system and public opinion often consider claimants "deserving/ needs to be saved" or trying to "abuse the Canadian system."

Thobani (2000) notes that the language of non-discrimination in immigration policy, in theory, lives up to this goal. However, both the points system and the process of claiming asylum remain embedded in gendered and racist practices. Already having established the whiteness and Britishness of Canada, reforms to the *Immigration Act* (1976) sought to strengthen the "cultural and social fabric" and the "bilingual character of Canada." (Thobani, 2000, p. 18). The Bilingual Commission of Canada ensured that policy dictated English and French as the national languages and cultures.

Immigration reforms cemented whiteness as Canada's **founding** identity.

Asylum claims or applying for entrance into Canada are complicated and vary by originating country. Currently, people arriving in Canada or already in the country make an application to the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (IRB) as Convention Refugees or Persons in Need of Protection.

Outside of Canada, under the Refugee and Humanitarian Resettlement Program, people are to use a referral program (by the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), a designated referral organization, or a private sponsorship group) to facilitate asylum claims. How refugee status is determined, the validity of asylum claims, and which countries are refugee-producing is a constantly shifting ground.

One way to see the connections between social policy and public discourse is in the Government of Canada's (GoC) publications and gray literature. In these documents, "Most Canadians" is used to signify the public opinion of the majority and strategically attempts to build or appeal to a sense of collective values. For example, until 2019, Canada had a list of *Designated Countries of Origin* that"valued justice, protected human rights and did not produce refugees." On the Immigration and Citizenship website, it states, "Most Canadians recognize that there are places in the world where it is

less likely for a person to be persecuted compared to other areas. However, many people from these places try to claim asylum in Canada but are later found not to need protection. Too much time and too many resources are spent reviewing these unfounded claims" (GoC, 2017). These statements activate a sense of "what Canadians know" and "what Canadians want," which is fiscal responsibility and the rejection of those potentially taking advantage. This list also highlights how Canada defines "in need of protection" vs the on-the-ground reality. For example, Mexico is no longer on the list in 2024, but in 2022, it had the highest number of refugee claims after Haiti (IRB, 2023).

The Points system in action

The desire for some degree of heterogeneity remains today in the imagined community of Canada. With some differences tolerated, fashion and food are examples, but the essential pieces must change. 'Catching up' is often related to assimilating into ways of life in Canada and reinforces the colonial relationship – those from the Global North are more "advanced." One such example is how education and professions from the Global North can be easily transferred while restricting countries of the Global South. Credentials are deemed not good enough, and people need to upgrade or catch up their skills to the level of modern countries (Sakamoto, 2017). There is also a requirement for 'Canadian Experience' in applications. Applicants who are not applying for humanitarian, compassion or refuge are assessed and receive points for education, language and work history – the more points, the increased chance of acceptance (Citizenship and Immigration, 2020). 'Canadian experience' eases the transition into the economy where people can gain employment quicker. Obtaining 'Canadian experience' is complex; one must have a previous work history that aligns with Canada's – transferrable skills and/or education that is considered on par (Bhuyan et al., 2017). Acquiring this experience is a qualifier to determine who can achieve economic and social integration – and who can pay for their resettlement.

Producing a Multicultural Canada

The *Multiculturalism policy* (1988) codified these principles in legislation and took the goals of equity one step further. The intention was for all Canadians to see themselves represented. In this way, Canadian culture would remain a fundamental way of life that, at minimum, was expected to tolerate and respect 'difference.' Various slogans of 'different but equal' were activated to encourage everyone to work towards equality in all aspects of life (Kymlicka, 2004). Diversity and equality were considered the foundation of multiculturalism, with intercultural sharing, equity and inclusion as

essential elements (Berry, 2013). At the start of the policy, maintaining diversity was the focus, with an intentional shift away from assimilation. According to Berry (2013), sharing and social inclusion have been pathways to promoting equality and equity. A focus on Canadian citizenship, or 'we are all one country', has dominated policy goals in the 1990s. Multiculturalism and its policies reflect how the nation imagines resettlement and 'old stock Canadians' to respond (Carranza, 2017).

Resettlement is idealized as a form of social inclusion, acceptance, and maintaining pre-migration identity in a nation where diverse identities are celebrated as integral to the whole – a multicultural mosaic (Walker & Zuberi, 2019).

In 1998, the Washington Post reported:

> In contrast to the melting pot metaphor of Europe and the United States, Canada uses the image of the mosaic — brightly coloured bits of ethnicity, culture, racial identity and language

> embedded side by side. They may contrast with one another, but together, they form a portrait of the nation in the same way the dots on a pointillist painting convey a coherent image. Increasingly, though, this nation of immigrants — once overwhelmingly white, now multihued — has begun to confront a troubling question: With all these differences, does being Canadian still mean anything more than sharing a vast, cold expanse of land? (Schneider, 1998)

This image of the multicultural mosaic influences Canada's role on the international stage. Policies, rhetoric and images support the Canadian brand in the eyes of the world and secure, powerful positions at international tables, such as the United Nations (Nytagodien & Neal, 2004). Canada has been viewed as 'exceptional' in accepting large numbers of refugees (Bhuyan et al., 2017).

However, these policies construct immigrants/forced migrants as both racialized and foreign, legally and formally, and maintain this marking, ranging from employment documents (disclosing status) to the census (Jeyapal, 2018). Immigration and social policy play significant roles in defining who can belong and where and have a racializing function within institutions.

Critiques of this policy indicate that the 'cultural' portion came to dominate the entire discourse. From a policy-to-practice perspective, critiques of multiculturalism suggest that people actively maintaining their history and heritage will ultimately create a sense of division and prevent a feeling of a unifying national identity among all Canadians (Berry, 2013; Nylund, 2011). Under this approach, multiculturalism equates 'difference,' especially racialization, to a 'way of life' (Ahmed, 2016). This 'way' of living and being in the world is distinctly not Canadian and not white. It draws false equations from race to ethnicity and code difference as 'culture.' Criticism suggests that there can be too much focus on difference ('respect for diversity'), which undermines sameness, national unity, and identity. Other approaches, such as the melting pot in the U.S., blur the lines between the country of origin identity and that of the country of settlement to maintain the foci of being "American" (Berry, 2005). Whilst both approaches have their downfalls, critical race scholars have critiqued multiculturalism for focusing on difference in a way that renders whiteness invisible as a race (McLaren, 1994). The outcome of this attempt at invisibilization is naturalization, where whiteness becomes the norm and standard for identity.

Critics have also indicated that this approach to celebrating diversity stops at food, dress and dance, rendering political and structural contributions by immigrants/forced migrants invisible (Jantiz, 2014). People are encouraged to be tolerant and accepting of difference – to a point. A Canadian opinion poll in 2016 conducted by Angus Ried and the BBC found that 2/3 of respondents believe immigrants/ forced migrants should "do more to fit in". In another question, 1/3 of respondents were dissatisfied with how people were integrating in their cities. Public opinion shapes the degree to which tolerance develops on individual and collective levels, contributing to policy discourse (Jeyapal, 2018). The guidelines for tolerance and who can be marginalized are constantly shifting. These community tolerances have circular impacts from individual to national levels.

The undeniable fallacy of multiculturalism and its policies is that Canada was founded upon the decimation of Indigenous peoples, their relationship to the land, their communities and their ways of life. The goal of colonization, codified in the Indian Act (1876), was to create a white European identity with British and French settlers (Blackstock, 2012). Johnstone and Lee (2020) identified that knowledge of this history, including residential schools – the last one closing within the last three decades (1991) was minimal among Canadians. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 2015 when more Canadians became aware of this history (Truth and Reconciliation Report, 2016). This short synopsis acknowledges the violence upon which Multiculturalism and what it erases was built

and encourages further reading. Despite Canada favouring the mosaic/multicultural approach where people keep their heritage – cultures are remade as unknown and therefore 'strange.' 'Catching up' represents the idea of the Global North, formerly the 'First World,' as exemplifying notions of modernity, progress and development. The other countries of the Global North are known to each other, and therefore, not much change is expected. Often English-speaking or bilingual, they have similar foods and customs and, if not, can be adapted – such as perogies!

Immigration has many intersecting domains: legal, social, economic and political sectors, each impacting the other. Belonging speaks to acceptance in the legal sense but also has ties in the social and day-to-day realms. For example, who is expected to be in spaces such as parent-teacher associations, golf clubs, and other professions? Who is considered to be a leader? Can they be racialized? Can they be female? Have an accent? As social workers whose ethical oaths include fostering diversity and multiculturalism, it is critical to reflect on our own and other's perceptions of belonging and the embedded assumptions in our psyches. How multiculturalism is practiced daily, in organizations is idealized as challenging the embedded privilege and whiteness in the constructions of difference (Johnstone & Lee, 2020).

Discussion Questions:

- How and why does Canada promote its Multicultural identity?
- In what ways do immigration ideologies and policy services favour assimilation?
- In what ways does social work promote multiculturalism?

5

Chapter Five: The Making of Whiteness

Abstract: This chapter opens up a space to engage with the critical theories that have been deconstructing social work. This is not an exhaustive list, but this discussion traces some of the key ways that social work, theoretically, has attempted to: make and (re)make whiteness as the knower, engage (and **know**) the stranger, reduce the 'strangeness' of the stranger, and determine what difference is acceptable. Critical theories have brought to light social work's construction of 'the Other' and maintenance of the stranger; however, there remains a significant gap in the literature on how the colonial identity and relationships are navigated in working with immigrants/forced migrants. In responding to this gap, some perspectives from workers in the areas of settlement, community development, child protection and therapists were drawn from three research studies discussed in this chapter. The research studies are "*Examining the Intersection of Immigrants' Acculturation and Child Welfare,*" *Examining the Intersection of Immigrant Women's Acculturation & Mental Health*," and "*Exploring the Dynamics of Intimate Partner Violence amongst the Diaspora*"

Key Concepts: Whiteness, objectivity, neutrality and securitization

Introduction

"Definitely stigma. This is systemic racism that is what it is, right? ***It is systemic racism****, and probably colonialism,* ***systemic colonialism.*** ~CAS worker"

Since the Confederation, Canadian immigration laws and policies have changed considerably. However, one goal has remained constant— control over immigration via— covert and overt forms of discrimination (Hollifield, Martin & Orrenius, 2014). Tropes of 'a better life' and upward mobility present modernity, progress and development as the pathway taken by the Global North to be advanced. The Global South is then developing, underdeveloped, representative of a time before or stuck in a 'backward' way of life. Modernity works because the Global North is constructed as the only opportunity for countries of the South to achieve safety/security/economic support/progress/education, and human rights (Carranza & Grigg, 2022). Initiatives with non-white immigrants/forced migrants remain focused on assimilation to society and employment in a way that remakes whiteness as the ideal. This chapter examines the profession's role in support, advocacy and activism while holding the bounds of exclusion. These insights situate social work within —whiteness and the maintenance of power, even when pushing back against the institution that made them, including the welfare state.

Influences in the Canadian Context

The context in which *helping* operates is influenced by the neoliberal state, funding and which practice approaches are valued. Social work often reflects the national temperature on issues and holds the binary of difference (Jeffrey, 2004). The profession is dependent on 'clients'; ultimately, keeping the stranger strange is the basis for a multicultural approach. Meaning there must be *differences* for social workers to engage with. Multiculturalism, as discussed in previous chapters, ideologically supports inclusion yet maintains immigrants/forced migrants as the Other to keep the dominant (culture, identity, etc.) as the 'norm.' One example could be Christian holidays recognized nationally and in many workplaces, while non-Christian celebrations are 'add on' or special interest. Even at the federal level, non-Christian religious holidays are not recognized in workplace settings, and only certain types of workplaces are allowed to recognize them in the same way. For example, only federal places of business can recognize Truth and Reconciliation Day as a holiday

Immigration control and securitization heavily influence public and community tolerance and reception. Narratives are built to justify exclusion, violence and the securitization of borders. After 9/11, Thobani (2007) and Jeyapal (2016) speak to the Globalized 'War on Terror' or 'the age of terror.' Any*body* marked to possibly be associated with religious extremism from what is called the 'Middle East' and Southeast Asia was/is deemed a threat to Canadian security and way of life. This discourse constructing those from the Middle East and Southeast Asia as a threatening stranger, had been growing for decades, largely over oil and global control (Jeyapal, 2018.). 9/11 saw support for increasing measures of "protection" from countries defined as the Middle East into immigration policy through a range of security measures. Amplifying narratives about the stranger, associating radicalism, extremism and terrorism with geography and religion. Violence is constructed as inherent to cultures and races that are Othered, and in immigration discourse, it is the individual immigrant/forced migrant that could be responsible for these failures, making them 'undeserving (Thobani, 2007). The post-9/11 world saw a wave of changes in immigration policies and responses to immigrants/forced migrants – deepening the divide of difference. In the age of terror, those on the other side of the *war* were classified as 'too' different. Prior to this, the 'War on Drugs' marked those arriving from Central America and some South American countries as dangerous due to gang affiliation and narco-trafficking (Simmons, 2010).

For difference to occur, there must be a self or standard by which anything outside is measured. Forged during colonialism, the race hierarchy – whiteness, became the standard. In terms of immigration, the standard of belonging is those who were born here and who visually 'fit' the image. Thobani (2007) speaks to how citizenship is understood – from the perspective of the centre (those who belong) and not those who have been denied access (Indigenous people, immigrants/forced migrants). Certain

knowledge and identities have been ideally suited to occupy the space of centre/standard. The crux of this stronghold is access to a particular knowledge – objective, neutral and rational. Also, the type of knowledge and alignment social work advocated for during professionalization.

Difference does not need to be extreme or associated with a Global war. The Angus Reid poll previously discussed found that while the majority of Canadians (roughly over 72%) supported immigration, close to 80% of those same respondents wished that immigrants/forced migrants would 'do more' to blend in and 'act Canadian.' Nationalism is what fuels the Canadian identity, inclusive of fabled multiculturalism, and supporting the prioritization of the nation's needs above all others (Jeyapal, 2018). In this case, the 'need' to act Canadian. Canada promotes a national image of safety for (white) citizens and claims this for immigrants/forced migrants as well. However, those not born in Canada can and do have the 'privilege' of citizenship taken away (Jeyapal, 2018). Canada limits citizenship not only by numbers, but in categories – making some easily expendable for labour and deportable.

Whiteness

The concept of the well-worn pathway is useful for identifying social work's orientation toward whiteness, which troubles the moves toward social justice and decolonization (Jeyapal & Bhuyan, 2016). As an ethics-governed practice advocating for a more equitable and just society, social work remains in lock-step with whiteness (Carranza, 2022). Ahmed (2007) suggests that whiteness is the backdrop to experience; it becomes worldly through its disappearance – in social work, this becomes naturalized in skills and suitability. Whiteness has been theorized as 'unmarked,' represented by invisibility, a non-colour and idealized as a non-race. The historically informed context of today has naturalized the white body to be seen as *the* human body. A body must be seen and understood to be white, but whiteness's power is derived from not being able to see it or name it (Ahmed, 2006). According to Ahmed (2006) whiteness can be traced through its disappearance. Invisibility is the narrative intentionally produced by whiteness, but this only exists in the imagination of those who inhabit it (Ahmed, 2006). Whiteness has attempted to orientate itself away from inclusion in discussions on the processes of racialization. The deliberate attempt at avoidance at being named complicates how we can, and do, talk about it amidst whiteness as the background to experience. How this emerges is in who's experiences and emotions are validated.

One such example is grief – whose expressions are valued? For immigrants/forced migrants, their grief for the losses of family, community and homeland are misunderstood and invalidate the gratefulness they are expected to show. With the achievement of safety and a 'better life' the expectation is that they proclaim and exhibit thankfulness for this. In the study on men's integration, one child of immigrants/ forced migrant parents explained,

> Men never talk about this loss. When they come they have to get a job and normally they make these decisions quick. And they are on the bottom, everyone keeps telling them that they are lucky. Lucky. So they can be thinking about home and missing it. Even for me, when I work with people who didn't migrate will ask if I am happy that I have all these opportunities, never understanding that I might miss [country of origin]. Like actually maybe they don't care.

In the way that grief is invalidated and not recognized for immigrants/forced migrants, emotions are celebrated and naturalized for those who belong. In the making of whiteness and femininity, empathy has been a foundational emotion for 'goodness' (Jeffrey, 2004). As coloniality has attempted to erase whiteness (making it the natural default), it becomes 'the way we do things here'. For example, the

script of whiteness that encourages showing empathy in social work, where whiteness structures engagement with the Stranger – is an undetectable governing rule. These scripts frame the social work encounter and professional ethics as 'how-to' practices. Social work was built from the white female body to be at home, extend, take up space and belong.

I share the following experience to highlight how some bodies are excluded and marked as not belonging:

> The city that I work in has been establishing community-university networks for research and student placements for over a decade. The University is well known in the community, and the majority of staff at the organizations are familiar with placements and the process. Many are alumni of the same University. I often arrive at a mainstream organization and introduce myself as a 'faculty' from the School of Work, and more often than not, I get a second look. In this gaze, I can see surprise, hesitation, and confusion – challenging my assertion of 'Faculty.' I wait for a bit. A second person will generally ask me again who I was and what organization I represented. Often with the same look of confusion. The person that I'm there to see usually gets paged the second time I introduce myself.

The goal of whiteness is uniformity, hegemony and supremacy. Akun (2021) and Akun and Jones (2001) state that white supremacy culture divides white people from Black, Indigenous and Racialized people and disconnects us all from nature. This was done so that the elite could dictate who is fully human to bestow privilege on some and violence upon the stranger because of their strangeness. Conceptualizing white supremacy culture, Akun and Jones (2001) use the words of Cristina Rivera Chapman from the Earthseed Land Collective:

> White supremacy culture is so common and widespread; the invisible ocean we all must tread. Mi abuela likened it to gravity in conversations about US imperialism in Latin America. This ocean deeply informs what we think and feel and even how we think and feel. It has to. It's a matter of sink or swim. And for some of us sink means drown. While white supremacy and structural racism are not simple. I would say, at the end of the day, what white supremacy culture needs me/us to believe is this one thing: The only way for me to swim is someone else has to sink (p. 9).

Whiteness determines who is a fish, allowed to learn to tread water, moved towards an area of safety in the ocean, and who needs to not survive to maintain dominance. Most importantly, who is at home and swimming is effortless.

Whiteness in Social Work

Social work went mainstream in the 1920's, starting in universities and pushing for professional recognition. Practice standards and best practices used the knowledge base of the 'hard' sciences and aligned with the medical model to produce uniformity in practice. With the establishment of the Canadian Association of Social Work, the image of the profession was to be individual engagement and propelling an image of grassroots and social justice. This attempt at a double focus ironically has shaped and been influenced by the whitewashed narrative discussed in previous chapters. The history of social work has not only been whitewashed by dismissing the contributions of Black, Indigenous and People of Colour, but it is also embedded in the larger structure of white supremacy that supports their erasure. Additionally, Kelechi and their colleagues (2021) map the history of social work, layering an analysis of the ways that key figures, theories and practices have intentionally been left out of the discussion. This

narrative has glorified the contributions of white, namely women, while erasing the work of Black, Indigenous and racialized social workers. This structuring of the profession as white in both identity (who 'looks' as if they can 'help') and in knowledge – the scripts of whiteness (Badwell, 2015) challenges the capacity to work towards social justice. The connection to state apparatuses, too, challenges this – social workers are employed directly by the government, quasi-government and not-for-profits (funded in part by government).

Question: Can social work be decolonized?

How, as a profession, can social work move towards social justice?

Social work remains concerned with the management of difference (Jeffrey, 2004). Earlier, the work was to overcome difference as a personal failure. Overtime, overcoming shifted to determining which differences were valued, 'okay' or must be changed. At times, social work approaches determinations of difference by stereotypes and assumptions. For example, one settlement in the RCYP project worker whose caseload was immigrant/forced migrant youth said, "Central Americans and Latinos like to party and be loud – have a lot of fun. This is fine for being social and doesn't need to change, but at work, no, this is not the way. So it's a part of my job to help learn this." In discussing other elements of resettlement and changes, they said, "With the people from Central America – and Latinos – the biggest problem for them is time. Being on time. Understanding that Canadians are on time, and it's rude to make people wait".

This either/or thinking is a product of whiteness (Okun & Jones, 2000). As a part of the colonial project, this 'rightness' formed the basis of institutions, professions, and communities. This binary of right/wrong has been woven into politics, work, and our social lives (Okun, 2021). There is a value placed on individualism – the protestant work ethic, being self-made, and the myth of meritocracy. Individualism and the idea that one should be neutral, without emotion, logical and rational and is correlated to objectivity. Historically, objective knowledge is seen in the medical model as the gold standard. Objectivity is a crucial feature of white supremacy culture (Okun, 2021; Okun & Jones, 2000).

- When considering the right/wrong ways, how does 'outside-the-box' thinking challenge or reinforce this logic?
- Is everyone supported in outside-the-box practices?

Research remains a key feature of social work education and practice. This is another way that whiteness saturates the profession, as objectivity forms the backbone of 'pure research.' It is in this type of research that 'rationality' and 'rigour' were used by those in power to deny the legitimacy of dissenting voices (Ermine et al., 2005). Enforcing an idea that each piece of research must be validated, i.e., claims of racism must be proven or that those who experience an issue cannot be objective in researching it (McGuire & Cisneros, 2020). When Black, Indigenous and racialized scholars engage in research, especially on their own lived experiences, there are claims of being 'too close' to the data, unable to see neutrally. This mirrors how social workers who share identities that have been Othered are often seen as not having boundaries or too close to a situation, as discussed previously in "*Helpers as Knowers.*"

Research is used to develop interventions and best practices (Johnstone, 2015). Ethical practice, too, is haunted by objectivity and neutrality. There is enforcement of 'best' practice as having 'one right way' as this thinking maintains the centre. Coloniality is activated in the social work encounter in considering what gets funded in terms of services for immigrants/forced migrants – programs that support the

development of economic and social capital. Job and skill retraining (despite previous credentials), obtaining Canadian experiences, and language training – all of which are deemed essential for positive integration (Jeyapal, 2017).

In settlement work, workers run the risk of 'knowledge coloniality' or encouraging immigrants/forced migrants to adopt different forms of whiteness thinking. While there are many theoretical frameworks to prevent this – decolonial, anti-racist and anti-oppressive practice, this practice still underlies the profession. Clarke and Wan (2011) identified that while the concepts of anti-oppression were gaining traction in social work education, research, policy and practice, the settlement sector was slow to adopt them. Social work has courses and specializations in immigration at the college and university level, yet a 2016 report found social workers self-identified as ill-prepared to work with immigrants/forced migrants. The British Colombia Association of Social Workers (2016) noted that those entering and who had been in the field for over 5 years were not prepared to assist in the areas of policy and legislation and resettlement processes. What these studies indicate is the knowledge of legislation and issues surrounding resettlement are not prioritized across employment fields. This rang true in *Examining the Intersection of Immigrants' Integration/Acculturation and Child Welfare*, where one worker commented:

> I have been there, Children's Aid Society for 2 years, I don't know what every single training available in any CAS building but I've never seen training and it's not mandatory to go to any training that has to do with immigrant and refugee women. There is no training at all, I've seen. Maybe there is some, sometimes the training is so sporadic it's not constantly offered, but certainly nothing mandatory that's constantly offered to our new workers to work with immigrant/ refugee women, there is some certain trainings you can go to with trauma that is often specific, so have training on how to work with the situation but I haven't been encouraged by anybody to go any understanding trauma of having flown from another country or you know coming to Canada being at, you know, ground zero, you know nothing but you are here because you got sponsored you got maybe family from church helping you, but definitely not helping so much, so yeah I would say that we don't really have any training to deal with the situation, you sort of learn as you do it and that's impossible.

The study found systemic issues related to race and citizenship status to negatively impact immigrant/ forced migrants. The systemic issues identified by community members, service users, CAS and settlement workers arose from the production of whiteness and assimilative underpinnings of social work (Carranza, 2017). One service user commented that CAS perceives families: "It's very much embedded white middle-class standards that set their expectations." In part, this lens of looking from the Western gaze allows for workers to practice sanctioned ignorance. The Western gaze privileges ways of being hailing from British notions – the nuclear family, parenting practices and attachment to primary caregivers. So when this is seen as the most important, having knowledge of what falls outside the norm is not considered relevant or required.

One way this emerges in direct practice is in over estimating the primacy of the nuclear family, as happens in the Global North. A young person discussed how:

> In therapy, they didn't understand that I grew up with my Grandma and all her sisters and friends back home and moved here to be with my mom—after she had been here a long time to go to school. Like I had to apply for my own citizenship. So it's not like your normal Canadian Mom/ Son relationship. Everything they talk about doesn't make sense to me or to many people like me. It's like me and my mom were raised by the same person at a different time. Yes, she was

always still involved, but it's unique. I cannot explain.

Configurations of family, as one example, have forced theorists to see that assimilation has become a stale and unachievable concept. Assimilation expects people to let go of everything and anything that has meaning to them – in order to belong to 'mainstream' society. This does not work for separated or multigenerational families and many others. However, to some degree, these expectations remain. Immigrants/forced migrants, inclusive of their race, racialization and assumed 'culture,' are often marginalized and criminalized when they do not assimilate, and even when they do. A service provider in the RCYP project who migrated as a young person from the Caribbean said, "I didn't even know I was Black until I came here. I worked on not having an accent, changed how I dress, but I'm still a threat no matter what, even here [referring to workplace]". Hence, for this participant, regardless of his efforts to assimilate, his Black body was perceived as a threat. Moreover, white Canadians saw his Blackness as not belonging. Bermúdez (2018) contends that the ways helping professions work with immigrants/forced migrants echo unresolved historical violence that no amount of anti-oppressive practice or cultural sensitivity can mitigate. The participants' experiences above suggest that the historical past is forever present in the day-to-day lives of people perceived as the stranger/ 'Other.'

Social work and the social sciences have, along with social and policy frameworks, 'evolved' in the theoretical and practical work done within the social work encounter. This evolution is aligned with the goals of multiculturalism and liberalism, 'respect for difference,' by visually adding representation while structural change is slow to occur. For example, the Canadian Association of Social Workers and other organizations celebrate diversity and inclusion and encourage engagement with the multicultural tapestry of Canada's mosaic. Supporting *Caribbean Week* or *Latin American Heritage Month* are efforts to promote the ideologies of multiculturalism and equality and show regard for the contributions made – those of the Other. Certain foods are celebrated, and movies and activities are planned to support local businesses or a local speaker. Some organizations will honour Indigenous practices such as smudging or a Round Dance. While promotion and engagement with such activities are well-meaning and can serve to aid in expanding cultural learning, we cannot overlook that these opportunities to do so are typically only allowed within a specific time or place.

As demonstrated in previous examples throughout the text, while cultural foods may be accepted and celebrated during a community event, many immigrants/forced migrants often experience discrimination when bringing these same foods into their respective workplaces. Encouraging people to learn and engage in the *ethnic* to show support for cultures also places them outside the norm. Difference is devalued. However, this is not the case when the dominant identity shows interest or engages. One such example is appropriating the cultural day of "*El Dia de los Muertos*" (Day of the Dead – celebrated in Mexico, and many of the countries of Central and South America), by buying and wearing sugar skulls and other associated dress. This practice, valued for its colourful aesthetic, can erase history and connections when taken up as an aesthetic. Combined with that, people from countries across Central and South America have received a lukewarm reception in Canada and, at times, outright hostile treatment due to their association with gangs and narco-trafficking (Carranza et al. 2021).

The Western Gaze

What often creates a holding pattern for social work is found in the standpoints, language and theoretical frameworks of the Western gaze. Whiteness is an invisible standpoint from which the Western gaze originates. Lee and Bhuyan (2021) argue that the Western gaze is that of the dominant, based on Eurocentric standards of what matters and what has meaning and value to society. The Western gaze was created during colonialism, and coloniality has expanded it to become common sense, structuring

the colonial grid (Carranza, 2016; Lee and Bhuyan, 2021). This standpoint promotes Eurocentric ways of thinking, allowing the production of norms to remain unrecognized and invisible. The white body is heteronormative, unmarked by race and not labelled with a disability. It is foreign in that it is not Indigenous – but not a stranger. The Western gaze informs "common sense", that dictates responses, how we act and engage with one another, and normalizes behaviors. The increase in the numbers of culturally, ethnicity and racially diverse immigrants from non-European countries has significantly affected public policy and discourse in Canada.

Whiteness operates under an assumed universality – that supports the idea that social work can be helpful to everyone. Along with the notion of universality is generalist practice. **Generalist practice** for social work means having one broad base of knowledge and skills and being flexible to work with many populations. Universality and generalist practice see social workers as ready to be employed in immigration and associated elements of resettlement, medical, child protection, and community work. Universality also indicates that social work *can* and *should* work with everyone. Who can embody the universal acts as a gatekeeper to who and how people can belong. Gatekeeping via labels of 'deserving' and 'not deserving' delegitimizes immigrant/forced migrant experiences and knowledge (Duhaney & El-Lahib, 2021). El-Lahib (2020) challenges how social work supports gatekeeping and surveillance to propel colonial, racist and ableist agendas. Normalizing the embedded practices is what dissolves the state's accountability. The agenda of assimilation happens in nuanced ways depending on placement on the colonial grid – one such example is in hiring practices, the requirement of being able to lift 10lbs -20lbs has roots in marginalizing those with disabilities. This requirement, normalized in hiring practices, allows for 'legal' discriminatory practices. Removal of equality and upholding multiculturalism in terms of immigrants/forced migrants is normalized in a range of ways, from asking for citizenship status to denying previous experience and education under the requirement for 'Canadian experience' (Jantz, 2015; Sakamoto et al., 2019). These practices can be subtle or bold but serve to support discrimination in such a way that it is practiced in the day-to-day, thus reinforcing a specific identity that belongs.

Interrogating and resisting these day-to-day practices begins with language (Duhaney & El-Lahib, 2021). Examining language also shows that discourse is key in maintaining who can never belong. Part of ongoing coloniality is imposing a range of definitions of identity and applications of stereotypes. Labels and identities are limiting and constructed in opposition to whiteness, often acting as boundaries around the limits of the Other. In Canada, Jantz (2015) argues that the language of migration, both in policy and in the everyday, ensures that some identities are permanently securitized. In the "age of terror", Jeyapal (2019) notes that post-9/11, this language and discourse fuels moral panic and fear of immigration to maintain the stranger, thus supporting discrimination. One of the consequences is a significant increase in racism towards people perceived as from the Middle East, as well as an increasing magnitude of religious discrimination since 9/11. Consequently, these processes continue to obstruct immigrant/forced migrants' capacity to access social resources and opportunities in Canada (Yan & Chan, 2011).

Today, those who are 'deserving,' 'welcome,' and who can access services are those who show promise of upward mobility and economic contribution (Jeyapal, 2019). To limit access to social services and assistance, bills are introduced, i.e., Bill C-43, as well as the enforcement of massive securitization of borders via mandatory detention – while anti-immigration sentiments are growing. Vilifying other countries as 'backwards' amplifies the pressure to assimilate, for the individual and for social work to conform. Recently, the 45th President of the United States spent his term in office limiting migration from countries he referred to as "shitholes" (Carranza, 2020; New York Times, 2018). Growing fears of invasion and resource drains amidst a neo-liberal retrenchment have increased the surveillance

mechanisms within social work and reliance on narratives of 'deserving' to administer help. Social work, too, is increasingly being surveilled amidst ongoing cutbacks and reductions in services, creating greater controls and more motoring to ensure people are meeting the criteria, engaging in required programming and regulating practices (Jeyapal, 2019). There is resistance and calls for new ways of working and moving towards social justice. Much of this resistance work has come from inside, on the ground and the scholarship of Black and Indigenous people, including those across the globe and those that have been racialized and minoritized.

Unpacking Whiteness

Social workers most often work within agencies and healthcare facilities sanctioned by government policies, which dictate funding and professionals' standards of care (Sakamoto et al., 2018). While some social workers are engaged in community-orientated settings, as professionals, the standard of care is expected to be maintained.

A key question here is, can this reputation be renegotiated and deconstructed?

Social work literature engages with two major themes in whiteness studies: how whiteness produces unearned race privilege and how whiteness remains invisible from a sociocultural perspective for most white people (Lee & Bhuyan, 2021). Interdisciplinary scholarship sees whiteness as the dominant yet highly 'invisible' way of structuring practice and theory (Nylund, 2006). Attention to whiteness and associated privilege in social work ranges from an emphasis on visibilizing racial identity (Pewewardy 2007) to discussions of racial identity with service users as a means to foster a more integrated sense of self of the clients (Blitz 2006). Naming privilege, mapping the ways it has structured one's life and professional trajectory, has also been popularized – but students and those in the helping professions have been left with a sense of – now what? Reflexivity was once sold for those working from the dominant space to critically engage with their own subject positions. Hesse-Biber (2014) suggested that this analytic 'tool' can apply to everyone. For example, those who were born in Canada can learn to understand their own worldview through their citizenship. In their analysis, practitioners, researchers and helpers could discover their own biases, mitigate them and engage with people to the best of their ability. An important note here is that this is a developmental process, which requires not only an intellectual commitment but a process of engagement with all the senses. The onus is on the professional and not on the immigrant/forced migrant to 'teach' the helpers.

Responding to Whiteness

Picking up on the discussion in *What is Cross-Cultural Across from?,* Cultural **competency** emerged in the U.S. in the 1980s and was intended to address diversity and inequality. Culture at the time, was attributed to language, geography, ethnicity and race as the same identifiers (Kirmayer, 2012). Theoretically, cultural competency begins with the notion that one's mental health and wellness and help-seeking behaviours are rooted in culture (Kirmayer, 2012). Culture is a key driver not only in how mental health is experienced or expressed but also in how therapeutic relationships are forged and upheld. As a practice, it considers the differences between the social worker/therapist/helper and the person seeking services in social position and power. The space of the social work encounter in cultural competency is marked by differences in cultural knowledge and identity, language, religion and other aspects of cultural identity (Kirmayer, 2012). Azzopardi and McNeill (2016) define cultural competency as:

> It is understood as an ongoing process whereby one gains awareness of and appreciation for cultural

diversity and an ability to work sensitively, respectfully, and proficiently with those from diverse backgrounds (p. 3).

In both theory and practice, the difference is attributed to the person seeking help – the stranger. *Competence* signifies a measure of mastery based on scientific knowledge and professionalization of skills (Carracio et al. 2002). The knowledge and ability to do things well is the basis of a professional identity, capacity and in social work – the ‘toolkit’. Culture in this approach becomes fixed, rooted and inherent to the individual. An interrelated set of practices based on geographies, ethnicity and race now shapes the presenting issue and becomes one of the most important elements for the practitioner to navigate. Culture can then be known enough for the social worker to perform their work (Carpenter, Schwallie and Longhofer, 2007). Competency indicates that the social worker can know, based on their universal knowledge and applicability of evidence-informed skills (Kirmayer, 2012). It further implies that the clinician or social worker is of the dominant culture, thus erasing identity (Sakamoto, 2007).

Lee and Byuhan (2020) speak to the ideological split in clinical social work on cultural competency and anti-oppressive practice. Cultural competency emphasizes culturally responsible and sensitive practice in each setting but does not address the structural roots of oppression. It has, at its base, the impetus to learn about histories, traits and knowledge among culturally similar groups (Azzopardi and McNeill, 2016). In early iterations of the practice, culture was to be celebrated and valued for difference – supporting multicultural societies. Despite the growth in frameworks for practicing from a culturally competent stance, there is little agreement in academia and in the field on how this approach can work (Azzopardi and McNeill, 2016). This can lead to individualizing and pathologizing trauma by removing the political elements of experiences (Carranza et al., forthcoming). This plays out in practice, as one white-identified worker commented on immigrants/forced migrant mental health:

> I think in particular for immigrant families you have to keep the cultural piece, at the forefront and so, understanding that, you know, in somebody’s village or somebody’s city the way their family is completely normal so you can’t fault them in any way for doing that, because, you know, the expectations we have here are normalized, so it’s the same, right? So appreciating that, and look, and identifying the family they’re doing the best that they can.

Drawing our attention to the language used, we see the imagery of a village and the ‘culture piece’ with no specifications on what the means for the family or social worker. Institutional racism is removed from the theory ignoring the impacts on social relations and processes (Lee & Bhuyan, 2020). The many iterations of cultural competency have not resolved the inability to incorporate macro-systemic factors. The social work encounter does not just cross difference by necessity, it attempts to manage and contain it. Cultural competency and adjacent models have evolved to include the shifting nature of culture and the structural elements of marginalization (Azzopardi and McNeill, 2016). The models of **cultural consciousness** proposed by Azzopardi and McNeill incorporate (a) evidence-based knowledge, (b) conceptual framework for practice, (c) intervention strategies, and (d) critical self-awareness (p. 11). Continuing to base work on medical models and evidence-based knowledge maintains the roots of knowledge in positivism. Models of **cultural humility** or **cultural consciousness** center the lived experience of those seeking services, ascribing them ‘experts’ in their own lives and moving away from privileging Global North social work knowledge.

Reflexivity, as discussed in Chapter One, is the continual analysis of our preconceptions and what influences them, including personal belief systems. Knowledge used in social work encounters is produced based on this circular analytical process. Reflexivity in working with immigrants/forced migrants allows the helper to determine how meaning, including belonging/not belonging, is created

within a certain culture or society (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011).

Practicing reflexivity has been written from a neutral standpoint, not including how race, citizenship, ability or gender mediates the process. This means the goal of reflexivity, as a practice, is to be utilized by everyone. Taylor and White (2000) claim reflexivity is an important practice skill and central to working ethically in uncertain contexts and unpredictable situations. Examining oneself advances critical self-awareness by the practitioner in how they understand and engage with social problems. It assists with further realizations that assumptions about social problems and the people who experience them have ethical and practical consequences – both socially and at work. It is often seen as the cornerstone of 'doing' social justice (Morely, 2015). D'Cruz (2007) and colleagues reported that 'reflective,' 'reflexivity,' and 'critical reflection' helped practitioners to resolve uncertainty to allow them to engage with the stranger and bridge the differences that can divide people.

In reflexivity, social work theoretical positioning has attempted to navigate the 'problem' of working with the Stranger. On the one hand, they must remain different and separate, but there must be a way to 'help' to support the ongoing need for services – the helper must be able to know them. Morley (2015) defines reflexivity as:

> An epistemological position that brings together the social constructionist stance of reflexivity with the emancipatory goals of critical social science. Critical reflexivity is a vial precondition for critical reflection, yet not sufficient in its own right to activate the transformative deconstruction and reconstruction processes that critical reflection enables. A critically reflexive stance is essential to further a critical social work agenda that is committed to social justice and human rights, despite the challenges presented by the contemporary, neoliberal context.

Reflexivity is sold as having the ability to challenge and disrupt privilege by de-centering voice and elevating the lived experiences of those impacted (Carranza & Grigg, 2018). Lee and Bhuyan (2020) challenge reflexivity and its capacity to remake whiteness. Some forms of reflexivity are reproductive and repetitious and reinforce existing power relations, while others may be challenging and disruptive (Fox & Allana, 2014). This process of encouraging people to reexamine their access to privilege may help to constitute these structures and contribute to inequalities by its habitual representation of them. It can also sit and stagnate to the question – now what? Unpacking whiteness but leaving it as the norm contributes to a new form of dominance. In some spaces, reflexivity is thought to acknowledge difference in an effort to subvert or move past them. It supports the goal of helping others. It produces a new identity that understands its own privilege and minimizes its power, building this space as a 'knower' of its centre (Jeffrey, 2004). White bodies remain at the centre of social work and social work research (Badwell, 2016) and continue to be thought to exemplify 'objective,' 'goodness' and 'helping.'

Aligned with the social justice goals of social work, **anti-oppressive practice** (AOP) has gained traction in education and research. Baines (2007) indicates theoretically AOP:

> … an umbrella term for a number of social justice oriented approaches to social work, including, feminist, Marxist, post-modernist, Indigenous, post-structuralist, critical constructionist, anti-colonial and anti-racist. As part of larger movements for social change, AOP is constantly refining its theory and practice to address new tensions and social problems, as well as underlying structural factors (p. 4)

Progressive social work now situates diversity, difference, and oppression at the forefront of the commitment to social justice (Brown, 2020). As a framework, AOP addresses issues of gender, race,

class and multiple forms of oppression (Mullaly, 2016). Wilson and Beresford (2000) note that AOP attempts to utilize a common agenda, reduction of marginalization, to work in a non-hierarchal way to address the multiple axes of oppression while also recognizing the social processes with each form. The dismantling of structures has been the focus of AOP, with one criticism being that there is no direction to inform individual and interpersonal interactions in clinical settings (Parrott, 2009).

Brown (2020) credits the emergence of AOP as an attempt to eradicate oppression on a larger structural scale without privileging one form over another. Collective Social Work associations, including the Canadian Association of Social Workers – have included an AOP approach. Under this umbrella a range of issues are included, and interventions related to critical social work. de Montigny (2011) cautions against this, the reproduction of AOP as hegemonic, and concludes that inclusion in the Canadian Association of Social Workers accreditation standards may prevent meaningful critique. However, this approach is thought to minimize the divisiveness of issues and encourage joint advocacy and action. This framework favours broad based approaches that allow for nuance and intersections to be addressed. Baines (2011) argues that reflexivity and critical reflection are the starting points for this work. To dismantle privilege and structural oppression, mainstream or dominant social practices – social workers must start with themselves and how their perceptions have seeped into and shaped their thinking. This purposeful interrogation of ‘our’ practices and theoretical leanings will prevent reproducing hegemony or knowledge coloniality (Wilson and Beresford, 2000).

Conclusions

Stratified by race, class, ethnicity and gender, migration is frequently marked by complications, loss and often force. The context of contemporary migration is shaped by systemic exclusion, anti-immigration sentiments and globalized narratives that often mark people as ‘their culture.’ In this process of movement, there is often no home to ‘arrive’ at, as the expectations of assimilation but maintaining difference remain. This chapter has provided an overview of whiteness, its maintenance and the ways the profession has attempted to mitigate power and privilege.

Questions for further thinking

- How does the idea of “a better life” emerge in other social work contexts?
- What other major Global processes impact immigration to Canada?
- How can social workers problematize negative stereotypes and narratives of immigrants/forced migrants?

6

Chapter Six: What is Cross-Cultural Across from?

Abstract: This chapter is focused on what became the professional body, or the hegemonic form of social work. Situating the ‘professionalized’ as a form of hegemonic social work shows how power is maintained, even when workers are pushing back against the institution. This chapter examines the profession’s historical role in holding the bounds of exclusion with newcomers by reinforcing assimilationist ideology in direct practice and policy.

Key Concepts: Multiculturalism, civility, professionalization and attachment theory

Introduction:

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (2017) tweeted: "To those fleeing persecution, terror & war, Canadians will welcome you, regardless of your faith. Diversity is our strength #WelcomeToCanada." This tweet was retweeted more than 400,000 times. Over 750,000 people "liked" the tweet, demonstrating how many people were touched by his remark.

When writing the history of the social sciences discipline(s), it's the story of the mainstream. In this narrative, the first practitioners, theorists and professors – are white. This story of the mainstream gives the illusion that white social workers are the providers of services and that the stranger, including Black, Indigenous, racialized, and immigrants/forced migrants, are the recipients of 'help' (Wright et al., 2021). Wright and their colleagues (2021) call this illusion the "whitewashing of social work." Because of this whitewashing, the critical contributions of Black, Indigenous, and other racialized groups, such as disabled/people labelled with disabilities, as well as community and grassroots activism, have been erased. This erasure has intentionally led to the embedding of Eurocentric thinking in social work theories, practices and teaching. This has served to reimagine the social work encounter as replicating the colonial encounter.

The account in this chapter is focused on what became the professional body or the hegemonic form of social work. Situating the 'professionalized' as a form of hegemonic social work shows how power is maintained, even when workers are pushing back against the institution. This chapter examines the profession's historical role in holding the bounds of exclusion by reinforcing assimilationist ideology in direct practice and policy. Assimilation and integration have historically been a shifting ground – as concrete markers are difficult to define. Li (2003) explores how integration in policy is framed as participating in Canada's social, economic and political life but lacks a definition. During the formation of Canada, white masculine notions of self-reliance, strength, and hardness were of the highest value for nation-building (O'Connell, 2012). The ideas and practice of full engagement are as abstract as the definition of "Canadian Society." As a handmaiden to the state, social work influences and is influenced by popular opinion, policies and the political agenda. For immigration, it is a complex web under the larger rubric of multiculturalism. Ideologically, multicultural policies were to bolster Canada and Canadians as welcoming, friendly (eh!) and embracers of difference. This extends to social work.

Historically, Canada's approach to resettlement via policy and social services was assimilation – the erasure of difference and amalgamation into the dominant ways of living. Some identities remain as strangers, regardless of the degree of assimilation. This is often connected to geopolitics (e.g., the war on terror or the war on drugs). Canadian national identity is advertised as inclusive, humanitarian, and aligned with the ethical and moral principles of equality (Olsen et al., 2014). When people have characteristics or beliefs that are considered similar, such as Canadian experience or fluency in English/French, these are considered assets, strengths, and a form of resiliency. Assimilation also discredits the grief in immigrants/forced migrants that their journey ends upon arrival, and people should be happy/relieved to be in Canada and 'be' Canadian (i.e. assimilate). In the project "Men's Integration and Resettlement" that looked at immigration through the lens of masculine identities (Carranza, 2020), a young person discussed how "people (Canadians) think, you're here! You're fine! YOU MADE IT. They think you arrived, so all your problems are gone". Grief over the life course was largely misunderstood.

Social Work as the Helper/Helped

What is omitted in historical accounts is that social work played a significant role in advancing the colonial project and disciplining bodies into aligning with Whiteness (Fortier & Hon-Sin Wong, 2018; Saraceno, 2012). The National Policy of *Canadianisation* was enforced in the early 1900s for the millions of non-Europeans arriving in Canada. The policy had a companion handbook for social workers. Immigration social workers were indoctrinated with the manual "Strangers within Our Gates" or "Becoming Canadians" by J. S. Woodsworth (Irving et al., 1995). Coleman (2010) noted that this manual provided a hierarchy of nationalities and ethnic groups, beginning with British immigrants, and detailed how social workers could enforce assimilative strategies. One example is privileging the nuclear family as the organizing principle of social life and economic policies (such as the breadwinner model and medical benefits coverage) and favoring English. This manual, companioned with eugenics, was foundational to the advent of the profession. Social workers were included in the privileged group that could determine belonging, influencing who could do what and, if they could not, what tasks they could perform to advance the nation (building the railroad or domestic work).

As a profession, social work has foot-soldiered to the government and was active in forming early white Canada and enforcing assimilation. Social work/social workers used its discursive power to shape people's assimilation and resettlement, including access to mandated services (Bhuyan et al., 2017). Social workers were active eugenics agents, immigration status assessors, and child welfare workers. In the mainstream accounts, in the 1890s, both in Canada and the U.S., social work was created to respond to wage labour and rapid urbanization during the "moral reform" era due to the harsh outcomes of capitalism and growing poverty (Fortier & Hon-Sin Wong, 2018). Working under the guise of helping, early social workers (those wanting professional status) were agents of the state – providing services and support that focused on 'catching –up' (assimilation) for immigrants/forced migrants. According to Blackstock (2009), this is the core impetus of social work: to control the definition of improvement and to improve others. Helping then hinges on the belief that the 'helper' knows or has achieved this 'improvement.'

The profession is predicated on the social worker as the 'knower/helper' and the person engaging in the services as the 'helpee.' Wright and colleagues (2021) demarcate this binary via race and status as the stranger, which was implemented via colonization. Nestled into its surveilling role for the government, social work was a part of the seclusion and cultural genocide of Indigenous Peoples (Blackstock, 2007; Johnstone & Lee, 2020). Naming social work's active role in harmful past practices is central to reconciling with the past and decolonization. Post WW1, eugenics was supported by mainstream Canada and used to advocate for racial heterogeneity (McLaren, 1990). British Whiteness was considered the pinnacle of the colonial hierarchy during this time, excluding Irish and people from the Eastern Bloc. Still, this degree of Whiteness was prioritized over those who were Indigenous, Black, and racialized. As Blackstock (2012) points out, during this time of eugenics, the Residential School system attempted to annihilate Indigenous children and culture, providing a roadmap for Nazi Germany. There is little indication that social work or any profession, including human rights advocates, objected to eugenics or Residential schools (Blackstock, 2012; 2007). During this period, social work relied on the same eugenics science to develop its best practices. Eugenics science, labels, and interventions informed how social work classified fit/unfit and deserving/underserving. Assessment, screening, profiling, and data collection through surveys were developed to determine who could access what services or who was deemed unfit (Johnstone & Yee, 2020). Social workers could specialize in these assessments that could be used broadly, many of which were applied to immigration and citizenship (Johnstone, 2016). Assessments determined who was eligible for housing, poverty relief, and employment or was 'fit.' The profession established its roots through the Sixties Scoop, aligned with the medical model and active in

eugenics. Social work remains dependent on the hierarchical binary – the colonial difference – for its modes of operation and best practices.

Social work has disregarded activism strategically over its history to gain professional status and sought alignment with scientific knowledge and the social sciences. Social work and the helping professions have had a key role in constructing and determining who belongs and who is deserving of services – known as gatekeeping. Early Canadian social work was not concerned with state-initiated recruitment of racialized immigrants for labour as they were considered to only be here for employment needs and not social reproduction. Nor was the profession concerned with the treatment of labourers or the immigration of Black people, as these groups were considered not able to assimilate (Jeyapal, 2016). Assimilation as a strategy for resettlement – trying to promote uniformity, less reliance on the state, and economic stability has been known as *empowerment*. Children have always been an important piece of social work, especially in assimilation efforts. Due to their age and child development thinking, younger people are more apt to adopt Canadian ways (Carranza & Grigg, 2022).

Douglas (2022) writes about Attachment Theory formulated by English Psychoanalyst John Bowlby as the foundation for child welfare in Canada. This theory was based on European nuclear families and the primacy of bonding with parental figures. Attachment theory focuses on the human need for and the early life patterns of creating long-term bonds with one another. Despite criticism, including how individual attachment with a primary caregiver can be incongruent with collective care, attachment theory was highly influential, and its relevance and uptake can be seen today. This theory, filtered through child welfare policy, has had disastrous effects on Indigenous communities through government interventions. Blackstock (2009) indicates that prior to colonization and social work, Indigenous communities worked towards conflict resolution, children living with family and community and redistribution of resources when parental roles needed to be shifted. This created a community that supported families. As Choate and Tortorelli (2022) write, the focus on best-interest of the child has encouraged decision-makers to remove children and place supporting the individual over building the community. Children are also cut off from their Indigenous relatives, culture and community. There is no mediating for the legacies of colonialism in assessing poverty and the assumption of neglect that disproportionately impacts Indigenous communities (Blackstock, 2009). When this theory is applied universally, it reinforces colonization and assimilation by forcing a Eurocentric worldview on Indigenous and other racialized communities (Chaote & Tortorelli, 2022; Ife & Tascon, 2016).

Social workers gained power as knowers by mirroring the colonial relationship. Explicitly, this colonial relationship is the basis for the Sixties Scoop. The colonial relationship is sometimes less easy to name as it shows up in current interventions or 'values' embedded in programs. One example is parenting training or training that teach people to clean their homes to keep their children safe, or the Canadian way to work. It can also be traced to the idea, as encouraged in some helping areas to take any job to get 'Canadian experience.' These interventions and lack of policy analysis continue to organize social work education and practice (Jeyapal & Bhuyan, 2016). Social work as a nation-building method is firmly rooted in the early practice of advancing 'white civility' (Johnstone, 2015).

Civility is derived from the Latin word for civis, meaning citizen. Throughout Canada's nation-building,' white civility' built upon notions of Britishness has meant respectful, courteous, and polite: acting civilized.

Badwell (2015) notes that social work practices are firmly rooted in civilizing narratives from European colonization. 'White civility' is the pure, neutral, unbiased stance that informs social, cultural, and epistemological orientations. Achieving white civility has been the cornerstone of what social work

considers success. Beginning with voluntary charity work since Confederation 1867, social work has been gendered as female, class(d) are middle-class, and race(d) as white. Understanding social work through the lens of the Coloniality of Gender (Lugones, 2007) positions professionalization as a colonial tool that advanced white womanhood as the archetypal category of femininity. The identity-making within social work aligned white womanhood as naturalized helpers to enrich the upper and middle classes to 'give back' and assist others to 'improve' 'catch up' and 'rise up' (Blackstock, 2009; Jeyapal, 2020).

Historical Timeline

White women in Canada formed the Imperial Daughters of the Empire (IODE) to advance white civility as a condition of citizenship. Many of the 'founding' women deviated from their privilege of not working outside of the home to address issues they believed to be impacting the nation (Johnstone, 2015). The organization quickly grew, and the mission expanded to include a 'patriotic' approach to social work in immigration (Johnstone, 2015). Their work included developing IODE newsletters and articles, which discussed threats of invasion and overpopulation and supported the national fears of racialized immigrants/forced migrants. The IODE claimed to assist people in abandoning old ways of life in favour of those with 'value.' Based on a eugenics-laden medical model, poverty and other 'social ills' such as addictions were seen as personal and genetic failures. The medical model sees problems with the mind or body originating in biology and physiology, concluding that social ills are preventable and fixable. Eugenics used its 'science' to advance the idea of (white) racial purity. One method was to sterilize Indigenous women and those deemed 'unfit' – including poor women. Systems of classification were also the product of eugenic ideas in the early twentieth century, including family trees used to trace genetics. The science of genetics generated a body of knowledge that categorized persons according to ability, race, class, mental health, and sexual orientation. This body of knowledge was the basis for the morality drivers of social reform. Crime, prostitution, and delinquency were claimed to be genetically determined and, therefore, a public health issue (McLaren, 1990). Eugenics fueled immigration discourse by indicating that 'degenerates' (disabled, racialized) would spread crime and disease (McLaren, 1990). Another example is the classification of working-class women, including racialized women, as degenerate under eugenics, labelling them at at high risk of raising problematic children (Johnstone, 2015). Social work's public advocacy work during this time was either in support of this version of nation-building or, notably, absent (Blackstock, 2008).

Early gatekeeping saw social workers labelled immigrants/forced migrants as either 'able to' or 'unable to assimilate.' If a person was deemed 'unable to assimilate,' they were marked as a 'peril to white civilization' and should not be in Canada (Johnstone, 2015; McLaren, 1995). The IODE was not only aligned with on-the-ground practice, but key members were part of the Canadian Association of Social Workers and the beginnings of Child Protection. The work of the IODE seeped through social work, which influenced assessment practices and policy models by defining what to prevent and exclude based on Whiteness.

Other, early social reformers and social workers were involved with the Settlement House Movement. Despite the mission placing value on all of humanity, these houses were focused on enforcing Eurocentric values and ways of living. It was founded in England, gaining popularity in Canada around 1910 with the University Settlement House in Toronto, and spread throughout the country (Yan & Lauer, 2008). Intended to bridge cultural and ethnic diversity to assist people's integration into the host society, settlement houses provided immediate shelter and economic support while living with "citizenship mentors." The Settlement House chapters for women provided good mothering and

domestic skills education, which was code for British approaches to family life. Analysis of the Settlement House Movement has varied. Some, like Yan and Lauer (2008), speak to the community-building aspect of this service, while others, such as Johnstone (2015, 2016), have critiqued the use of a white civilizing discourse. Following Johnstone's (2016) claims to remedy the "foreign problem," the programming of settlement houses aimed to ensure that the immigrants/forced migrants would assimilate to become productive members of society (p. 56). This extends beyond the labour force to distancing oneself from other immigrants/forced migrants, participating in mainstream social and political activities and speaking exclusively English/French (Li, 2003). The reform or progressive part of these houses was the idea that each culture could learn from one another, enriching the social fabric of Canada. At the same time, settlement houses and workers provided the government and businesses 'insider knowledge' of other cultures (Johnstone, 2016). This knowledge was used to fuel Canada's economic edge on the global stage.

Alignment with standardized, rational knowing was constructed in contrast to the grassroots activism of primarily Black women (El-Lahib, 2022). At this time, many voluntary organizations were led by Black, Indigenous and Asian women, which is often written out of historical accounts. The Society for the Protection of Refugees in Toronto in 1854, and soon afterward, in 1856, The Ladies Coloured Fugitive Association, The Queen Victoria Benevolent Society, and The Ladies Freedman Aid Society (Shadd, Cooper, & Smardz Frost, 2005). These organizations were a blend of abolitionism, policy critique, advocacy and relief.

Professionalization began with the first university program in 1914 and the establishment of the Canadian Association of Social Work in 1926 (Johnstone & Lee, 2020). Early work was focused on settlement services, home visiting, daycare, and some poverty alleviation (Irving, 2009). However, these services were provided only to Canadian citizens who brought value into the (imagined) community. The transition from voluntary helper to professional was successful, in part, by reiterating the dominant discourses of the Stranger in immigration and the need for assimilation facilitated by social work. When the University of Toronto opened the first School of Social Work, settlement houses were one of the primary placements. Settlement workers were key lecturers, collaborating and informing the future of social work education (Johnstone, 2015). In these early years, we can see the enactment of the colonial grid, the interlocking processes that produced bodies of value, and the measurements of such. For example, people from Asian countries, based on eugenics presuppositions of their race, were considered fit for labour only. This idea of fitness infiltrated the collective Canadian consciousness, creating visual cues to signal who is out of place. For example, who is assumed to be a CEO or a University professor? The colonial grid gained depth and expanded its reach.

The saturation of "white, British, monoculture" (Johnstone & Lee, 202, p 74) into social work reflected the nation's burgeoning identity. The narrative of the CASW at the time was that hard work and advancement (the Protestant work ethic) are what immigrants/forced migrants should strive towards (Shadd, Cooper, & Smardz-Frost, 2005). At the same time, social work furthered its credibility by providing surveillance in the social reform movement that approached immigration as a social problem (Irving, Parsons, & Bellamy, 1995). As a social 'problem,' immigration needed a resolution, meaning differences needed to be minimized and/or handled. The social *problem* of migration enforces the use of borders. In reality and theoretically, borders support an imagined community (Anderson, 2016) – and keep people in and out (Ahmed, 2000).

Goals of 'technical' and 'standards' were advertised by the CASW, as opposed to ethical or social justice priorities. Leaders in the CASW focused on developing practice competencies, technical expertise, and disciplining praxis. Focusing on 'best practice' was favoured over its political goal of

improving social conditions (Jeyapal, 2020; Johnstone & Lee, 2020). During this time, the profession continued to be under the umbrella of the social sciences. It is essential to recognize that the social sciences have almost always tried to mimic the so-called hard sciences – in accepting the paradigms and elevating the ways of knowing (Ladson-Billings & Donner, 2008). One example is the use of positivism and the medical model that privileges rational, value-neutral frameworks (Fisher & Goodley, 2007). The medical model positions the scientist (or professional) as a knower. The knower determines the meaning of the relationship in this classic power-over relationship (Farre & Rapley, 2017). The professional hierarchy haunts social work in the replication of the colonial difference.

During the migration of non- Jewish Europeans during and after the post-WWII period, social work was gaining traction because of funding and was in its "Golden Era" to build back a better Canada (Irving et al., 1995). The social safety net was thought to be adequate; white masculinity and the protestant work ethic were at their height. White men were employed in the 40-hour work week, and a (nuclear) family could live on one income, with social and health benefits. Despite a push for multiculturalism, initiatives with immigrants/forced migrants continued to encourage civic participation in established ways, such as volunteering, political involvement and employment acquisition (Sakamoto, 2016). Post WWII saw an eruption of anti-migration, anti-Semitic backlash across Canada, with a fervent disdain for 'difference.' Right-wing nationalism was visibly on the rise, and after the bombing of the American naval base at Pearl Harbor in Honolulu, Hawaii, Japanese Canadians were forced into internment camps, work camps, and prison of war camps on Canadian soil or deportation (Cohn, 1985). This persecution was legal and actionable throughout Canada. A counter-narrative was critical of this persecution and divided social work into political agendas. During this time, Universal human rights had become a centerpiece of the profession and fit well with the dominant ideology of conservatism (Johnstone, 2015). Activating this conservativism was the idea that 'privilege' was the outcome of hard work, a message the female-dominated profession amplified while ignoring the growing left-wing concern about white supremacy in Canada (Johnstone, 2015; Johnstone & Lee, 2020; Sakamoto et al., 2017).

In 1945, the Citizen Branch (now Citizenship and Immigration Canada) was established to promote unity and national identity. The branch implemented social and cultural programs focusing on amplifying similarities and encouraging people to forget racial and ethnic differences. Social workers implemented this unifying agenda by appealing to a universal humanity (Iacovetta, 2006). Within the same time (1947), the *Citizenship Act* – declared Canadians as no longer British subjects (Knowles, 1997). As Canada became a signatory of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a condition was the loosening of the regulations on migration. The loosening of regulations meant strategic control from the Citizen Branch to ensure that these advances did not translate into the national identity – it remained emblematically white (Johnstone & Lee, 2020). Unity and diversity were implemented together to give the illusion of 'respect for difference,' but the implementation did not materialize. During this time, festivals and multicultural weeks became popularized to promote tolerance and learning. Ultimately, these festivals controlled when people could where they could publicly enjoy their history and provided optional engagement for non-immigrants/forced migrants. Iacovetta (2006) notes that these festivals lead to the fetishization and exoticization of 'difference', rooting the 'stranger/Other' in a different time and geography for entertainment (Ahmed, 2000).

The Conservativism, at the heart of 'professional' social work, was amplified in the 1950s Cold War era. Anti-communist rhetoric across North America stained socialism and left-leaning activism. What was slowly emerging was distrust for socialism and unionism, presenting the need for surveillance and enforcement (Foucault, 1977). With this, social work's disciplining services amplified state entrenchment increased – such as child welfare and immigration selection (Yellowhorn & Harding, 2020). Discipline and surveillance were found in all aspects of the social safety net, from poverty

alleviation to health care, to ensure appropriate government spending (Iacovetta, 2006). This degree of discipline, repression, and ongoing marginalization created what Focault called a "docile body" (Focault, 1977 p. 9), where social workers became conduits for the dominant discourse. Resistance, advocacy, and social justice for social workers ascribing to the 'professional identity' became difficult during these times – as they were a part of the system.

As those coming from 'preferred' countries continued to decline, the increase of labour needs and the international pressure to reduce the coloniality in the immigration system was mounting. Canada instituted its universal points-based system in the late 1960s, which claimed to encourage more diversity in people and professionals, enhancing Canada's knowledge base and economy. Bhuyan and colleagues (2017) suggest that this change moved immigration away from a publicly determined model to one that meets corporate interests. The points-based system also gave rise to a new form of coloniality – Canadian Experience. Shifting toward meeting the needs of the labour market was happening amidst the backdrop of social and civil resistance – including in some areas of social work and social workers. The 1960s and 1970s were a complex time in Canada, with the Civil Rights movement, the women's movement, and the advancement of labour rights – amidst the ongoing violence in Residential Schools and the Sixties Scoop.

There was an explosion of activism across the United States, to which Canada followed suit in an effort to advance social, cultural, and political rights (Sakamoto & Pitner, 2005). The *Canadian Bill of Rights* was introduced in 1960 and prohibited discrimination for reasons of race, national origin, colour, religion, or sex; in 1970, the Canadian government ratified the *International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination* (Dewing, 2013). The conservative areas of social work continued to focus on its professionalization and identity as uniquely Canadian, separating from American influences at the expense of any social justice work (Johnstone & Yee, 2020). Despite this, individual social workers and groups continued to protest and were involved in resistance movements and grassroots activism (Choudry, 2005). In the later 1970s, responding to racial activism and civil rights, Black social workers formed the Association of Black Social Workers (ABSW) in Montreal to address the unique needs of Black clients (Johnstone, 2015). This history is often less discussed as scholars have noted the intentional erasure of Black, Indigenous, and racialized advocates, activists, and social workers.

Multiculturalism

As Canada began adopting policies of multiculturalism, this approach and language filtered into social work. Multiculturalism as a value is rooted in liberalism ('respect for difference' or 'different but equal'). This approach can be problematized as remaking diversity into the bordering of the 'us' (who belongs) and 'them' (the stranger). Even when differences of language and culture are absent, the image of the stranger blankets racialized immigrant/forced migrants into an Other status – non-Christian religions, or non-English speaking are examples. Being multicultural means defining who is an accepted occupant of space (citizens, those who belong, the norm) and who is diverse *from* the norm. Ahmed (2016) indicates that Multiculturalism in practice relies on a deficit model of culture while managing the threat of the stranger. The deficit model positions people as different from the norm ***because*** of their culture, which is constructed as less than or behind the dominant in advancement. According to social work historian Yoosun Park (2005), multiculturalism constructs culture *as a* difference that immigrants/ forced migrants must manage to fit in, belong and be considered as deserving to be safe. Differences are measured through what will be tolerated and accepted by Canada and Canadians vs. what must be changed. One example is professional Social Work bodies celebrating diversity, often with food and

events or schools having courses on 'special' topics or alternative methods. Celebrating diversity in these ways keeps the epistemological and ontological roots of the knowledge base to maintain the status quo. For example, a focus on Anti-Oppressive Practice or cultural competency over shifting to Afrocentric social work.

This is important to understand for social work and the helping professions as exclusion defines the in-group (based on what they are 'not') and contains the stranger in the out-group. Who is in the out-group defines who belongs in the in-group. Immigrants/forced migrants are constructed as strangers, which in turn impacts the philosophical underpinnings of 'help.' Strangers are **known** as strange which is out of place in Canadian society. Strangers have historically been Black, Jewish, Muslim, Chinese, and Japanese immigrants, GLBTQQSA2+, and those with disabilities – axis of the colonial grid. While policy has changed over time (e.g., removing the *Chinese Exclusion Act* or introducing the Points System), legislation continues to control who can access citizenship, regularizing some while maintaining a temporary, precarious and easily deportable class such as *Temporary Foreign Workers* (Jeyapal, 2016).

Multiculturalism in Social Work

As European, mostly white immigration dwindled, there was an acknowledgment that assimilation was ill-defined as a policy approach and was not working (Berry, 2013) – and new frameworks were required to manage 'difference.' Despite Canada's move away from Eurocentric immigration policy in 1978 and the adoption of multiculturalism (George, 2002), racialized immigrants/forced migrants remained at a structural disadvantage (Carranza, 2017). Integration, as opposed to assimilation, has emerged as the ultimate goal of social work with immigrants/forced migrants (Li, 2002). Theoretical and scholarly work challenging migration, assimilation, and integration frameworks have flourished in the past two decades, yet mainstream social work remains in the trappings of Western ontologies. These hegemonic discourses of how to be healthy, appropriate forms of parenting and family, and navigating society are foundational to social work. Initiatives to increase professional 'preparedness' have ranged from adopting cultural competency and humility frameworks (Garran & Werkmeister, 2013) and taking courses on working with immigrants/forced migrants (Dominelli, 2017). Social work was focused on helping people overcome barriers and "fit in." The intentional moving away from assimilation, what difference and how much was tolerable – framed this policy and practice transition to the cultural mosaic/multiculturalism. For example, cuisine, celebrations, dance, and 'traditional' fashion are accepted and enrich the cultural mosaic. 'Breaking bread' together is a low-investment way to engage with elements of culture. What makes this 'okay' is that it is optional. Non-immigrant/forced migrants are not required to engage in food or multicultural festivals. However, in the workplace, tolerance and openness to cuisines are less culturally 'okay,' and scent-free policies are used to regulate people bringing 'ethnic' foods (Kim, 2017).

The paradigm of the cultural mosaic has considerable overlap with how social work engages with immigrants/forced migrants and the liberal 'respect for difference' approach. Shifts in social work's best practice models have diverted from direct assimilation practices toward subversive strategies to help people 'learn to be Canadian.' For example, in the 2018 study, "Immigrant Acculturation and the Intersection of Child Welfare," one social worker described immigrant/forced migrant families as: "they are just starting from a different place [than Canadian-born citizens]," reflecting the different but equal value held by many Canadians and the desire to help get 'them' to a place that's acceptable. Other social workers noted the assimilation inherent in their work with families. For example: "there is a reason behind it [requiring families to act in accordance to Child Welfare standards], but it's still trying to impose these values onto families, and I feel that it isn't always fair and it takes away their autonomy as

a family to raise their children [….]. “It’s always a struggle imposing these white middle-class values.” Assimilation requires people to blend into Canada through ways of thinking and being.

According to Nylund (2006), elements of multicultural education have been commonplace in university social work programs since the late 1970s or early 1980s. The central themes of multiculturalism were translated into the practice model – **cultural competency**. This model is an ongoing process whereby the helper gains awareness of and appreciation for cultural diversity and the ability to work sensitively, respectfully, and proficiently with those from diverse backgrounds (Azzopardi & McNeill, 2016). According to Lum (1999), the culturally competent practice model focuses on four areas: (1) cultural awareness, (2) knowledge acquisition, (3) skill development, and (4) inductive learning. A central assumption of this model is that, by teaching students about various ethnic and racial groups, one would be more sensitive and empathic to the needs of the stranger in the social work encounter (Lum, 1999). As with the national multiculturalism policy, ‘getting to know’ and ‘knowing’ people who are different is a strategy for successful engagement.

Cultural competency has evolved. However, like the medical model, the ideological origins still have influence today. There can be cultural differences between Canadian and Scandinavian or European – but this model is primarily concerned with racialized differences (McLaren, 1995). Given the history and the naturalizing of white womanhood into the profession, the subject position of those developing cultural competency was one of belonging – through whiteness, employability, and citizenship. Much of the literature indicates that the trappings of cultural competence lie in its apolitical stance, weak analysis of power relations, promotion of othering, and inadequate disregard for oppression at systemic and structural levels (Abrams & Moio, 2009; Azzopardi & McNeill, 2016). McLaren (1995) also identified that cultural competency lacks a critique of structural exclusion, meaning it delinks the outcomes of oppression to the systems that produce it. One example is understanding poverty for immigrants/forced migrants as an individual issue related to gender roles and not the result of how the labour market is organized. Poverty continues to be viewed as an individual failure to work hard enough, assimilate, gain Canadian experience or save prior to arrival in Canada. Excluding a systemic analysis erases the correlations between poverty to discrimination in employment practices, including not recognizing credentials or how racialized women are often streamlined into low-wage work. Using cultural competency situates social workers across from the stranger. Social Workers are engaging from *their* subject position to work ‘across’ cultures.

The desire to work with people from various cultures is not inherently problematic but can result in judging from a position or ways of knowing rooted in Whiteness (Nylund, 2006). As Blackstock (2009) indicates, the helpee is considered as needing to be improved, and looking externally for that guidance. The embedded nature of Whiteness can obscure the complexities of resettlement and being racialized through this process. It can also mean ascribing to the narrative held in the Canadian psyche, such as the protestant work ethic/myth of meritocracy. Making whiteness the pinnacle of humanity, claiming it to be a natural state of being, and leaving it un-interrogated is the crux of creating the Stranger/Other. Like the medical model, creating Strange(r)ness in relation to self can lead social workers and other professionals to pathologize what they deem ‘problems’ to culture (Jensen, 2011). The Stranger is reinforced through language, the use of ‘them’ as a group identity in relation to ‘us’ (the dominant), rooting people into an ahistorical understanding of difference. An example of ahistorical understandings is how the Global North and classic feminism view the Hijab as backward and oppressive, yet little analysis is applied to the use of Christian Nuns’ habit (traditional outfit).

With ‘cross–cultural’ and cultural competency, there is little dialogue on the starting point. The culture that the social worker is looking from. This means the initial cultural lens and perspective from which

the social worker approaches their profession is not named. These approaches reinforce that there is one normative position to work *from*. It assumes that the professional/client do not share racial, ethnic, linguistic, or cultural similarities. At times, acknowledging and valuing difference can seem optimistic, exemplified by statements such as 'the same, but different' and 'we are all equal' slogans. Multiculturalism and cultural competency can universalize experiences as an easy way to understand people or 'know' the Stranger/Other. For example universalizing, Carranza (2021) discusses the construction of women from Central America along the colonial grid in Canada and the expectations assigned to their identity. The Global North interprets the gender binary for much of Central America and South America as encompassed in *machismo* and *marianismo.*

Machismo posits that men must protect and exert dominance, aggression, and oppression on women. On the other hand, *Marianismo* cements women's obedience, submission to men, and selfless devotion to family—mirroring the Virgin Mary's attributes (Gutierrez, 2004). These gendered attributes hail from Catholicism and devotion to religion (Carranza, 2017). From the lens of the Global North, *Machismo* may be constructed as hyper-masculine, leading to abuse, and *Marianismo* is correlated with passivity and acceptance. Cultural competency may position these tropes as the cause or source of problems during resettlement if there is abuse in the relationship. This framework delinks experiences of violence from the stress of migration, racism, colonization, or structural oppression (Carranza, 2017).

Around the same period of the growing activism of the 1960s and 1970s, Anti-Oppressive Practice (AOP), influenced by Marxist, socialist, and radical ideologies, structural/sociological understandings of oppressions, emancipatory and feminist perspectives were emerging (Dominelli, 2002; Sakamoto, 2005). Sakamoto and Pitner (2005) note that the AOP framework was the first time 'professional' social work was linked to social justice. Each of these theories approaches one form of oppression as its entry point. For example, feminism focuses on gender and radical social work, on class. AOP umbrellas each oppression (e.g., heteronormativity or racism) to collapse each into a larger unit of analysis. AOP provides a framework for understanding the range of structural marginalization(s) to include people's experiences. 'Lived experience' becomes the focus of working at the individual level, with social workers using the encounter to challenge the dynamics of power.

AOP has its problems. Collaboration and equal partnership are critical components of this approach, but as a 'top-down' profession, these goals may not actualize in practice. While social work has been navigating its reckoning with inherent power dynamics and atrocities – this has not successfully resolved this dynamic (Janes, 2016). As Sakamoto and Pitner (2005) point out, this power dynamic makes the encounter vulnerable to reproducing the 'knower/known' trap. People may not want to engage or have their experience utilized for social justice (Dominelli, 2012). Morgaine and Capous-Desyllas (2019) have suggested that the underlying model of AOP is around redistribution and recognition of rights. There is little change to structures and systems in both approaches, instead relying on the 'separate but equal' and 'tolerance of difference' approaches. Johnstone and Lee (2020) draw attention to the power ascribed to the profession in determining who belongs and receives services from the state. With this power, organizations and workers have enforced and surveilled for the state in immigration work. While cultural competency and AOP may have brought social work closer to social justice work, the power dynamics remain reminiscent of the colonial relationship – with state-ascribed power.

Immigration and social work experienced a neoliberal turn in the 1990s (Baines, 2015; Bhuyan et al., 2017). This turn is often associated with globalization and modernity – moving forward, progress on a global scale. Neoliberalism encourages a basic welfare state with minimal intervention from the government, as the market (economy) will function independently and provide for people. In this idea, individuals and families can work, accumulate wealth and care for themselves. If a person needs

services beyond what the government provides (for example, disability support), a family member, faith-based organization, or community should be able to provide for them and assist with any excess (Baines, 2015). Resettlement and immigration are often framed as ‘too costly’ (Thobani, 2000) – a companion thought to the narratives of overpopulation, not enough resources, and threats of invasion by the stranger (Carranza, 2017). These narratives support government cutbacks to ‘welfare services’ and the attempt to shift responsibility – including resettlement– to charity organizations, churches, and private businesses. Immigration and resettlement assistance became more punitive and restrictive during this period, justified by a ‘scarcity’ of resources. Surveilling the ‘need’ and ‘deservingness’ increased the role of social workers in government and community organizations (Bhuyan et al., 2017; Sakamoto, 2006). Timelines were established, and benchmarks were created – to ensure people were actively working towards ‘catching up’ or participating in the economy and not ‘draining’ it.

Canada maintains a pre-determined level of immigration to resolve flat population growth and to protect the image of a welcoming nation, receiving international recognition for its multicultural policies. With the narrative of scarcity rising amidst neoliberalism (Thobani, 2000), the idea that opening borders would diminish Canadian resources fuels public support for ‘select’ immigrants – those closer to Whiteness. The points system continues to value Whiteness as the unmarked body: cis-gendered, able, heteronormative, and productive. As the points system gained traction by valuing transferability and ease of resettlement deemed immigrants/forced migrants without ‘Canadian Experience’ and education ‘ineligible/insufficient/deficient’. This assessment was a subversive way to exclude certain people without infringing on rights or protections. Despite this racial codification and justifiable employment discrimination, the usage of ‘Canadian Experience’ remained until an Ontario Human Rights appeal in 2013 (Bhuyan et al., 2017). Social work was active in this discriminatory practice in two ways: advocating for volunteering and low-wage work to assist in employment experience. Second, requiring education and experience to be a professional social worker in Canada.

Decolonial approaches are gaining traction in social work but remain limited to deconstructing the Other. Learning about ‘other’ epistemologies and ontologies remains optional (Carranza, forthcoming). Rossiter (2011) challenges the capacity of social work to engage in decolonization with its footing in violence and exploitative history, suggesting a reorientation of social work and its ethics. Social work knowledge continues to be steeped in Whiteness, amplifying coloniality and promoted as generalizable across the globe. Keeping a generalist knowledge base encourages confidence to work with the stranger – people in Canada, and even across borders (Razack, 2009). Social work is taught as placid, flexible, and adaptable – a set of skills that can be applied in various settings. Understanding how knowledge is recreated in the encounter with immigrants/forced migrants is essential to revealing the embedded Whiteness of the discourse. We must center how organizations attempt to hold fast to coloniality – no matter the identities of those working.

Conclusion

The history discussed in this chapter is essential to understanding the current Canadian nation-building project. In its various manifestations, social work remains an insider to the state. Since the beginning of professionalization, social work has claimed an area of competence, determined by a unique knowledge, based on personal suitability to move practice away from volunteering or neighborly giving (Nothdurfter & Lorenz, 2010). Professional social work has intentionally sought insider status amidst a system that conceptualizes nation and citizenship through an interlocking system of coloniality – class relations, racialization, and patriarchy (Sharma, 2000). Gaining professional recognition in the Global North meant alignment with the medical model and practice standards. Attempting to find uniqueness meant

distancing ‘helping’ from the hard science professions. Social work has more recently propelled an image of a grassroots, social justice narrative, which ironically has shaped and been shaped by a whitewashed narrative (Gooding & Mehrota, 2021). Gooding and Mehrota (2021) write about how the history of social work has not only been whitewashed by dismissing the contributions of Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour – but embedded in the white supremacy that supports their erasure. Kelechi and their colleagues (2021) map the history of social work while layering an analysis of how key figures, theories, and practices were erased. This whitewashed narrative has glorified the contributions of white, namely women, in favour of the more radical work of Black, Indigenous, and Racialized social workers.

This insider status was made possible by the attempts to adopt the rationale and language of modernity (Nothdurfter & Lorenz, 2010). This rationale of modernity and the reliance on the positivist paradigm promoted the respectability of social work as professional, and in academia. ‘What works’ and ‘best practices’ are based on the logic of modernity and rationality.

Coloniality is a rethinking of how colonialism operationalized its ideologies in different times and spaces to permeate all aspects of social life. There is a complex relationship between the past and present that continues. Coloniality allows us to investigate how the colonial encounter and colonial relationship model the complexities impacting social work today. Looking through a lens of coloniality:

- Reflect on how your own social work/placement experience(s) support the notion of assimilation
- How do the discourses of worthiness and belonging are present in the day-to-day of your social work discussions?
- What is the value of decolonial social work?
    - What is gained?
    - What is lost?

7

Chapter Seven: Helpers as Knowers

Abstract: As helpers, we must examine our stories and those we work with and ask what certain stories “do”? What are the taken-for-granted assumptions that underlie the truth claims in our stories? Thinking about the truths in us and our stories, how/why we tell them, challenges the notion that there is one truth. One truth often means that some stories are considered more truthful, valued and accepted. These questions move us away from thinking that the well-worn pathway of social work is natural and that certain bodies are more apt to help.

Key Concepts: Deserving, identity, margins, centre and knowledge

Introduction

The social work encounter or the imagined site of helping is predicated on several factors, including the helper’s knowledge, skills and capacity. The helper/helpee relationship is time-limited, purpose-driven and regulated via organizations and professional bodies (e.g. The Canadian Association of Social Workers). This helping encounter exists within the history of social work and the involvement in migration. Helpers assist in both navigating belonging and maintaining the borders of exclusion.

Historical constructions of the **deserving** immigrants/forced migrants have been imagined as needing rescue and protection and wanting to be repaired. Embedded in perceptions of **deserving** is the ability to Canadianize, including leaving culture and language behind upon arrival. Historically, Helping professions have promoted positive acculturation, resettlement and maintaining Canadian ways as the ideal (Badwall, 2015). Tropes of "working hard" and "contributing to the fabric of Canada" are coded as proper assimilation and are projected onto those who *deserve* to come to Canada. Even those perceived as deserving experience scrutiny and investigation for elements of the stranger. The stranger has been met with fear and disdain as they threaten the nation's homogeneity (Thobani, 2007). Resistance to strangeness is cloaked under the claim of becoming a drain to the social support systems, including housing and health, stealing, and invasion. Opposingly, agency and resiliency are valued as an extension of "rising up" and overcoming adversity (i.e., leaving one's country of origin and making a life in Canada). As the meaning of helping suggests, social workers, therapists, counsellors and other adjacent professions are positioned to assist immigrants/forced migrants in their Canadianization process.

The process of resettlement intersects with the categorizations of difference along the lines of the ***colonial grid***, including age (Carranza & Grigg, 2022), gender (Carranza, 2017), disabilities (El-Lahib, 2015), and the racialization process of becoming a Canadian. Access to civility dictates who has the right to be a citizen and who is seen as multicultural vs. the stranger (Razack, 2002; Thobani, 2007). Linked to structural imperatives – such as the racialization and feminization of labour, immigrants/ forced migrants are required to overcome any obstacles, and help is provided to those who show the most promise and benefit to Canada (Fudge, 2021). Resettlement, idealized as 'overcoming,' is code for the struggle of coming from the Global South to the North and delinks experiences from larger systemic structures such as coloniality and globalization. It also invisibilizes capitalist advancement in how the Global North advances its interests by exploiting countries in the Global South – the destruction Canada creates mining, i.e., the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Peru, the U. S's vested interests in Central America or the UK's ongoing coloniality in Anguilla. When the journey stops upon arrival, problems are considered "there." This demarcation draws in the questions:

- How is the helping encounter experienced by those who may not be represented "here"?
- How is the symbolism of "overcoming" coded in daily helping practices?

The journey of migration is constantly in motion. Resettlement can last a lifetime.

Relationships predicated on the "knower" are like the rescuer, hero or 'rising up' narratives. These types of relationships are based on ideologies of *modernity* and assume progress, mobility, and achievement are possible – especially in this cultural mosaic of Canada. This narrative skews the reality that migration is a lived process, and many times, people experience trauma in their country of origin during their journey to and in Canada. The promise(s) of multiculturalism gives the illusion that upon arrival – safety is achieved, life is now 'better,' and difference will be respected. The grief for connections, family in the country of origin, and the ways of being before migration is often dismissed and/or invalidated, assuming that people will now have a 'better life,' they are lucky to have been chosen or to have been accepted to resettle in CanadaCarranza & Grigg, 2022). As discussed in *Acculturation as a Family Process*, this grief is fluid, ambiguous, and unfinished.

Migration, in many ways, is trauma/traumatic and exists in the material conditions of people's lives. For example, experiencing racism in healthcare contributes to a decline in well-being. In the case of racialized immigrants/forced migrants, trauma can be exacerbated by living amidst those who benefit from ongoing coloniality, racism and marginalization (Carranza, 2007a, 2007b; Pottie et al., 2005; Turner & Simmons, 2006). However, these correlations and outcomes are often misunderstood and

deemed **barriers** to accessing services. There is no shortage of literature discussing barriers to seeking help (Martínez et al., 2020), lack of access (Grupp, 2019) and other structural barriers disguised as individual immigrant/forced migrant problems.

Question: What are some examples of barriers that are actually structural or masking coloniality?

Loss of belonging is structural. Being locked out of belonging materializes in, but is not limited to, education, work, health, and relationships. One example is the push to volunteer to gain Canadian experience, but credentials will not be recognized. Starting over with no pay to acquire skills, knowledge and connections considered valid. 'Help' is positioned as assistance in resettlement, job training, and language learning, all the tasks of "catching up." Yet, there is an acknowledgment that current practice interventions are falling short. Helpers are not required to include social justice or macro-level work; cultural competency is often removed from the history of coloniality. *Help* enforces colonial norms of Canada – individualism over community, privileging of the nuclear family and getting ahead. One of the 'hallmarks' of social work is to work with the person in their environment (Colby & Dziegielewski, 2004), yet various modalities do not include the family, community and transnational relationships.

One assumption taken for granted is that helpers *know* how things are done: how to get a job, learn the language, or access education. The second is around occupying a historical White space as someone who is differently situated on the colonial grid. In terms of race, when the helper does not fit this role, their knowledge is challenged, they are questioned, and they experience racism (Badwall, 2015).

The question is, who is seen as someone who 'knows'?

CASE:

A service user requesting services complaint to the director that he/she had been assigned a 'coloured' social worker and that he would like to be transferred to a 'Canadian social worker'. The social worker in question was the fourth generation born in Canada, held an MSW and had 12 years of practice experience. When this was disclosed to the service user, she/he responded that he/she preferred to receive help from a 'real Canadian social worker.' The service user was transferred to a white Canadian social worker who had recently graduated with her BSW.

Helping as the Colonial Mirror

The history of helping in migration and resettlement has narrated, animated, and analyzed how Canada has constructed its nationhood as *saviour* within the work of multiculturalism. In this praxis – the Other, the stranger, has been a pivotal construct to maintain whiteness through the appearance of purity, civility, citizenship, belonging and goodness. Social work has positioned itself as 'eclectic' with many intervention models to recognize diversity but maintains its knowing stance. However, the deeply embedded desire to manage the strangeness of the stranger remains structurally enforced (Razack, 1998). Social work is dependent on differences and works towards assimilation. Popular social work texts, such as *Social Work: The People's Profession* (Colby & Dziegielewski, 2004) to a more recent example, *Introduction to Social Work in Canada: Histories, Contexts and Practices* (Denov et al., 2015), identify the first step in diversity work is critical reflexivity, with identifying social location. The next step is determining a holistic intervention encompassing the intersections of 'client' identities. Simply put, social work education claims that understanding, recognizing, and integrating diversity into practice will move the encounter along to resolve the issues with structural advocacy work second.

Question: *What does this mean in practice?*

How does this show up in social work?

The 'identity' of social workers is changing – moving away from the naturally worn pathway of whiteness – and opening up new ways of practice and advocacy (Ahmed, 2005; Janes, 2016). New ways have implications for the knowledge base of social work, which requires a shift in epistemologies and ontologies to engage in decolonialism. As discussed in previous chapters, representation, such as special interest topics, is not enough. Non-western knowledge is not valued in mainstream social work and helping; at best, these are named "out-of-the-box." Exclusion extends beyond a lack of foreign credential recognition to how people from the Global South's knowledge is discounted as not the "way things are done around here." Social workers operate amidst a myriad of neoliberal technologies of standardization to enhance productivity and drive down costs (Baines, 2010). When neoliberalism structures a workplace, managerialism often intentionally stifles innovation, reinforcing how things have always been done and cementing a pre-established valued knowledge base. While claims that innovation is at the heart of helping, colonial conditioning is still ever-present and shapes whose ideas will be valued (Whebi et al., 2015). Unpacking value has meant assessing what is in the best interest of service users under the guise of quality assurance and standardization.

Therapeutic spaces often mirror colonial relations. Whiteness and privilege remain in the encounter – even when the social worker is not white. A "knower" hails from a pre-existing assumption that the dominant can and has the right to this knowledge of immigrants/forced migrants—a juxtaposition for ideologies driving social work boundaries and ethics. In the past, therapeutic spaces have been visibly white, and over time, this whiteness has been embedded in these relations. One example is objectivity, neutrality and boundaries. Each of these examples can be seen as being disconnected and not "too close" to an issue. As faces change, we remain beholden to history via evidence-informed and best practices. When a person is the standard that belongs as the helper, their ways of knowing and being can challenge and push back – not all identities are afforded this power. These standards are presented as neutral to allow 'anyone' to fill the social work role. However, when people are not visibly "from here," how can they assist someone else in aligning themselves with Canadian ways? In these types of questions, the power relations of the social work encounter are revealed. For example, the idea that power is unidirectional or is structured as over 'clients.' While this has been problematized in recent years to renegotiate 'power with,' the inescapable original configuration of helper/needs help remains (Janes, 2016). Coloniality of Power (Quijano, 2000) indicates that this power over structure is modelled on the original colonial relationships.

Baswell (2015) suggests that one of the ways helping spaces mirror colonial relations is the *scripts of whiteness,* which are warmth, genuine, unconditional positive regard, and empathy (Badwell, 2015). These characteristics are not objective; they are related to the history of social work and placement on the colonial grid, including race, migration, and gender influence, and can be perceived as warm, caring, genuine, and empathic. Ultimately, these practices are coded in a particular set of behaviours – derived from notions of the history of white womanhood (Jeyapal & Bhuyan, 2017). Aligned with the social justice ideals of the profession, these coded behaviours and practice norms operate to define and govern what is *'good' practice* (Badwall, 2015). 'Good' practices are presented in social work as neutral, client-focused, respectful and competent. Being 'good' also includes being friendly and welcoming, mirroring the image Canada portrays (Jeyapal, 2018). The result has been a hegemonic subscription to a particular identity that *belongs* in the encounter due to its capacity to role model a 'good' Canadian. Resulting in the **Helper as Knower**.

Colonial conditioning and the scripts of whiteness extend beyond white social workers. The ethical practice and desired characteristics that formed the hegemonic performance of helping have unevenly impacted those who do not fit the mould. Experiences of marginalization and harassment in the profession, and lower pay are two examples (Bailey, 1998; Jeyapal & Bhuyan, 2017). The performance demands change depending on one's location on the colonial grid. For example, those with marginalized identities are ascribed less capacity for neutrality and experience accusations of being 'too close' to people and/or issues. Further, difference from Whiteness is often essentialized. One way this can manifest is by expecting immigrants/forced migrants to know everything about migration policy and resettlement. This is not the case with those who "look" Canadian; in this way, sanctioned ignorance is acceptable (Carranza, 2017). Practice frameworks such as cultural competency and humility act as a buffer for not knowing but are only afforded to some identities (Nylund, 2006). By way of example, one young person who migrated alone from Central America recounted how when working with a school counsellor for their immigration status– they thought they could bring all the documents to their session and would receive help. Instead, the counsellor (who was born in Canada) encouraged them to "be independent" and ask others who had been through the process how to renew their student visa and residency applications. The participant felt that the counsellor assumed that all applications were the same and that all immigrants/forced migrants knew how to navigate the system – while they did not. Yan (2010) echoed these sentiments in their research with the British Columbia Association of Social Workers, where less than 20% of respondents had received formal training on policies and resettlement, and less than half felt comfortable assisting in anything related to immigration.

The young person from Central America's experience demonstrates how people are expected to represent or speak for their identities. These expectations extend into the workplace and assumptions of how, for example, employees who are immigrants/forced migrants are expected to 'know' what is happening for those engaging in services. In these ways, lived experience is valued to increase proficiency and meet service users' needs (Bhyuan & Lee, 2015). In discussions of proximity to issues, the neutrality of whiteness is reified – white social workers rarely have their identities called into question when connecting with people. When a connection is built within boundaries (rooted in individualism), white social workers may be questioned, but not *their whiteness.*

Racialized workers are often judged on the *scripts of whiteness*, which presents a paradox – being and belonging in the profession is conditional. However, the professional status is automatically thought to place them in a privileged position in relation to the 'client' (Healy, 2000). Therefore, racialized and Other identities are at times believed to be helping through similar 'cultural' characteristics, but can be switched into defined as a hindrance – too connected and the potential for boundary transgressions. These notions reinforce the idea of helping as a one-dimensional power-over relationship (Lundy, 2004). Badwall (2015) found in their research with racialized social workers – they are ignored, gaslit, and treated with hostility when they name racism. This could be in their daily work with clients or coworkers or when they advocate for changes at the practical, theoretical and structural levels of organizations. Understanding the colonial continuities that inform the current state of practice is complex. As Ahmed (2005) indicates, pushing for social justice often requires naming practices that harm, oppress, or marginalize others, but when this naming occurs, the namer often gets cast as the problem. Nevertheless, social work continues to cause harm under the masquerade of moral superiority, helping, and goodness (Badwell, 2015). Neutrality is idealized, hailing from positivism, to not influence 'clients' – exercising boundaries.

The following case studies illustrate that this positioning in the helping encounter is fluid, changing, and altered by who is 'performing.'

Case Studies

Questions to trace the colonial grid:

- *How do we analyze these scenarios? What informs our lens?*

In tracing a critique of multiculturalism and the history of social work, we can also ask:

- *How is the context of migration and racialization examined in the encounter, which has the potential to reproduce the colonial relationship?*

As you work through the following case studies, try to keep the following questions in mind:

- How is race animated in social work and the helping relationship?
- How are the colonial identity and relationships navigated by both—
- the helper and the client(s)?
- Who occupies space at the margin and at the centre?

Case One: 'We do not see race'

> Alison was a racialized social worker employed by a mainstream organization. She had been hired specifically to work with newcomers, to which she agreed. However, after a year or so, she made the request to her supervisor to diversify her caseload. After some weeks went by without a response, she approached her supervisor again, who responded that after discussing it with the organization's directors, some 'concerns' had emerged. These were related to her accent, but, most of all, her ability to relate to the lived experiences of white people. "We don't see race, you know, but our clients probably do," her supervisor added.

Questions:

- What assumptions come to mind about Alison?
- What is informing their supervisor's response?
- What are the possible outcomes of a 'we don't see race approach'?

Case Two and Three: Who's knowledge?

Emily

> Emily, a Canadian-trained social worker, was employed by a settlement organization to provide trauma counselling to newcomers. However, she faced many day-to-day challenges. One significant challenge was that, from time to time, some service users were concerned about her 'ethnic' background and refused to receive services from her and requested a 'white Canadian' social worker, even if this meant working with a cultural interpreter. The most significant reason given was that White Canadians had 'superior' knowledge, or they knew more than her. The second was their fear of being judged by 'one of their own.'

Laura:

> Laura is a racialized social worker, whose caseload is composed of racialized folks. She enjoyed

> working with diverse groups–as she found it easy to relate to their experiences, i.e., shared history of adversity and so forth. However, she faced various challenges. The most significant is related to the "you know." Meaning, whenever she was asking inquisitive questions to get a sense of the service user's experience, perception or meaning-making about a particular situation, more often than not, service users would respond with "you know" or "you know how it is" or "you know how things are". When she'd press for more information, some service users would get offended or taken aback, like surprised that she wouldn't know.

Questions:

- What processes are at play?
- How does colonial conditioning influence these processes?
- In understanding these complex processes – what is an ideal way to proceed?

Case Three: Where are you from?

> While in group supervision, Janine, a racialized social worker, discussed that she was tired of her white clients always asking where she was from, and where she had received her social work credentials? How many years she'd been in Canada? Her white supervisor responded, "well, they have the right to ask questions and get to know who we are". While a white peer responded, "Have you considered that perhaps you are too sensitive?" Janine responded, do they ask the same questions of you? A few weeks later, Janine was transferred to another supervisor. When asking about the transfer to another supervisor, she was told that "it was the agency's procedure … to rotate people to different supervisors." Meanwhile, she was the only one experiencing such rotation.

Questions:

- How are "rights" being operated in this scenario?
- What are Janine's clients and supervisor's assumptions? And what is informing these assumptions?
- What are the scripts of whiteness at play in this scenario?

Discussion

Each case study represents some deeply held beliefs in Canada and the profession. The claim to not 'see race' is problematic in many ways, one being that it attempts to erase the historical present of racialized social workers. It is a specific subject position to claim to 'not see' violence, oppression, and marginalization, which not everyone is allowed to not see/ignore. There is an attempt to minimize differences, which can be a source of comfort to some. Colonial conditioning asserts that some people must make their identities more comfortable than others – i.e. not being "too much". In Alison's case, there is concern that she cannot be effective with non-racialized clients and may be off-putting to them. The power dynamics in this case do not represent the common understanding of power over, as Alison is assumed not to understand these clients. The organization appears to be investing the power dynamics in favor of the status quo.

In unpacking Emily's practice experience, she identified that positioning whiteness and the Canadian way was understood as the pathway to "fitting in." With multiple processes at play, understanding how each is positioned on the colonial grid – one, a worker and the other seeking services can be seen as

navigating the structural impetus towards assimilation pushed in immigration. It also challenges the notion that people have single identities and are made up of complexities; while some may want to work with similar people, others do not. It also speaks to how we come to 'know' people with the opportunity for privacy. This also undercuts the narrative of how representation can achieve equity produced by neoliberalism.

Janine is facing what can be understood as a boundary violation, but it also has some implications for 'who belongs' and whose knowledge is valued. In this scenario, one way of interpretation is how the service user or client assumed that they had the *right* to *know* personal information about Janine. This is often the case with the colonial migrant – often exoticized as from somewhere 'far away' and should be open to discussing that by virtue of being in Canadian space. The expectation is that Janine must be open to explaining her identity in a way her colleagues, who may seemingly belong, do not. The underlying claim is that strangeness can be known, and those inhabiting it must be open to explaining it in a way that is understood. Janine is encouraged to comply with this person's request by her organization, implicitly indicating that telling people personal information related to migration is accepted. In this instance, telling people information is positioned as a condition of "good" social work.

In each of these cases, how the social worker's knowledge was taken up in the encounter is challenged by those working with and their organizations. This challenge results from colonial conditioning. "*Where are you from*?" is a question with assumptions embedded and can be weaponized against those perceived as strange. Pushing back and not answering is a site of resistance. This resistance is often met with disdain from organizations. Navigating the type of scenarios faced by Emily presents another challenge. Often, it is assumed to be internalized thoughts and feelings related to racism and marginalization – which can also be true. However, an element of colonial conditioning suggests Western ways of knowing are superior.

Conclusion

Each case is full of nuance. The case studies invite new questions about how the role is constructed and maintained in education and agencies. There is also a need to discuss the idea that power is unidirectional at its roots – with the social worker/helper higher on the hierarchy. As a profession, the idea that the role and practices have power and the client is always powerless is outdated and needs to be re-examined with an understanding of coloniality and the colonial grid. In the case of social work, its pedagogy needs to examine how ideologies of diversity, cross-culture work, and other methods of 'knowing' have (re)produced an environment that essentializes and marginalizes racialized workers.

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Chapter Eight: Migration as a Family Process

Abstract. The purpose of this chapter is to re-conceptualize acculturation as a family process. Latin Americans who have settled in North America will be utilized as a case sample, as their common thread is the history of colonization and oppression. Hence, its applications will be relevant to diverse groups from colonized spaces. To do so, three theoretical frameworks are examined: family systems, social psychology, and economic sociology. This reconceptualization contributes to the existing literature in four ways: (1) it takes into account how immigrant experiences are shaped by the global economy, (2) it brings into focus the family context of migration, (3) it conceptualizes the immigrant family as a

dynamic system moving across time and across borders and, (4) it offers the opportunity for research initiatives that are resource focused and take into account the complexities of the phenomenon of family immigration processes.

Key concepts: Historical trauma, transnational families, acculturation, social psychology, economic sociology and family systems theory

Introduction

Immigration in the global world has mostly focused on the individual and the macro levels (Root et al., 2014). Theorizations at the family level remain limited. This gap presents an opportunity to reimagine acculturation as a family process, specifically for those coming from previously colonized territories in the Global South to the Global North. Factors influencing acculturation from three bodies of literature will be assembled to create a new proposed approach, family systems, social psychology and economic sociology. Each of these theoretical frameworks offers complementary and unique concepts to arrive at such a reconceptualization. A systems perspective provides thinking on how families navigate cultural transitions and mediating factors; social psychology, to illustrate how individual experiences impact the family and finally, economic sociology details how labour market structuring and integration shapes acculturation is experienced. Using these concepts will produce a more complex understanding of how migrant families, specifically those perceived as the Stranger/Other, go through the changes involved in moving from their home country and settling in a new place. Finally, emerging from these concepts and gaps, an integrative definition of "family acculturation" is presented.

Latin American migrants who have settled in North America will be utilized as a case example. While a very diverse region, not only racially (i.e., Blacks, Indigenous, Asians, Arab and White European) but also linguistically (i.e., Spanish, Indigenous dialects, English, French, Creole and Portuguese) (Sanabria, 2015), its common thread is the history of colonization and coloniality. Hence, the applications draw in not only the three frameworks but also the colonial grid and coloniality to be relevant with diverse groups from colonized spaces in helping encounters.

Understanding Acculturation

Theories of acculturation have their footprints in anthropology and sociology, with growing influence from social psychology (Ngo, 2008). Berry (1992) has argued that psychological changes in the individual involve significant behavioural and internal transformations. Individuals may experience five types of changes during the acculturation process: physical, biological, cultural, social, and psychological. The type and degree of these changes will depend largely on the degree of differences between the individual and the respective context. Furthermore, Berry and Kim (1988) proposed that there are several modes of acculturation. These are: (a) **assimilation**, (b) **integration**, (c) **separation** (or segregation) and (d) **marginalization**. Outcomes range from: relinquishing their original cultural identity and becoming as similar as possible to members of the settlement country (assimilation), to being isolated from both their host society and their cultural of origin (marginalization). Weinreich (2009) added **enculturation**, wherein people merge their two identities by keeping parts their heritage and culture, while incorporating others from the settlement country. Berry (2006) argued that these changes may result in acculturative stress, identity transformations, shifts in personality and attitudinal changes.

Ngo (2008) has suggested that these theories unify experiences and create a taken-for-granted "truth" about migration. Understanding the construction of the migrant family as the Stranger requires

an analysis of the contextual landscape. Migrant families cannot be separated from their historical, political and social realities, and neither can Canada. Using a frame of coloniality, the proposed model of family acculturation speaks to the ways that structural marginalization, including barriers to citizenship and economic integration, influences the migration journey. Further, it considers the ways that racism, discrimination, marginalization and prejudice have been significant components of the cultural history and social experience of Latin Americans (Viruell-Fuentes, Miranda and Abdulrahim, 2012). Hernández-Wolfe (2013) added that in the case of Latin Americans, the history of colonialism has shaped entitlements and privilege, or lack thereof.

The maintenance of 'difference' underscores policies and perceptions of immigration, contributing to the production of the ethno-racial hierarchy in Canada. It is within the broader context of reception and how immigration intersects with racism and prejudice, which significantly impacts family functioning and parent and child development during resettlement (Pereira, Chapman & Stein, 2006). Those arriving from colonized territories, faces pronounced challenges in their integration processes due to racial differences, which mark them as the Stranger: the colonial immigrant. This is a result of how, as Carranza (2016) asserts, our day-to-day interactions take place wherein the categorization of people, inherited from colonialism, is still used to navigate human relationships and identities and influences senses of belonging. In the dominant space, this informs perceptions about where particular individuals ought to belong. This is the foundation of the **colonial grid**, which roots 'difference' in people's psyche. These differences are expressed through various transmuted responses (verbal and nonverbal), including tone of voice and subordinate and/or passive body language, postures and reactions toward the racialized 'other' (Hernández-Wolfe, 2013). These reactions often manifest into day-to-day experiences of micro-aggressions (Hernández, Carranza & Almeida, 2010).

Family Systems Theory

Family systems theorists have concluded that acculturation is a life-long journey, with effects spanning several generations. Conflicts that may arise from acculturation are understood as normative and a part of transitions throughout the life cycle. The concepts presented below draw attention to how adaptation and response occur during acculturation and the ways that the family system responds. The seminal work of McGoldrick and Carter (1999) sets the foundation for understanding family functioning through negotiating relationships and adaptation. They situate families as systems moving through time and, as such, face challenges across the life span, which forces a re-organization of relationships, triggering changes in the system. The authors argued that families:

> encompass the entire emotional system of at least three, and frequently now four or even five, generations held together by blood, legal, and/or historical ties. Relationships with parents, siblings, and other family members go through transitions as they move along the life cycle. (p.1)

For Latin Americans, in particular, who share a strong sense of *familismo*, where the needs of the family are more important than the individual (Bacallao & Smokowski, 2007), it is important to note this system often involves members in the settlement country, abroad and includes deceased family members (Carranza, 2007a). When family members cross borders and resettle, family transitions become more complex and are layered on top of the life cycle changes (Falicov, 2014).

Families in Cultural Transition

Transitions involve many losses: home, extended family, relationships, and cultural environment

that can have intergenerational effects on the family (McGoldrick & Carter, 1999). Boss (2010) posits that migration creates a sense of "ambiguous loss"; that is, to remain psychologically connected to family members left behind while being strongly affected by their absence, which may never be resolved. Ambiguous loss disrupts through the uncertainty of these losses. Ambiguity confuses family dynamics through physical separation, reunions, and uncertainty, forcing people to question their roles and re-organize the unit to ensure its functioning for what is to come.

Separation and reunions during the migratory process require constant shifting in the family functioning (Bacallao & Smokowski, 2007). Long-term separations prompt substantial changes, and it can then be argued that unresolved conflicts can potentially impact family functioning across generations. New patterns of interaction emerge because of changes in family composition. Landau-Stanton (1990) adds that during acculturation, families experience stress with changes in attitudes and behaviours, in [inter] dependency patterns and roles shifting. McGoldrick and Walsh (1991) have suggested that all family members are connected, thus, they react to one another's distress. Sometimes, their reactions may be compounded so that what upsets one ends up upsetting all.

Parent-child tension. Various studies have shown that due to faster acculturation in adolescents, there is often a gap with their parents (e.g., Lau et al., 2005). However, studies have not found that this gap results in conflicts (Smokowski & Bacallao, 2011; Lau et al., 2005). Changes in family dynamics also occur when children are asked to interpret for their parents, possibly resulting in role reversal (Bacallao & Smokowski, 2007). Dependency on their children may place parents in a less authoritarian position, disrupting traditional family dynamics (Falicov, 2007; Morrison & James, 2009). Adherence to familismo prompted the adolescents in Bacallao and Smokowski's (2007) research to become bicultural and bilingual to help family members navigate the host society. This demonstrates that, in some instances, acculturation gaps between parents and adolescents can be beneficial in helping the family meet its needs (Bacallao & Smokowski, 2007; Smokowski et al., 2008). However, youth may feel caught between two worlds (Falicov, 2005; Smokowski & Bacallao, 2011). It has been argued that this conflict between cultural loyalties may contribute to a negative self-image for youth and can inhibit their chances for growth and achievement (Smokowski & Bacallao, 2011). Therefore, living between worlds, compounded with parent-child tension arising from value transmission and negotiating the family life stages in a new country, may negatively impact youth's mental health (Carranza, 2015; Tummala-Narra & Claudius, 2013).

Trauma and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). PTSD is understood as chronic and disabling, marked by a spectrum of treatment-resistant long-term symptoms. These behaviours interfere with the relationships of the symptom bearer (McFarlane, 2009). Figley and Kiser (2013) also suggested that a trauma experienced by one member may be experienced by the entire family system. Consequently, traumatized families are struggling to cope with an extraordinary stress that is disruptive to their lives. Viewing the situation as a family issue rather than a problem of one or two members may assist symptom bearers (Figley & Kiser, 2013). Klarić and their colleagues (2013) added that research findings indicate:

> That living in a family with a PTSD member can have a deep impact on other members of the family, the family dynamics, and the family system in its entirety. Traumatised families cope with the manifestation of the family member's posttraumatic symptoms within the family dynamic, with Secondary Traumatic Stress, burnout, or compassion fatigue as a consequence. In addition, the PTSD of a family member has the potential to be transferred to subsequent generations (p. 33).

PTSD occurs at the intersection of race and gender on the colonial grid. Latin American women have been socialized to handle "the social-emotional tasks of bereavement, from the expression of grief to the care-taking of the terminally ill, as well as the surviving family members" (Walsh & McGoldrick, 1988, p. 328). Hernández-Wolfe (2013) adds that colonialism is so embedded in people's value systems that it often informs responses to trauma. This influences family composition and navigation of traumas amidst the separation of people's experiences from their history and context.

Responses to racism as a unit is under theorized, one example in family systems theory, Carranza (2007a) found that racism is dealt with at the family level in Salvadorian families. As an example, mothers teach their daughters how to position themselves to deal with prejudice and discrimination in Canada through fostering ethnic pride, which was found to be a significant protective factor. However, responses at the family level to racism and other oppressive forces have not yet been thoroughly researched. Nor does this literature thoroughly explore the social economic context of migration and how it shapes the family experience. Falicov (1998) argues that "for immigrants encounters with discrimination fluctuate with historical trends toward inclusion or exclusion. These, in turn, generate either ethnic affirmation or ethnic shame, a wish to assimilate to the dominant culture or a desire to isolate from it" (p. 96). To this extent, it is very important to consider these external factors when studying the acculturation shifts in North American countries. The focus on the system changes does not sufficiently encompass the experience of individuals within the family unit. The next part of the chapter draws from social psychology to expand conceptualizations of the immigration process. This perspective has some overlap, which speaks to the shortcomings of family systems and adds new concepts.

Relevant Concepts and Research in Social Psychology

Gold and Douvan (1997) defined social psychology as "the study of the reciprocal influence of persons and their environment" (42). The levels of analysis are usually the person, social organization, interpersonal relations, and culture (Gold & Douvan, 1997). With respect to immigration, the focus has been on the individual's acculturation process—specifically the emotional and cognitive aspects of the change involved, with minimal consideration for the family. Acculturation is generally understood as the change process that occurs when people are consistently in contact with culturally dissimilar people, groups, and social influences (Schwartz et al., 2013).

Acculturative Stress

Refers to stressors experienced during settlement that have been found to negatively impact physical, psychological and emotional health and wellbeing (Berry, 2006). Both family systems and social psychology suggest that acculturative stress takes place over the lifespan as opposed to a one-time occurrence. Some of the signs of acculturative stress include anxiety, depression, feelings of marginality and alienation, heightened psychosomatic symptoms, and identity confusion (Berry, 2006). Scholars have identified several factors mediating the experience of acculturative stress (Berry, 1991). These include (a) **mode of acculturation** (b) **phases of acculturation** which may involve contact, conflict, crisis, and adaptation (c) **nature of the receiving society** which may be multicultural or demand assimilation d) **characteristics of the acculturating group** such as gender, and (e) **characteristics of the acculturating individual** such as coping skills, and contact with the larger society. Schwartz and colleagues (2010) add that real or perceived similarities between the country of origin and settlement country lower acculturative stress.

Individual Acculturation and the Family

Parent-child relationships. A substantial amount of psychology research has been dedicated to exploring the interplay between the younger generation's role as language and cultural brokers, their psychological well-being and family functioning. This interplay invariably impacts the parent-child relationship, which in turn affects the family's acculturation processes (Tardif-Williams & Fisher, 2009). For example, acculturation differences between parents and their children have been linked to low cohesion, increased conflict (Farver et al., 2002), and less supportive parenting (Weaver & Kim, 2008). Family dynamics can change when children are asked to interpret for parents. Acting as a broker can challenge the power relationship between the parent/child in the public sphere, while in the home, they are expected to occupy the role of the child (Villanueva &Buriel, 2010). Villanueva and Buriel (2010) found that the continual role-shifting between the public and private spheres may contribute to children's stress.

Several studies have found a link between brokering and higher levels of individual and familial stress (Trickett & Jones, 2007; Martínez, McLure & Eddy, 2009), poor functioning (Martínez et al., 2009), and psychological health (Hua & Costigan, 2012). However, recent studies have also explored the role that the overall family context and familial processes play in mediating these relationships. For instance, in Hua and Costigan's (2012) study, adolescents with a strong sense of familial obligation and who perceived their parents to be highly psychologically controlling experienced poor mental well-being. Trickett and Jones (2007) found that cultural brokering was linked to higher conflict in the family. Conversely, Orellana and their colleagues (2003) noted that children play a protective role by assisting their parents to navigate institutions and access various resources. Further, many of these studies also show that children view brokering as just another one of their household activities (Villanueva & Buriel, 2010) and are not necessarily related to decreased family cohesion or overall family satisfaction (Trickett & Jones, 2007). Weisskirch (2017) found that children viewed language brokering positively, which was linked to increased levels of attachment to the home culture and positively affected their ethnic identity. This may suggest that immigrant youth understand the necessity of their role for overall family survival.

Factors Influencing Acculturation

Loss and Trauma. Loss plays a significant role in acculturation and is experienced differently by migrant families, for example, after WWII, then those forcibly displaced (Choummanivong et al., 2014). The loss of family and friends, combined with fearing for their loved one's safety, was strongly correlated with increased psychological distress, poor concentration, inability to secure employment and lower levels of language acquisition (Li et al., 2016). Significant losses, combined with a lack of social and family support, have been linked to maladaptive integration and coping strategies (Capielo et al., 2015). Fears for family members left behind, lack of trust in new relationships, and social isolation can lead to unhealthy relationships, struggles in parenting, and employment-related difficulties (Choummanivong et al., 2014). These traumatic experiences can result in a series of personal difficulties in which unprocessed grief and trauma can impact present and future relationships, which are significant for the person's survival in the new country. Leslie (1993), in a study of Central American families living in the United States, experience significant levels of stress due to the political upheaval most Central Americans have endured. Trauma and political violence experienced prior to flight shaped the refugees' perceptions of their new home and affected the settlement process (Leslie, 1993).

Grief. Often, discussions of migration and grief deal with these concepts at the individual level and from a problem-focused standpoint. These discussions are shaped by who belongs and who is allowed to grieve. The majority, however, fails to identify that grief may be a normal reaction and a way of validating the losses. The idea of "you are safe now" does not mitigate the loss experienced during

migration (Carranza, 2008). To this extent, grief may be a necessary aspect of the transformation that individuals and families may go through in their acculturation process. Shapiro (1994) stated, "a family's first priority in managing the crisis of grief is re-establishing the stable equilibrium necessary to support ongoing family development" (12). Establishing these new stable structures requires individual, family system, community, and socio-cultural resources.

Mediating grief during acculturation for those coming from the Global South is compounded by the experience of historical and collective trauma, which is owed to colonialism and its remnants. This type of trauma is prevalent among Indigenous Peoples across the Americas (Braveheart et al., 2011). Braveheart (2003) defines **historical trauma** as cumulative emotional and psychological injuries carried across generations. These losses, compounded by collective trauma due to civil wars, can impact the ability to come together as a community, for example, to resist discrimination and demystify stereotypes (Carranza, 2007b).

Systemic Factors

Berry (2011) added to theories of acculturation in social psychology to include structural factors. Acculturation expectations and the assertion of power by the dominant group to influence the resettlement process have added a new layer to understanding. This new understanding highlights the ways in which ideology and policies frame the relationship between immigrants/formed migrants and Canada or their country of resettlement. He also connects the social, historical, and economic forces of colonization and domination to the phenomena of migration. Berry (2011) speaks to how "settler" societies receive racialized immigrants, particularly those from the Global South, and how values are re-negotiated by both those coming and the country of settlement. Positive acculturation is associated with bi-culturalism or competency in the values and traditions of the host and country of origin. This, however, is dependent on the host society's degree to which their policies are aligned with multiculturalism and acceptance of diversity. Often, acceptance is correlated with the level of similarities between countries. Bekteshi and colleagues (2017) found that integration, often defined by learning the language and customs, is mediated by citizenship status, experiences in the country of origin, reasons for migration, gender and perception of acceptance.

Racism and acculturation. Bekteshi and colleagues (2017) studied how contextual factors, such as pre-migration status, departure experience, and difficulties during and after arrival, impact acculturative stress. Participants who faced racism, language barriers, and an unwelcoming environment experienced higher levels of stress and anxiety. Racialized immigrants' stress was found to be significantly higher level than that of White English-speaking immigrants/forced migrants. Additional research suggests that stress and discrimination increase when a chosen acculturation strategy conflicts with the preferences of the receiving society, e.g. marginalization vs. assimilation (Jasinskaja-Lahti et al., 2003). A substantial amount of research in psychology suggests that stress and discrimination lead to poor psychological health outcomes (Jasinskaja-Lahti et al., 2006).

Carter (2007) stressed the importance of understanding the specific psychological and emotional injury caused by the various forms of racism and discrimination. The degree of exclusions from the receiving country, perceptions of the stranger and experiences of racism have a significant impact on the acculturation process and the mental health of immigrants/forced migrants. Additional research shows that support networks help to mediate the negative psychological consequences of discrimination: increased contact with ethnic support networks in both countries decreased the number of reported psychological symptoms. Social psychology brings important understandings of acculturation as an individual process, as mediated by reception (Carter, 2007).

The literature on family relationships previously reviewed (Espín, 1999; Martínez, McClure & Eddy, 2009) focuses on different dyads (i.e., husband-wife) versus the family unit and is mainly problem-focused. It speaks to issues as isolated events rooted in a point in time and ignores the processes of acculturation over the life course. In this respect, it risks stereotyping immigrant/forced migrant families as problematic. Also, they do not arrive in their new home as *tabula rasa*. They bring with them their knowledge, strategies, resources, and resiliency. In fact, it can be argued that it is their resistance to oppression that highlights their agency and capacity to withstand adversity. The literature reviewed in the preceding section also does not consider the way in which the historical, economic and political context affects individuals and families re-settling. It also does not speak to the process of economic integration and the implications for the family. For example, in the literature and in my clinical practice, it's evident sending monthly remittances is a practice of love and support. This can add stress to the family relationships, challenging their economic survival. Economic sociology will be used to address these broader contextual issues.

Relevant Concepts and Research in Economic Sociology

The role of immigration in the labour market system is often understood through a class lens to examine the power relationships of the economy (Simmons, 2010). Furthermore, economic sociologists share with social psychologists an interest in language acquisition, cultural integration, and identity transformation as they relate to economic incorporation and class acquisition (Castles, 2010). Many economic sociologists are concerned with the interplay between the labour market structures that create "push" and "pull" factors, and society. From this perspective, migration is a fundamental part of labour and production in the globalized economy (Simmons, 2010). Seminal literature speaks to "incorporation," which is understood through the means of production and consumption versus acculturation (Portes, 2010). Patterns of migration are understood as a direct response to the growing economic inequalities advancing the Global North and as a way for people to overcome market failures or poverty in the Global South (Sana & Massey, 2005). In this analysis, migration becomes the only way for families to meet their basic needs and achieve upward social mobility (Schmalzbauer, 2009).

Current economic sociology moves beyond a political economy and class analysis by adding two interrelated sets of questions. First, the role of social linkages in the migration and incorporation process (Sana & Massey, 2005). For example, what roles do family members who do not initially migrate play in encouraging the "pioneering" movement of a family member? Are friends abroad asked or expected to help when they arrive? The second set of questions concern "resistance". For example, to what extent is migration a way to mitigate threats to well-being and security (Sana & Massey, 2005)? The above set of questions come together in the family sphere. Economic sociology has been active in exploring hypotheses on the way in which families use migration as survival and mobility mechanisms. I will now review the components most relevant to the topic of this paper.

Preceding Factors

Social class. Economic success is an essential determinant in the level of stress and social adaptation for immigrants and pre-migration factors play a key role in integration. For example, Federal Skilled Workers will likely integrate into the labour market differently than labourers or Refugees (Simmons, 2010). Classifications or reasons for migration are always determined by race and country of origin – whether a person is coming from the Global South or North. Itzigsohn and Giorguli-Saucedo (2005) argued that economic integration and labour market participation are mediated by race and embedded in the "pull" factors of the receiving society. For example, doctors from other English-speaking and predominantly white nations are recruited and welcomed. Conversely, people from Central

America are viewed as best suited to landscaping and farming. Whereas professionals are sought out, the supply of Central American and Caribbean people "in need" is higher than the demand, and as a result, are met with a negative reception and remain undocumented. These examples of belonging shape and are shaped by the Colonial Grid.

Portes and Rumbaut (1990) argued that social class mediates incorporation and integration. In Canada, Bauder (2003) and Reitz (2005) identify social capital as an outcome of class and the primary commodity for exchange in the labour market. Bauder (2003) found that racialized immigrants were locked out of gaining social capital and restricted from high-skill and pay segments of the labour market. Segmentation reduces prospects for economic stability and, in turn, increases stress and negative mental and physical health outcomes.

Remittances. Many immigrants bring money home or send remittances (Menjívar, DaVanzo, Greenwell &Valdéz, 1998) to contribute to the individual and/or family life, as well as their community in general. Portes and Purhmann (2015) argued that "transnational communities", are involved in a permanent economic, political and cultural bridging between the receiving and country of origin. Transnationalism has granted immigrants/forced migrants and their families new opportunities for material and social positioning. Members of transnational families are now able to fabricate the basis of their class reproduction and mobility in two different locations (Dreby & Adkins, 2010). These practices also reproduce class structures, as they highlight inequalities between families who receive remittances and those who do not (Schmalzbauer, 2009). Within families, those who have migrated have greater direct access to resources (e.g., increased technology), whereas non-migrants benefits are dependent on remittances (Dreby & Adkins, 2010). Thus, within the family, power must be negotiated and dynamics adjusted (Schmalzbauer, 2009). For example, in Schmalzbauer's (2008) research, Honduran adolescents in transnational families self-identified as middle-class, largely unaware of their parent's lived realities in the Global North. The remittances that permitted middle-class activities (e.g., attending private school), informed their belief in meritocracy, and shaped their expectations for the future. Yet, this lifestyle is dependent on them remaining in Honduras and continuing to receive remittances.

The Family's Sphere

Youth and Social Mobility. A contemporary debate in sociology centres on how first, 1.5- and second-generation immigrants fare – will they experience upward or downward mobility? According to *Segmented Assimilation Theory* (Portes & Zhou, 1993), differences in how groups fare over time can be attributed to structural and sociocultural factors both in the country of origin and the receiving society. Where some communities have been able to protect against downward mobility (i.e. Cubans in the United States), others appear to lack the resources (e.g., the presence of ethnic civil and social institutions) necessary to facilitate upward mobility (López &Stanton-Salazar, 2001). Those without legal status arguably face the most difficult context of reception as their in-between status prevents their legal incorporation into society (Gonzáles, 2011; Menjívar & Salcído, 2002). Thus, even youth with access to pathways of upwardly mobility or who are academically successful are still prevented from successful economic incorporation (Gonzáles, 2011).

Liminality. Menjívar (2006) speaks to ambiguous or "in-between" citizenship as it shapes the migration process. Citizenship status, or lack thereof, has been understood as one of the most significant elements of integration. From how new immigrants interact with others in the settlement and country of origin to health and health-seeking behaviours, citizenship status creates barriers and defines access. Further, those with legal status and those without are regarded as two different social classes with varying access to social capital and upward mobility. As men often are the primary applicants for

citizenship and sponsor their spouses, it generates a specific form of social vulnerability, including domestic violence and gendering pathways to citizenship (Menjívar & Salcido, 2002). Menjívar and Salcido (2002) found that as a result, women more often had "grey" legal status and were therefore more vulnerable. Women with precarious legal status are often unable to access assistance for experiences of abuse or to obtain citizenship.

Race and Class: Systemic Exclusion. Inequalities along race and class lines are the core of incorporation and form the basis of discrimination (Smith & Mannon, 2010). These cleavages of exclusion, as established during colonization, are the foundation of how social inequities are created and maintained. In the case of racialized women, structural oppression in the labour market intersects with racism, class and gender. Often, they feel forced to put up with discrimination because of fear of losing their job. In their study with immigrant/forced migrant women in Canada, Smith and Mannon (2010) discovered that most participants did not perceive "gender as a playing a major role in their lives" (p. 1000) and, alternatively, identified with other inequalities such as race and class. Women must learn to cope with labour exploitation, racial innuendoes, and sexism as a part of incorporation (Smith & Mannon, 2010). Participants in the study identified their ethnic communities as a source of solidarity and protection from experiences of discrimination both in the workplace and in their day-to-day lives. Portes (2010) argued that the greater the experiences of discrimination, the greater the distance between immigrants and members of the receiving society. Hence, discrimination can increase transnational participation.

The literature reviewed suggests that immigrants/forced migrants navigate challenging contexts of reception through connections and communities. The maintenance and development of linkages may be interpreted as their expression of solidarity across nations and a form of resistance. Moreover, these can be acts of family survival in a globalized economy. The economic sociology literature highlights that while race and ethnicity may be a source of external discrimination, in parallel, they can also be a source of unlimited collective strength. Family systems theory, social psychology, and economic sociology provide key concepts and different perspectives, informing the conceptualization of "family acculturation" for Latin Americans. I now draw from the most relevant concepts to propose an integrated model.

An Integrated Model of "Family Acculturation"

Reconceptualizing "acculturation" opens space to embody the uniqueness of the processes that occur at the familial level, to frame them within a historical, socio-political, and economic context. Coming from colonized spaces, families bring forth the poignant day-to-day reality of being the Stranger/Other, that is, the colonial immigrant/forced migrant (Carranza, 2017). The colonial immigrant/forced migrant experiences their worth, lack thereof, or sense of belonging in accordance to the 'colonial matrix'; that is, where people's imposed identity categories are 'located' (Carranza, 2016). In contemporary times, these are expressed on the individual level through micro-aggressions (Hernández, Carranza & Almeida, 2010), how people engage based on the colonial remnants engrained in the psyche of inferiority or superiority (Carranza, 2016) and structures such as the labour market. The historical, collective memory of and current external oppressions are navigated at the family level (Carranza, 2008, 2016).

Family systems theorists' focus is on the changes that occur in the family in both the country of origin and the receiving (Falicov, 2014). For example, trauma is explored but not in the context of political or social violence, as many families have experienced in the Global South. Social psychologists focus on the changes of the individual and challenges faced in the settlement country. Like systems

theorists, economic sociologists include both countries in their analysis. Although economic sociologists do not give attention to family sentiments, they discuss the transnational strategies used to remain connected for economic survival in a global economy. These concepts are imperative to a reconceptualization of "family acculturation," which addresses the changes a family goes through during and after migration- but falls short of placing them on the colonial grid.

One significant difference between the three perspectives is the unit of analysis. Family systems' is the family across the life span, social psychology's literature analyzes the individual in relation to society and for economic sociologists the unit of analysis is the macro level. Their hypothesis addresses historical, political and class issues of power and domination and the strategies of resistance and resilience developed by immigrant/forced migrant groups. Social psychologists provide us with micro-level analysis, for example, the power differential between husbands and wives. At the same time, economic sociologists address gender at the macro level, that is, the role of women in the global economy. For families who have migrated from colonized spaces, theories must incorporate all units of analysis to be inclusive of the nuances and disparities of such a complex process.

Family systems theorists, social psychologists and economic sociologists speak to patterns of adaptation and resistance. They, at the margins, overlap regarding their discussions in the family sphere. Given that only a few family systems theorists have studied immigrant and refugee families as a whole, I will draw strongly on social psychology and economic sociology literature to further this analysis. I propose the following conceptualization. **Family acculturation** is reimagined as:

> The processes by which transnational families, coming from colonized spaces, "negotiate" hierarchies of knowledge, and new processes and dynamics set out by their cultural transition such as new roles and identities with family members in the settlement country, and abroad. These processes are significantly influenced by the family's: (i) perceived location, of themselves and others, in the imaginary colonial grid, (ii) hierarchy and members' age and gender (iii) the inner dynamics of the 'ethnic' group and community, and (iv) the political/social/colonial processes between the specific racialized group and the society at large.

This reorganizing is achieved in an effort to minimize individual and familial risks and promote economic, emotional and spiritual growth across the lifespan. "Family acculturation" is continual and multi-dimensional. It is shaped by nuances and contradictions because of its links to the local, regional, national and global levels combined with economic, political and historical trends- that serve to demarcate the colonial immigrant from those born or those who appear to belong in the Global North. Families may engage in intercultural dialogues and "negotiations" within the settlement country and abroad. These may encompass the family's experience of solidarity, resistance, cohesiveness, and scripts from past and present experiences, i.e., colonial grid, war, social class, resilience, and intergenerational legacies. The meaning of these may change according to the geo- localities, which may or may not give space for the family member's sense of agency. "Family acculturation" is a process that entails the family's perception of success that, in turn, may be guided by a re-assessment of what is valued in their lives. New family discourses, identities and roles will emerge not only for economic survival but also for the emotional well-being of all family members. These often correlated with the length of time in the settlement country, citizenship and economic integration. The roles may include members of the nuclear family and extended family, locally and abroad. The outcomes of successful acculturation will align with each family's values and belief system. The colonial grid may impede (i.e., dark skin) or enhance (i.e., white-passing) family acculturation. This model offers possibilities for different outcomes.

Conceptual Implications

Latin American families who migrate place a strong importance on maintaining connections across time and space. Migration has meant that new family discourses, identities and roles will emerge not only for economic survival but also for the emotional and spiritual well-being of family members across countries. The roles may include members of the nuclear family, the extended family settling in the same or another country, and those still living in the country of origin. Frequent communications and easy access to travel may allow for old roles and relationships to continue or be re-claimed. Family meetings may take place in several living rooms, as technology allows virtual and instant connections between countries. In other circumstances, frequent travel to the country of origin may not be necessary for family acculturation to occur. As families acculturate, they may learn new ways of being and relating. Family visits to the country of origin and vice versa may expose family members to new information and behavioural patterns. Therefore, understanding families must include a transnational approach, as they remain active participants in each other's lives. Migration requires an adjustment of how these roles are taken up, and as such, social work and the helping professions must reflect these configurations in teaching and research.

CASE STUDY

Steven

Steven and his family arrived in Canada three years ago. He separated from his wife of 20 years six months after their arrival. They have one son. Prior to coming to Canada, they enjoyed the privileges of a middle-class family, i.e., their son attended private school, had access to a private club, a beach house, etc. However, the idea of living in the North was appealing. The idea of having a 'better life' made them apply for a Canadian visa. Once their application was granted, they sold their company and other belongings, bringing their life savings with them.

When their son was born, they, as a couple, made the decision that his wife would stop working outside the home and stay home and care for their son. He stated that he grew up in poverty, and building his company from the ground up took him away from his family a lot. This meant that he became the sole breadwinner. He stated that his wife administered the family income. When their son attended school full-time, she was busy taking him to extracurricular activities. So, they decided that she should continue to focus on the care of their son and their household.

Once in Canada, they were confronted with challenges that they did not expect. Their son was fluent in English and French – as this was part of his educational formation in their country of origin. Their son was translating for them. This made him uncomfortable, as he felt that he was losing respect and his status in the family was threatened. Steven was not able to find meaningful employment. Moreover, having a 'boss' was a new experience for him. He was the 'boss' and had more than 200 employees under him, including managers and supervisors. He could only attain employment in the cleaning industry. He found himself having three part-time jobs in order to cover rent and household expenses. His wife and son refused to live in an apartment. They decided to invest their life savings in a house and vehicles – as neither of them was used to using public transportation.

However, due to the monthly mortgage payments, vehicle expenses, and household expenses, their life savings were soon disappearing. Due to the financial strain, his wife had to secure employment in the cleaning industry as well. He felt that his wife and son resented him. They accused him of "not being able to provide for them." He reported feeling ashamed about the fact that he was working in the cleaning industry and that he no longer was able to provide the living standard his family was accustomed to.

Question: Using the model of family acculturation, how can we think through Steven and his family? What stands out?

Conclusion

The clinical implications derived from this discussion are twofold. The first is centring on the experience of migration in the family's history. This approach necessitates that helpers must, in conjunction with the family, navigate the complexities of their acculturation through the lens of how racism, uncertainty, trauma and loss have reshaped their family. This serves as an emancipatory function in honouring experiences and not ascribing to knowable "truths" of acculturation. This also offers new possibilities to acknowledge bi-directional acculturation, where the dominant space is shifted through contact with immigrants/formed migrants. The second implication is concerned with systemic changes that bring into focus an underlying understanding that practitioners' and clients' therapeutic relations are a microcosm of contextual oppression. The helper's position on the colonial grid must be attended to in the sense that it is not neutral and is the basis for their lens. The colonial grid includes the identity of the helper, in particular their relation to the families: biases, prejudice, and own assimilationist ideology pushing the colonial other to once again assimilate to white settler society, thus divorcing themselves from their history.

9

Chapter Nine: Working with Immigrants/Forced Migrants and Trauma

Abstract: Current portrayals of migration focus on "arrival," indicating that trauma is negated by achieving safety in Canada and is not reflective of the lived reality of immigrants and newcomers to Canada. This chapter presents trauma as ongoing, a loss that moves through time with people.

Key Concepts: Historial trauma, socially produced trauma, Trauma Informed Practice (TIP), Critical consciousness, socially just trauma-informed practice and narrative therapy.

Introduction

Archetypal versions of migration often focus on *arrival* as the end of the journey. This idealized conclusion is embedded in the Canadian psyche – tweets from Canadians responding to Prime Minister Trudeau's photo welcoming Syrian refugees saying, "you are home now"

symbolize this vision. Arriving in Canada means safety has been achieved, and resettlement (code for 'catching up') can begin. Embedded in this idea, is that the factors influencing or prompting migration, or push factors, are negated by arriving in Canada. For example, fear of violence is supposed to be replaced by a sense of safety. Experiences of trauma are now in the process of healing by the mere fact of having arrived, with social services, safety and economic opportunities as a part of resettlement. The stress from lack of opportunities is replaced by the belief in meritocracy and the possibilities of upward mobility. This is also reflected in the social work encounter as practice is centred on the fabled *better life* image that was promised. Understandings of trauma in migration are not reflective of the lived reality. This chapter presents trauma as an ongoing loss that accompanies people across the various life stages throughout their lifetime, impacting individuals, families and communities. This reflects what people have shared in interviews as well as in my clinical practice. One of the Women Immigrant participants in the *Women Immigrants and Mental Health* research stated "Migration [itself] is trauma", which was echoed across projects. This trauma is heightened by the increasing securitization of borders and criminalization of immigrants/forced migrants, all fuelled by anti-immigration sentiments. People on the move are completely at the mercy of border control, immigration policies, and the allocation of funds that decide who and how many people can be granted sanctuary. This understanding sees the intersections of trauma as a political process of exclusion that structures the **colonial grid**.

"Migration as trauma" is contested in the literature. There is a consensus that the process of leaving, extending into how one resettles over their life course, impacts mental well-being. Despite this acknowledgement in much of the mental health literature, the impacts are seen as temporary and that immigrants/forced migrants will bounce back (Cissé et al., 2020). There are stressors associated with pre-migration, ranging from war to civil unrest created by ongoing coloniality. Furthermore, migration from the Global South can result in deprivation, sexual violence, detention, exploitation, and human trafficking in countries along the route and in Canada. During the resettlement process, immigrants/ forced migrants often encounter a system that's designed for expats from European countries, i.e., lack of recognition of professional credentials from the Global South. Misinformation, a fragmented system, unemployment, under-employment, poverty, unreasonable expectations, and a lack of services that can support their resettlement frames experiences. This continuum of the migration journey can exacerbate and create new stressors and trauma. Socially produced traumas are defined as traumatic events that are rooted in oppressive environmental forces that inflict pain and suffering (Goodman, 2015). Like other traumatic experiences, socially produced traumas can lead to psychological and physical health concerns, interpersonal and educational challenges, and increased morbidity and mortality (Flaherty, 2006).

Research and practice are often focused on the individual, but it is becoming evident that trauma impacts the functioning of both the family and community (Carranza et al., 2022). Additionally, trauma can extend beyond the individual lifespan to intergenerational. War, trauma, fear, oppression, and legacies of

colonialism continue to shape people's intersecting identities, impacting their well-being and resettlement. Key factors, such as acculturative stress and immigration trauma, are usually not explored within the context of assessment and intervention in the helping professions (Carranza, 2017). When working with individuals, families and communities seeking 'help,' it is crucial to be mindful of the ways trauma is experienced under the rubric of coloniality, for example, thinking about how colonialism intentionally fractured families and communities.

In the project, *Men's Integration and Resettlement*, one woman who had migrated to Canada as a child with her Father said, "Service providers, and people you meet think, "poof, everything changed. You get here, and [being] *thankful* is assumed to be your only emotion, and this is expected". Understandings of the lived processes of migration and belonging to Canada are evolving. Citizenship is not only a legality but is a process navigated by immigrants/forced migrants to negotiate their own space and belonging. Feelings of belonging, and if one can feel at home, settled and secure in a place, has as much to do with an individual's mental health and well-being as the immigration structures and popular discourse. Therefore, policies, initiatives, funding and settlement services to ease the stress are only one piece of the larger process for people and their families. Immigration and resettlement overlap with the majority of areas of social work. There are a couple of key pieces that impact trauma and acculturative shifts from other chapters to keep in mind:

- Migrations occur in various configurations. Some examples are young people migrating alone, families moving together or separate, and parents living in the Global North with children in their country of origin
- Families are in flux, reorganizing to accommodate separations.
- Trauma experienced by one family member impacts the whole -across generations and borders.
- The way that the Global North organizes and understands the gender identity of immigrants/ forced migrant can mediate acculturative shifts and trauma
- Acculturation and trauma are mediated heavily by the context of reception. In Canada, this reception can range from lukewarm to violent to welcoming. This is contingent on the colonial grid

Each stage of immigration, from leaving to resettlement to permanency in either a legal or a lived sense, can alter the individual's and/or the family unit's ability to function. These stages are unique to each individual, family and community – and are influenced by the receiving society and the reception. While the literature about those on the move continues to grow, common myths still exist and are operationalized in the helping relationship. One such example is that immigrant/forced migrant youth aged 16-25 experience fewer problems during resettlement and acculturate 'faster.' Due to age-related perspectives, young people are believed to be less influenced and invested in the language, culture, and ways of life in their country of origin and can assimilate into Canada quickly. It is also thought that younger people can 'bounce back' from traumatic experiences, especially those who are ascribed a high level of 'resiliency'. Research by Carranza and Grigg (2022) with young people from Central America and the Caribbean found this to be a more complex correlation. Both Canadians and adults who had migrated from Central America and the Caribbean believed that young people were more 'open and adaptable' to migration. Non-migrant service providers believed that they assimilated quicker due to age as younger people are more flexible and spend less time in their country of origin, so it was easier for them to learn Canadian ways. Along the lines of the colonial grid, these same service providers also spoke of less inherent criminality in young people. Criminality for those from Central America meant being less inclined towards gang affiliations and drug trafficking. Adults who had migrated themselves thought it was because young people had less of an accent and markers of difference and were able to code-switch. It is also believed that young people have a less cumbersome pathway to legal citizenship.

It was found that migratory trauma can, and often does, shift young people's sense of their own age, responsibilities, peers, and family connections. The responsibility placed on young people altered their growing up/developmental trajectory. One young person from Central America named this "the weight of hope." Hope existed for young people's families in the visions for their (potential) future life – the 'better', the safe and mobile life. In these instances, some young people noted that carrying their family's hope contributed to the extra stress on employment, making enough money and being successful in school (Carranza & Grigg, 2022). For some, the cumulative stress of pre-immigration trauma, resettlement and acculturation to Canada resulted in feelings of loneliness, isolation from both homes and depression. Furthermore, not only is migration a significant event for all families in motion, but the Global North – Canada included is founded on principles of individualism. This may or may not be at odds with acculturation as a family process and transnational living.

What does being trauma-informed look like?

Trauma theory has emerged out of a time, place and history of ideas, and since its original formation, has been raced, classed and gendered (Stevens, 2009). Young (1995) argues that trauma theory "is glued together by the practices, technologies, and narratives with which it is diagnosed, studied, treated, and represented and by the various interests, institutions, and moral arguments that mobilized these efforts and resources" (p. 5). Trauma informed Care (TIC), or practice (TIP) is an approach that recognizes the pervasive impact of trauma on people (Wylie et al., 2018). Goodman (2015) moves beyond clinical definitions to include the social structures and contextual elements that create and maintain marginalization, which in turn impacts trauma. Traditional definitions that focus on the individual pathology or psychology may exacerbate systemic oppression and distress. Using Western approaches assesses what is happening for someone as an individual in relation to the incident(s) or sources of trauma (Clark, 2016). By ignoring community and systemic factors, helpers fail to work with people on the spectrum of issues and can potentially miss opportunities for social justice in agencies and beyond (Goodman, 2015).

As theory and practice move away from privileging understandings of mental health and trauma from the lens of the West, flexibility and adaptability are number one for helpers (Wylie et al., 2018). The complexities and multilayered experiences of people need to be taken into account while assessing the social work encounter. Helpers must include how their identities influence this engagement – moving beyond a reflexive account of acknowledging our own citizenship, race, or place on the colonial grid. We must ask, how the concept of trauma-informed services is being *enacted* in clinical settings and scholarly works? How do people want to work with a helper? In the context of immigrants/forced migrants, TIC 'trauma' is understood, experienced, and worked through in various ways across the globe (Carranza et al., 2022). The Western view of trauma, while shifting, remains focused on intrinsic or intrapsychic experiences (Goodman, 2015). One example is Carranza and colleagues (2022) found that in Salvadorians in Canada, there was no Spanish translation or colloquial term for trauma. People made sense of trauma within a collective experience, and it was not individualized. This included transgenerational, intergenerational and community traumatic experiences. In Spanish, Salvadorians said, "The experience was traumatic" versus "I am traumatized." Trauma is then in movement and not rooted in the individual (Carranza et al., 2022). Experiences of trauma for Salvadorians included their migration and were dealt with at the transnational level. The context in which people experience trauma shapes the way that it impacts them.

Working in a way that incorporates an understanding of coloniality will look different in various contexts, depending on the community and group that you are working with. Referred to as **Socially**

Just Trauma Informed Practice (Domínguez, 2022), this intervention method draws connections between the individual and systemic oppression to the analysis. Coloniality of Power (Quijano, 2000) draws attention to the ways that race is constructed in the present and how the historical past remains. This can provide insights into how racialized immigrants/forced migrants are perceived in Canada based on race, ethnicity and culture and the ways these can construct them as the stranger. CoP informs the 'war on terror' and the 'war on drugs' and how both forced people into the diaspora and how they are received and encouraged to resettle. Another way social work practice can provide insight into migration and life experiences is to understand how gender-based violence is viewed through the lens of whiteness (Lugones, 2007). This can provide insights into how the world is navigated and experienced by Women Immigrants.

Trauma-informed approaches that use critical consciousness (Freire, 1973) and liberation-based frameworks (Martín-Baró, 1994) encourage people to focus on the systemic elements that contribute to the traumatic experiences. A TIC approach has the potential to connect the individual to present and historical experiences of the community and the global. One way to think this through and practice making these connections is by using the Colonial Grid (Carranza, 2016) and mapping the pieces of identity that people find relevant to their experiences. This exercise in the social work encounter can open discussion for people's experiences and space for storytelling. However, 'analysis' may not always be what people want to discuss. Their needs should be focused on what they consider more immediate.

Helpers must pay attention and speak, where appropriate, to systemic factors. For example, when people have their credentials questioned or are not hired due to an accent, this must be addressed within the comfort level of those engaging in services. Otherwise, the social work encounter runs the risk of individualizing and reproducing the colonial encounter (Carranza, 2022; Goodman, 2015).To deconstruct the sociocultural and geopolitical context, including the history, is to identify all of the systems at play – for example, how social injustices have, and continue to, disproportionately impact immigrant/forced migrant communities during the COVID-19 pandemic (Domínguez, 2020). It is also important to discuss how people navigate and make meaning of how they experience these systems. Immigrants/forced migrants interact with many settlement services and programs, in the healthcare and education systems. To combat invisible oppression all of the individual needs should be integrated in assessments and formulations, thus, accounted for in the needed interventions plan or plans of care. Wylie and their colleagues (2018) suggest that using socially just interventions encourages more collaborative work between helpers and those they are working with. TIC approaches encourage people, including the helper, to reflect on their roots, cultural influences and connections to the community for healing and understanding. Employing forms of understanding and healing that are important to people and relevant to their history and present should be used wherever possible. This does not mean the helper should engage in interventions that are outside the scope of their capacity and practice, rather, incorporating elements that align with the infrastructures of their agencies. For example, storytelling and narrative elements can amplify people's histories, communities and cultural engagements (Wylie et al., 2018).

This method of TIP can disrupt stereotypes and messages that are overt and covert in Canada for immigrants/forced migrants. While the message of 'You are home now' was wildly popular on Twitter – this is not always the truth. One participant in the Women Immigrant and Mental Health project said, "Canadian immigration, they have a three-word logo, 'Welcome to Canada.' I think they should change this to 'not **everyone** is welcome' ". Further, social just TIP links personal, family, and community experiences to the systems of resettlement that may not be working for people. It challenges the ideology of 'the Canadian dream' and 'Canada as a land of opportunities', turning what is considered a deficit in people into an opportunity for systemic construction. In this chapter, deficit understanding is

defined as people needing to find ways to *make up* for things that are 'lacking' – education from the Global North, professional circles and connections. Sometimes this work can fall under the rubric of **strengths-based** or even **empowerment**. Shifting this lens encourages a strength-based sociocultural perspective that rejects the notion people need to make up for the created deficits to maintain marginalization.

In the following case studies, try to look at trauma through the following three concepts:

Systemic Oppression and Community Trauma: Trauma is inherently political, given that the events occur within specific contexts and are grounded in societal structures (Burstow, 2003). Community trauma – a shared experience whereby emotional responses are tied to social relations. As such, the expression of emotions and affects are linked to relationships with others in the community (Fuss, 2013). It is important to remember that not all communities and members with shared experiences and identities will connect with this understanding of the collective. However, structural marginalization is a shared experience (Carranza et al., 2022).

Transgenerational/Intergenerational Trauma: This term refers to the impact of traumatic events that are transmitted from one generation to the next. In this understanding, people do not need to directly experience trauma to be impacted (Goodman & West-Olatunji 2008). Trauma can manifest at the individual, family, and community levels (Evans-Campbell 2008).

***Ecosystemic* perspective** (Goodman, 2015): The ecosystemic perspective looks at people's lives and the systems that overlap, ranging from how they see themselves to the systems-level macro factors. What is being experienced by the individual? What is indirectly happening? What systems have a direct and indirect impact?

Reminder: Review your *Colonial Grid* and note any colonial conditioning that may emerge when you work through the case studies. Think about what has informed this thinking. How can you make sense of it from an ecosystemic perspective?

Case Studies

Naya:

Naya, a 33 years-old woman, is a physiotherapist by profession and worked several years in her country of origin, Ghana, before coming to Canada as a Landed Immigrant 12 years ago. She came with her family (partner and two sons, 12 and 10). Like many immigrants, she and her family came to Canada searching for a 'better life' for themselves, but mostly their children. A part of this 'better life' was financial security – better jobs and upward mobility. However, her education and work experience was not validated. After a year of seeking employment in her profession, she was counselled that becoming a Personal Support Worker may allow her to continue in the care profession. Shortly after her training, she was able to secure casual work. However, several years later, she continued to hold only casual postings, despite her efforts to secure full-time employment. The latter would allow her to have a steady income and benefits for her family. She stayed in this field in order to have a permanent line of seniority, which was important. Nevertheless, she observed that others with less seniority would secure a line, but not her. She added that she would lose her assignments with no explanation. She experienced sexual harassment by some of the males that she provided care for. In spite of reporting this to her supervisor, nothing was done.

She came to therapy referred by her family doctor due to depression. In the initial assessment, Naya

reported experiencing low self-esteem and confidence (3), sleeping disturbances, crying spells, anger (10) and anger outbursts, poor concentration (2), poor memory (3), hypervigilance, and sadness (10). She reported feeling like she was "going crazy" – as "nothing made sense" to her.

Prior to her migration journey, she described herself as being a kind, friendly, compassionate, confident, strong, intelligent accomplished woman, neighbour, mother, active citizen, and professional. She stated not being able to understand the way she was feeling at the time of our conversation. She found herself feeling frustrated and unhappy with her partner and children. She added that she was socially withdrawn and apprehensive of people and almost fearful of people.

Julia

Julia is a 50-year-old woman. She came to Canada 30 years ago. While in her country of origin, she was subject to violence due to political turmoil in her country of origin. She was not able to finish high school due to increasing violence directed at youth at this time. Male youth were being recruited into a left-wing group. Female youth were the target of sexual violence and/or taken into the trenches to provide 'domestic duties.' She added that her younger sister was raped and murdered on her way home. She and her siblings left the country to seek refuge someplace else. While on her migration journey, she was raped and impregnated by the assailant. Due to her religious beliefs, she decided to carry the baby up to birth. When her daughter was 6, she married and had another two daughters with her partner.

Julia reported experiencing episodic sleeping disturbances and depression. However, in recent years, these difficulties have become more challenging to manage and are now accompanied by a lack of sexual intimacy. Julia's partner is complaining that she doesn't love him anymore. She finds herself very irritable with her husband and wants to leave her relationship.

Lydia

Lydia is a 27-year-old, a US citizen by birthright, Canadian by naturalization, and a third-year medical student. She was born in the US to Latin American parents. Her parents met In the US. They each left their country of origin due to political turmoil and lived in the US undocumented for more than a decade. Regardless of this, they had been able to secure employment and belonged to an extensive support network. These provided them with financial security and a buffer to endure the stresses of living in liminality and in a hostile environment due to anti-immigrant sentiment. Due to the US' ongoing immigration deportation policies, they sought refuge asylum in Canada.

Lydia and her parents sold their belongings and came to Canada, leaving behind their network of support and what gave meaning to their lives. In Canada, they found themselves living in extreme poverty. Lydia missed her friend and the mundane routines her life in the US entailed, i.e., going to the babysitter, playing with her peers and visiting families in her apartment building on weekends. They lived in a 'run down' neighbourhood. To make ends meet, they needed to have two jobs—leaving at the crack of dawn and returning late in the evening. This meant that Lydia was left unsupervised for several hours. She had to get herself ready for school by bus, do her homework and prepare and have dinner alone, after her return home. When asked, she had to lie about her age, stating that she was older. She had been instructed by her parents to do so. This made her feel nervous, as it contradicted what her parents had taught her about not lying. After a few years of this "hard work and savings", her parents made great efforts to live within the boundaries of a "good school" so she could be exposed to 'good' (white) people.

Lydia stated feeling "odd" and "different" in her new school—as she was the only racialized child in her grade. However, due to her well-developed social skills, she was able to make friends very easily. She

got to hang out with the "cool kids". She learned that the children who attended this particular school came from wealthy households and had access to things and activities that she didn't. She experienced poverty and shame – as she felt embarrassed of her clothing, her house, their furniture, the car her parents drove, etc. She preferred not to have friends over and not to be picked up by her parents (who now had a lax schedule). She'd had her parents' friends drop her off a block before her house (where the nice houses ended). She stated that at the time was difficult for her to understand the reason behind her parents working so much, not having access to a "pretty house", a dog and a nice car in comparison to her parents' friends. She added that due to her friends, she had access to private country clubs and other luxuries.

However, she delved into her schoolwork and was the best in her class. Yet, she reported that she learned soon enough that her academic performance was contested, but not that of the white youth she academically mentored. She was referred to the school social worker due to depression and suicidal ideation.

Ideas on working with People: *Working from a Strength-Based Perspective*

Strength-based approaches remain crucial in this work but not as a part of the deficit model. Interventions must be informed by deconstructing the colonial impetus to privilege certain identities and ways of being strong. For example, the **myth of meritocracy,** the idea that if a person works hard, they will get ahead based on effort and diligence alone and can overcome adversity, informs the (fabled) Canadian or American dream (Carranza, 2017). Another example is valuing independence over interdependence, that is, working together and depending on one another – this, too, is a strength when looked at from outside of the lens of the West. One way to approach notions of strength for helpers is valuing in thought and practice the range of experiences and histories of people, honouring how they exist in the world. Lee and Bhuyan (2018) note that the counselling relationship can often remake these norms of independence found in the Global North and Western lens that devalue collaboration and community. This approach can disconnect people and place additional pressure to 'solve' one's own problems.

Question: *How would this approach to strength alter a Western perspective on* ***Naya's*** *situation?*

Narrative Therapy

The stories that people tell have a social, cultural, political and historical complexity (White, 2001). *Narrative therapy*, or elements of it, can assist in re-storying and deconstruction, with a focus on conversations and collaboration. As an intervention, narrative therapy separates the person from their problem (White, 2007). In using narrative for social justice, 'problems' are connected to the larger social structures. TIP can utilize narrative therapy techniques to address the sociopolitical context, to unpack hegemonic narratives that are impacting people's lives (Brown, 2020). In working together, the social work encounter can use *counterviewing* to question the assumptions and taken-for-granted realities that hegemonic narratives create (e.g. white men in leadership positions). This hegemonic narrative works to inform the colonial grid where, to some degree, many of us see this positioning as natural – leadership as an extension of maleness and whiteness (Carranza et al., 2023). *Counterstorying*, where the development of a new story emerges, builds upon strengths and resists dominant narratives (Brown, 2020). A *counter-narrative* can illuminate the systemic nature of lived reality.

Question: *How could this thinking be applied to* ***Lydia's*** *experiences of shame?*

Privileging Non-Western Ways

This approach places value on healing in ways that are not part of the medical model or Western ways. It also removes the helper as the 'knower.' Goodman (2015) suggests that people engaging in helping can and should step away from frameworks learned in Eurocentric settings. This could privilege the viewpoints and practices that are meaningful to individuals, families, and communities without being appropriative or exploitative. Using art-making as a way to encourage communication and healing, photography or perhaps gentle movement. People have ways that they can make meaning from healing and this should be centred in their way of knowing. This approach is less prescriptive than narrative therapy and can and should be implemented on a case-by-case basis. It is also important to be mindful of the trappings of cultural competency and cultural humility. Being open to when an identity is not shared, or as a helper you are not invited in, you may need to seek additional guidance. Social and collective action has been identified as a way for people to challenge the structures that disempower them (Herman, 1997). Connection can be, not always, a powerful way to work with people and their communities. A collective co-created project can bring people together to discuss their shared struggles and, if they choose, social action (Goodman, 2015).

Question: How could a helper value **Julia's** own knowledge and healing?

Conclusion

The literature on trauma and resettlement acknowledges that the legal aspect of the immigration process is highly stressful due to its arduousness – from the paperwork to navigating the court system and lengthy waitlists. It is, too, very costly for applicants (Carranza, 2017). Further, migration, acculturation and integration are often saturated with stressors and uncertainty, concerns for safety and economic instability. Upon arrival, the experience is less than magical, as portrayed in the media and collective imagination. Once in their new home, immigrant/forced migrants often experience multiple barriers, such as language, accessing meaningful employment, and recognition of international credentials (Carranza, 2017; Lee & Bhuyan, 2018). Racialized immigrants/forced migrants face multiple added oppressions such as racism, discrimination, and unequal access to services (Comas-Díaz & Greene, 2013; Lee & Hadeed, 2009), as well as exclusion from economic integration and advancement (Creese, 2005; Galabuzi, 2004). Resettlement is a gendered process, for racialized women, they face an income gap of 47% with non-racialized men, and earn 59% less than non-immigrant men. It is likely that racialized immigrant women experience the highest income gap in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2016).

In the TIP approach detailed in this discussion – how do we connect this to the local, national and global? How do all of these experiences create or exacerbate *trauma*?

Trauma-informed practices with immigrant/forced migrants require a shift away from the medical model formulation of the intrinsic or intrapsychic. Trauma is political, and as such, where privilege exists, we should be engaging in advocacy, activism, and action. This starts with interrogating how intervention theories informed by coloniality create trauma. Adding in information and knowledge from the community can begin to shift away from Western lenses and Eurocentric education. At the micro level, examine the policies, directives and practices within where we work and volunteer. How do they support or reproduce coloniality? For example, how is 'foreign' knowledge and education valued or devalued? Are interventions geared only toward the individual? At the macro level, how does coloniality inform policies at local, national, and international levels? If it is safe for us to do so, asking how might policies be creating or exacerbating traumatic stress?

EXERCISE

Thinking about the Colonial Grid

Map the pieces of your identity that you think are important in your personal and professional capacities. Talk with a friend or a colleague, and engage in storytelling about what you thought about and why. Is it what they think is important? Does that shift what you think?

KEY QUESTIONS

- *In the TIP approach detailed in this discussion – how do we connect this to the local, national and global? How do all of these experiences create or exacerbate trauma?*

10

Chapter Ten: Gender as an Axis of the Colonial Grid

Abstract: Much of the immigration literature is written without consideration for gender or based on men's experiences. This chapter critically examines how gender intersects with the racialization process and structural racism that results in prejudice and social exclusion.

Key Concepts: Gender, Binary, Canadian Experience, and Feminization of Migration

Gender, as an axis of the colonial grid, stratifies migration and resettlement. Understanding how and why this process is stratified by gender moves beyond naming different 'push' and 'pull' factors or the ways that *men* and *women* resettle

The terms' men' and women are used as a reflection of the gender binary implemented and enforced during colonization – that remains today in public discourse and policy

. Acculturation processes often occur in spaces where immigrant/forced migrants are experiencing a construction of their identities as the Stranger, and their 'difference' is redefined and recreated in

complex ways (Anzaldúa, 2000). Gender remains vital to coloniality today. Violently implemented, the gender binary and the categories of men and women – were part of a larger strategy of colonization. In remaking the colonial homeland, the gender hierarchy intended to disrupt the family, collective and relations to land (Icaza and Vázquez, 2013). Icaza and Vázquez (2013) explain that in current thought around race and gender, generalizations that are un-embodied have come to dominate the discourse – meaning analysis is not emerging from lived realities. To ensure this discussion is built from the ground up, the Coloniality of Gender (CoG) (Icaza & Vázquez, 2013; Lugones, 2007; Salzar, 2012) is used to understand what is imposed on Black, Indigenous, People of Colour and racialized people through gender. Gender represents one of the fundamental destructions of/for colonization. As Lugones (2016) states, "the instrumentality of the colonial/modern gender system in subjecting us – both women and men of colour – in all domains of existence" (p. 14).

As Icaza and Vázquez (2016) contend, gender cannot be added as a category as it is constantly being negotiated – so it cannot be "male vs female" experiences. It was negotiated in their country of origin, during migration and in Canada during resettlement, amidst embodying citizenship and its practices. Gender must be situated in its geography of place, transnationally and in its history (Icaza & Vázquez, 2016). Gender is embodied (Icaza & Vázquez, 2013). The body is a site of labour, political identity, and a visibility politic that both produces and represents gender(ed), class(d) and race(d) identities. In this way, embodiment incorporates how social situations are impacted by how the body is used, viewed and performed (McCaughy, 1998). Using the CoG as a framework requires thinking from and about an embodied experience of how people migrate and resettle (Icaza & Vázquez, 2016). Embodiment centers on the ways that citizenship and liminality are understood and performed by immigrant/forced migrants and subsequently received by 'Canadians' (Carranza, 2017). Theorizations from the body are counter-intuitive to Western ways of knowing that see gender as a stable category that gets applied to people. In some Western theorizations, identities such as race then get added to the (stable) construct of gender.

Social situations, in turn, shape ideologies of gender that become written on the body. Gender is reconstructed through citizenship and discourses of immigration. Construction begins before arrival, on who can emigrate, where they can live and what capital they can access by virtue of their identity. This embodiment means that experiences of citizenship are intentionally constructed differently for men and women, and this is a living, ongoing and in-motion process. Gendered migration is reinforced in laws, labour market entry, day-to-day life, and the normative understandings they help to constitute. This discussion is a companion to *Migration as a family process* on mobility across national borders and the 'to-ing and from-ing' that informs the embodied experiences of being here and there simultaneously in transnational lives (Basch et al., 1994).

Analyzing gender connects citizenship practices (being 'here' in Canada) to the social and economic reproduction (being 'there', or back home) thus, globalizing the family in both masculine and feminine ways. Gender has been absent in migration research, leaving men as the default, masculinizing the dialogue (Lutz, 2010). As a result, there has been a construction of masculinities and masculinist ideologies embedded in migration, mobility and feminization of relationships and transnationalism (Lutz, 2010). Women are increasingly on the move, often correlated to the increased demand for feminized, low-wage labour. However, this assessment does not tell the whole story. Therefore, this chapter focuses more on women.

The data presented in this chapter is primarily from the two companion projects – *Men's Settlement and Integration* and *Examining the Intersection of Immigrant Women's Acculturation and Mental Health*. Each project was focused on self-identified gendered experiences. Women's stories

often had a nuanced, relational frame. Relationships were woven into men's narratives with upward mobility, taking care of the self and others, and exploration was foregrounded. In women's stories, the centrality of relationships was a tapestry throughout their narratives, in terms of both—familial bonds and the desire to develop new connections in Canada with neighbours, co-workers, schools and their new country. Women's emphasis on relationships was coupled with the hope that their family would be successful, safe and happy in Canada. One of the overarching themes in both projects echoed across research in Canada, was the systemic racism faced in foreign credential recognition. This hope of success that extended beyond re-establishing careers was often met with a sense of exclusion from full participation in their new country (Canada) and a strong desire to overcome it. Participants expressed feeling a demarcation of difference or being viewed as the Stranger/Other, due to not being born 'here,' language barriers and immigration status. Moreover, their race and accents were often markers of this difference. There was a sense that their existence pre-migration was irrelevant to their new lives, and they were pressured to gain Canadian experience in employment, education, language and social norms to successfully integrate. This is a consistent finding in research on Canada – the denial of previous knowledge, experience, and work. Women Immigrants identified that they had hope for the future in that Canadians and Canada would recognize their histories and humanity.

The term Women Immigrant (WI) is used, rather than immigrant women (as commonly used), as the participants were women long before they became immigrants, and the same is true for men – Male Immigrants (MI). This departs from the language used in the other chapters to reflect what was used in the research, including the ethics process and how participants wanted to be identified. Immigration is one of their many life experiences, and it is, indeed, a significant marker in their lives, but it does not define their identity. The research explored how women's migratory journey(s) intersected with mental wellness, health, and resettlement and how this evolved over time and transnationally.

Feminizing Migration to Canada

In Canada, international migration continues to be the primary engine driving its population growth and nation-building (Satzewich & Shaffir, 2007). Currently, immigrants/forced migrants constitute 21.9 % of the total Canadian population, the highest proportion in over sixty years (Government of Canada, 2019). The second generation is estimated to be 17.8% of the population.

Reminder from Chapter One: The Canadian government often determines successful benchmarks of settlement, including language acquisition and labour market integration. Prior to the late 1960s, and under the assumption that similar racial, ethnic, and religious beliefs would increase the ability to successfully integrate and assimilate into Canadian culture, eligibility for immigration to Canada was restricted to Europeans. For example, in 1966, over 75% of those immigrating to Canada were from the United Kingdom, Ireland, Italy, the United States, Germany, Portugal, France, and Greece. In 1967, the immigration requirements were changed from restricting applicants based on country of origin to a points-based system. Points were awarded based on: employment skills, education, age, marital status and language abilities. In 2001, the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act set out requirements for applicants to meet the criteria listed above. In terms of the changing demographics, increasingly immigrants/forced migrants are arriving from the Global South as opposed to previous migrants from the Global North.

With each wave of immigration, the proportion of WI to Canada continues to rise and now accounts for 52% (2.6 million) of international migration to Canada (Chui & Maheux, 2011). In 2015, Citizenship and Immigration Canada [CIC] stated that approximately 271 847 people were granted

permanent and temporary residency; slightly above half of this population were women. The feminization of migration, that is, the gradual increase of females in international migration, has brought attention to the gendered aspects from a statistical and qualitative perspective (Chui & Maheux, 2011). However, knowledge of how the intersection between race and gender shapes the various aspects of migration, settlement, integration and acculturation is in the beginning stages (Abraído-Lanza, Echeverría & Flórez, 2016; Lutz, 2010; Suárez-Orózco & Qin, 2006). Emerging research is beginning to shed light on such complex processes (Carranza, 2017; Menjívar & Salcído, 2002). Migration discourse, such as 'push/pull' factors, upward mobility, and exploration, represent a specifically masculine ideology that has less applicability to those from the Global South and racialized women. Further, current understandings do not consider the unique journey, complexities and vulnerabilities of women, alone and within the family (Carranza, 2017). Due to the race to the bottom, in political economy terms – driving down wages globally, women are increasingly migrating alone to support their families. Their children are reimagining their country of origin, being raised by family supported by remittances.

Research has suggested that women cite family reunification, economic opportunities, and fleeing gender-based or political violence as the reason for migration (Comas-Díaz & Greene, 2013). Women, more often, face unique relational challenges as they physically leave behind their support networks of close and extended family and friends, which previously sustained their everyday lives. Finding new ways to maintain connections is a part of their resettlement (Ahmad et al., 2009; Carranza, 2008, 2017). The loss of family and roots in their country of origin may be expressed through anxiety and fear, which can affect their adjustment to their country of settlement. For women who have experienced trauma, the negative mental health consequences of migration are often amplified (Comas-Díaz & Greene, 2013). Supports and services are not as readily available to women and, at times, avoided due to a sense of surveillance coming from health, education, child welfare and the immigration process. Feelings of being monitored and concerns around retribution have impacted many immigrants/ forced migrants' desire to seek assistance and are often misunderstood as a barrier to seeking service.

WIs in the imagination of the Global North are often associated with dependency on men as leaders or dominators. Lugones (2016) indicates that these stereotypes, along with the toxic elements associated with masculinity and immigrant/forced migrant men, were created as colonial tools to create race/gender. WI have historically been stereotyped as passive victims of male dominance, having less power in the relationship as ascribed to the role of traditional female homemaking (Carranza, 2017). These stereotypes span across cultures and countries of origin yet have produced different archetypal images. For example, women from El Salvador have a range of stereotypes associated with them – nannies, pupusa-makers, sassy-mouthed, overly sexualized, gang-affiliated, and beholden to marianismo (Carranza, 2022). In the post-911 'war on terror,' Muslim women are portrayed as ahistorical, rooted in a time and place far off with no rights (Shah, 2022).

The masculinization of immigration has done little to dispel these myths. Certain immigration streams favour men reasserting a specific control over migration. The default idea, then, is that they remain the head of the household. For example, Bannerjee and Phan (2014) found that men were often the first movers in the family, with women and families coming second under the skilled worker program. Women then, in these scenarios, are referred to as "tied-movers." The categories of "primary mover" and "tied mover" are referenced in policy as "principal" and "dependent" during the application process. Principal applicants in the "skilled worker" category are selected based on the point system that takes into account education, occupation, age, language ability, work experience, and adaptability. Men are significantly more likely to be principal applicants (Banerjee & Phan, 2014). In 2009, about 19% of all skilled worker principal applicants admitted to Canada were female. This number rose to 43% in 2019 (Immigration and Citizenship Canada, 2021). Popular discourse and discussion have picked up on

the ideology that men resettle faster, in part by entering the labour market quicker. Recent scholarship has dispelled many of these myths, including the feminization of low-wage labour, indicating that WI find employment quicker than their male counterparts (Satewich, 2017).

These stresses alone, or in conjunction with pre-migration trauma, can have negative impacts on physical health, psychosocial well-being, and mental health during settlement for all immigrants/forced migrants (Bankston, 2014), with impacts on their families and abroad. Arrival to Canada and the resettlement journey can be problematic – from starting over to new family expectations, a more individualistic society amidst the process of racialization and being reconfigured as the Stranger. Exploring these experiences brings attention to how women experience migration differently than how it has been constructed for men and their families. Canada emphasizes inclusion, but little change has been made to its systems and structures. These are perceived by many as an illusion (Li, 2000), limited to symbolic messages in government offices and institutions as well as the waiting rooms of non-government organizations (NGOs) serving the public and/or celebrating the 'exotic' food of the Stranger. Canada is known for a politer, subtle form of exclusion- the cleavages of the colonial grid are believed to be more covert. Canada boasts itself as one of the few countries in the G20 that allows its immigrants and refugees to become citizens compared to some European countries (e.g. Germany) and, increasingly, the United States. This juxtaposition is a paradox- the promise of citizenship that comes at a cost. This elevation of Canada has been exacerbated in recent years and exemplified by the actions of the 45th President and administration of the U.S. The active anti-immigration sentiments, the least of which is the former president referring to refugee-producing countries as 'shitholes,' extending to mass migration prevention efforts to punitive policies, have activated a belief in the "Canadian Dream" (Carranza, 2017; 2019). The 'Canadian Dream' was an idea brought forward by the participants in both of these projects. This dream is rooted in the promises of a friendly and welcoming brand, multiculturalism, opportunity and equality, and a holistic perspective of belonging in Canada. However, in the research projects discussed in this chapter and book, it was a dream never actualized for people.

Migration, acculturation, and integration are often saturated with stressors and uncertainty, as well as concerns for safety and economic instability. The legal aspect of the immigration process is highly stressful due to the arduousness, from the paperwork to navigating the court system and lengthy waitlists (Menjívar, 2017). Further, the system is constantly changing. Rarely are systems changes proactive and most often in response to a crisis – such as, recent to the time of this writing, mass exodus from Ukraine to responding to extreme backlogs in immigration applications caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants in the *Men's Integration and Resettlement* project detailed the ways that each of them believed entering their chosen education and work field would be in Canada and how, in each case, that did not materialize. This was due to the claim that 'Canadian experience' was needed, claims of un-transferability, racism and xenophobia. Each of the men interviewed felt that Canada misrepresented the possibility of acquiring meaningful employment, which caused economic and mental health stress.

The literature also indicates that once in their new home, immigrants/forced migrants often experience multiple barriers beyond stable employment, such as language, housing, systems navigations and day-to-day tasks. Racialized immigrants may face multiple and added oppressions such as racism, discrimination, and unequal access to services (Carranza, 2018; Comas-Díaz & Greene, 2013; Lee & Hadeed, 2009), as well as exclusion from economic integration and advancement (Creese, 2005; Galabuzi, 2004). It was a myth that once Canadian citizenship is secured, people have certain privileges: the ability to be employed, travel to certain countries without a visa, and a Canadian pension, yet many of these stressors remain. On paper, immigrants/forced migrants obtain the rights of people who were born here, but in reality, this often does not actualize in an idealized fashion (Carranza, 2017).

Economic Exclusion

One of the outcomes of immigration is a decline in income, which results in a 'brain gain' for Canada. Lack of recognition of international credentials (Houle &Yssaad, 2012), leading to a lack of meaningful employment (Dressler, 2015; Sethi, 2014), and access to affordable housing (Gajardo, 2010; Mudie, 2010; Wayland, 2007) which in turn can lead to living in extreme poverty (Polanyi et al., 2014) in areas marked by economic disparity (Galabuzi, 2006; Picot & Hou, 2003). More specifically, some scholars argue that for racialized immigrants/forced migrants, the experience of economic exclusion is an ongoing process during settlement and throughout their lives (Creese, 2005; Dyck & McLaren, 2002). Further, women experience gendered challenges in entering the labour market and maintaining employment. Among the ages of 25–54 years old, racialized immigrant men earned 71 cents for every dollar that non-racialized immigrant men earned. Racialized immigrant women earned 79 cents for every dollar that non-racialized immigrant women earned. These gaps continue into the second generation and beyond (Block et al., 2019).

In terms of recognition, Jones (2015) notes that the assessment of the credibility of knowledge exists at the intersection of gender, socialization, strangeness and foreignness. Male knowledge is privileged, rooted in whiteness, masculinity and ongoing coloniality in the Global North. Carranza and colleagues (2023) found that leadership roles remain a well-worn pathway for whiteness, maleness and those who were born here or somewhere in the Global North. Embedded within are the racist conceptions of progress, modernity and coloniality that intentionally dismiss the ontologies and epistemologies of the Global South (Carranza, 2018). In some spaces, racialized men's positioning has moved, albeit slightly, from the margins towards the center. While representation remains important, with little structural change, these shifts may not be long-term and can be reversed. It can be argued that coming to terms with these dynamics negatively impacts the mental health of people who have migrated to a knowledge economy that excludes their labour and experiences.

Acculturation and Mental Health

Acculturation is complex and multidimensional (Koneru et al., 2007; Pérez, 2011). Broadly speaking, acculturation relates to the psychological, attitudinal and behavioural changes that occur due to the interaction between individuals from different cultures and the settlement society (Berry, 2006). Acculturative stress is associated with the multiple changes/challenges (to name a few: diet, climate, dress code, language, day-to-day routines) of moving across borders to a new place. The move and transitions tend to impact self-esteem, identity, sense of belonging, and meaning-making processes. There is often a decrease in feelings of wellness (Miller & Chandler, 2002; Thomas Gee et al., 2004). In particular, racialized WI face multiple oppressions, such as racism, discrimination, and unequal access to services along the axis of gender (Cómas-Díaz & Greene, 2013; Guruge et al., 2009; Lee & Hadeed, 2009). From a family systems perspective, WIs' acculturation involves their family members, both in the settlement country and abroad (Gillum, 2009; Latta & Goodman, 2005).

Hilario and colleagues (2017) noted a lack of discussion of men's mental health in the scholarship on migration. The focus has been on familial and cultural values, intergenerational transmission and acculturation (Hilario et al., 2017; Salehi, 2010). With this lack of understanding of mental wellness for men who have migrated, social inequalities and social determinants of health have not been accurately assessed (Castañeda et al., 2015). This means that for MIs, their experiences of migration and the structural impacts of exclusion and racism are unknown in the ways they navigate their resettlement. What is known is that men tend to access mental health programs less than women

(Kirmayer et al., 2007) and that services are not meeting the needs of immigrants/forced migrants (Hilario et al., 2017).

Gender Relations

Acculturation is a family process and is mediated through the extended kin network. For women and men, gender norms within this unit can shift through acculturation. This can require renegotiating roles, time, and space while navigating the family's acculturation and integration journey (Carranza, 2019). Immigration challenges men and women differently because women are socialized to prioritize their family needs over their own personal goals (Carranza, 2008; Ho, 2006). Banerjee and Phan (2015) found that in economic migration, language acquisition and employment were more often in support of the husband's career. Low-wage jobs in the current economic structure favour women; they join the workforce much more quickly than men, becoming the primary earners. This can be problematic—as families are often forced into low-wage and precarious labour despite their achievements in their country of origin, which can heighten external stressors (Satewich, 2007). Scholars argue that working women continue to bear the primary household responsibilities to maintain their households (Menjívar & Salcído, 2002). This occurs amidst the loss of support from their extended family and community (Ahmad et al., 2009).

Themes

The themes are presented in the voices and the participants' stories. This standpoint centers participants' experiences building knowledge in these studies from below and brings embodiment from the margins to the centre. By using participants' 'voice', it attempts to connect personal accounts to the structural context, to prompt social action (Ponterotto, Mathew & Raughley, 2013). To protect the anonymity of the participants, identifying information was removed, and specific countries of origin were not named in quotes. The quotes remain unedited for grammar or speech patterns to preserve the integrity of participants' contributions. Further, not editing the quotes preserves a social justice orientation by maintaining authenticity and accuracy when representing the lived realities of participants (Ponterotto, et al., 2013).

The findings indicate that WI face challenges and experience several broken promises. These relate to the shifting needs of family members—particularly their partners and children. Commitment to the family's well-being before their own as a source of pride was significant. As one participant commented, "I hope my children will see a better world." The following section presents the pivotal themes that emerged in the data analysis: (i) 'it's not about me,' (ii) co-opted choices, (iii) declining women's mental health and well-being, (iv) Structural Racism: The Juxtaposition of a Better Life and (v) racism and discrimination.

"It's Not about Me": Being Invisible and Mothering through acculturation

The findings strongly indicated that for women, their relationships were central in their lives and, therefore, shaped their decision-making pre-, during, and post-migration. Women's experiences are often invisibilized. When interviewing men, one participant said, when asked about gender differences, "that's an interesting question if women adapt differently, I've never thought about it". This was echoed

by others with surprise, "I guess women would experience this differently." Women often spoke directly about their thoughts on men and resettlement, including examples of their husbands to enrich their understanding of gender in the process. Many quotes begin with, "It is this way for my husband, but not for me." WIs often constructed their narrative with the family or highlighted the differences with their male counterparts.

Another example is that many women identified first as mothers. Examples of motherhood as an organizing principle in their lives included putting their families and relationships first, most importantly, their children. Women who immigrated from collectivist societies drew from alternative discourses wherein the needs of the whole supersede the needs of the one. The following are some examples:

> It's not about me. You see, if they're [family members] okay, I am okay. When they are not okay, I am not okay either…So, for me to be okay, I need to ensure that they are okay…I know it is difficult to understand, and it is difficult for me to explain it, but that is the way I feel…[Norma]

Another woman commented, "…I think it did for my family. I think it did it for my husband and also for my kids". A settlement worker put it this way:

> Western societies have an emphasis on individualism and independence…. Women [who] come from collective societies think of the family before themselves, not only the nuclear family but also the extended family…experiencing a lot of stresses and pressures. [They] place the needs of the family before their own…Often, there is a conflict…

The findings indicate that from the point of arrival, participants set out to build their lives within conflicting discourses of what it means to be a woman and how womanhood is expressed. Women may need to position themselves according to the challenges they encounter in the settlement context, e.g., the ease or difficulties in getting international credentials recognized and securing employment.

Fatherhood through Acculturation

In describing their experiences, there were many references made by the participants to a narrative of searching for a better life, for themselves and their family. Their pre-migration aspiration for a better life was often framed in terms of physical, political, economic and social safety and security in Canada. There was a belief that their success would translate into the overall well-being of their family. During the interviews, several participants echoed similar reasons for migrating: "new/better opportunities," "the possibility of a new life," "upward mobility," "more security," and a few said "adventure," no longer living in liminality.

Men, too, often identified concerns about safety, health and economic well-being but situated themselves as actors within this narrative. One adult child commented, "Men, especially immigrant men, need to support their families. This support is by money and showing them how to be successful". They further explained that: "women are more likely to look for help, support. Men will just try try try to do it, they do not want to ask for help, they just want to 'make it' for themselves and their family". Raising children who were self-sufficient was a key driver for men so their children could be more successful in Canada than in their country of origin. One father explained, "it's up to you to make it worth it, you have to make it worth the pain of moving to a new country and everything you experienced. You have to make it worth it, and you have to make it easier for your kids". Another man stated, "I live to work. I

worked 90 hrs. per week…going from one job to another…When I was exhausted, I used to tell myself 'you've got to keep going, you can't crumble, you got to do it for your kid.' I couldn't afford to be sick or have back pain. I just couldn't…". One child explained that "Fathers from [country] are not able to be emotional with their kids. In part because they just have to work all the time. So you see Dad's involved on TV and that's not how it is. My Dad supported us to survive only". In this way men saw their family in relation to themselves, as leaders and providers. It was in their success that their partners, children and extended family could be safe and prosperous.

Co-opted Choices

A second most significant theme was the 'choices' WIs made, specifically due to immigration. Most of these were done in silence, while others were carried out for the children's or their husbands' welfare and without much recognition from those around them. The reasons varied, to name a few: migration to Canada, letting go of their careers so their husbands could pursue theirs, staying home and caring for their children because they had no family to trust and giving up motherhood. The following excerpts highlight this theme:

> I never wanted to leave my country or my family…But things change when you get married you know…. Honestly, this is not my story, it's my husband's story, because he wanted to live in North America, it was the biggest dream for him… I had a PhD in my country…here I'm a janitor. I chose not to have children when we were there [country of origin] because it would have been too difficult to come here with little children. We have been here for a while now… The first years, here [Canada] I chose not to have children because we were living in poverty and I wanted my husband to have his [professional] credentials recognized. I chose to work so my husband could try… We are still living in poverty and I am now too old to have children [looks down & a pause is taken] [Irina]

When asked about her 'choice' of working so her husband could have his credentials recognized, she responded:

> He needed it more than me…You know, men's identity is closely tied to their jobs and what they do…He was very upset when he found out how hard it was. I thought it would break him if he continued to work on what he was doing…

Another participant added:

> We both came here [Canada] with professional degrees and years of experience. Once here, we were told that we needed our professional degrees recognized… that is very expensive! We were also told that we needed Canadian experience… the experience that we had vanished in thin air! I was one of the few engineers in my country that worked with water…water is water here and in the rest of the world. We both could not do it [get credentials recognized]. So, [I] decided to stay home with my children now, while my husband works in getting his credentials recognized. He is very close now. I am very happy for him. Life will change for us. We will be able to buy a house and provide better for our children [Nina].

Another participant commented:

> We had a very good life in our country. We had a chauffeur and other servants. My husband was not so optimistic about life in ––. He wanted the kids to grow up safe. There [country of

> origin] it is mandatory for children to serve in the army. My husband didn't want that. I really didn't want to come…I had a good life there, material things, family, and friends. I had a very busy social life. I wasn't prepared to what was awaiting for me here. I mean cleaning toilets, cooking and the things that a house needs. My time there [country of origin] was divided between my social life and my family, but not looking after the house…I was not prepared to clean toilets. It was very difficult for me… I used to cry a lot…like… I had never done that! [Nadia]

When discussing acculturation and integration, one woman spoke about how they moved through the first few months, "When I first immigrated to Canada, I was just focused on my family, my kids and me, on how we're going to make it." For example, in assessing and making decisions on organizing their new lives in Canada, one woman noted, "I planned to get a job, but my son was a little boy, and I needed to take care of him." This indicated that children's needs are foundational to acculturation as a family. One service provider said that women "place the needs of their family before their own". Another woman stated, "However, that [attending school] wasn't my choice, because at that point and I say to her [worker], "Who goes to university? My kids, not me. Because financials". Children and their future were, as one woman identified, "Yes, they are priority, since I live in my country, kids. Kids get educated, get their life and be happy". Often, the decision to migrate and the process of acculturation and integration were organized around caring for and providing for their family. The findings indicate that hope for a better life encourages women persevere as they were forced to choose to work in a field foreign to their own.

> We didn't imagine it's going to be so hard to find a job, honestly. I believe in me, because it's my way. Every day I know it's going to be okay, every day. I am really optimistic, but it's not [okay]… Sometimes, I know I am just lying to myself. But it is really hard… Because, I will tell you, [the] first year, when I came here, I worked in a factory, I made balloons and I worked 12 hours shift, night shift.

The quotes above highlight the 'choices' the participants made for the sake of the well-being of their families. Some of these were carried out with more difficulties than others, women leading their professional and specialized field were ready to do so for their families. While others were more resistant to the idea of taking on activities related to housekeeping. An important issue here is how these choices had a resulting impact on the women's mental health.

Men: Irreconcilable (forced) choices

In both studies, men and women faced the 'choice' of leaving their country of origin. In migration, 'choice' is often a misnomer. Men expressed that they chose a 'better life,' which identified Canada as a 'place of opportunity,' as well as social safety, freedom of movement, and peace. Men consistently constructed 'choice' as a more active process than women. One explained that "sometimes you just have to break out for a new adventure, you will grow, and you know your family will grow, and there aren't those opportunities at home."

One participant, who was in Canada alone, said, "It just becomes the only reasonable option to live well. But is this well? I cannot drive here; I have a management job but was told not to hire other immigrants. So ya, we're poor back home but turns out poor in other ways here". The pre-migration narrative of a better life, which was promoted internationally, was woven into the range of stories shared. A participant, recruited as a professional said,

> I went to school in England, I had heard that many minorities do so well in Canada. There were ways to live better. I thought – yes, I am not white but they want me, so it will be okay. That company stuck me in a town of 13,000. I was the brown guy with an accent. That's not better at all – but you make it work.

Despite the various countries and cultures that participants were from, the idea of choosing a better life through migration was embedded in their accounts. This choice ensured their and their family's safety, security, rights, and well-being. Some participants alluded to how this search for upward mobility and the Canadian dream reinforced the ideology that the Global South is considered frozen in an inferior way of living, socially problematic or backward and that the role of the Global North, including Canada, is not often discussed. One adult child reflected:

> My Dad knew he just needed to be fine with the jokes [specific to country of origin] because we needed to be here, he chose to come to live better…. but none of those people or my parents ever talked about how Canada/the U.S does stuff in every country to make it impossible to live. No one wants to talk about that.

Many participants had constructed Canada as an "improvement overall", but noted the irony that much of Canada's success was dependent on the "exploitation back home" and "everyone wants cheap oil but they don't want the cost – us living in their country". The choice of migration existed amidst a myriad of factors, including the desire to be in control of one's life and their family's future.

A Downward Trajectory: Declining Women's Mental Health and Well-being

Women often maintained hope for themselves and their families in their narratives, but unspoken notions of sadness sometimes emerged. At other times, within this hope was the realization that the shifts amidst the exclusion added sadness and dampened well-being. The accumulated impact of ongoing stresses had implications – particularly for the participants' mental health. As the following participant stated, "women carry the emotions for the family." She added:

> Women often carry emotions for our families. If we are the carrier of emotions, and depending on the amount of situations we have gotten over, we might get to a place in which we are overflowing with emotions…We don't know where to put them; And how do we keep going and continue to be the backbone of our family? Then, what happens if you can't do it anymore? What happens to the family then? We just want the best for our family…[Lori]

Another participant added to these complexities:

> We had a very good life there [country of origin] …I was a teacher… We came here for our safety. Safety is the most important thing for us… We don't like much what we are doing here—nothing we do is related to our field! I chose to do this job to be with my children because my husband works at night. I am strong woman, but it gets tough sometimes…It is difficult to carry on every day here. Sometimes I find myself crying a lot for no reason…I have survived the genocide of my people…Kurdish people. I lost seven in my family, including my baby bother. I still have family there. It's a constant worry…I focus on my children…their future…their safety [Nadia]

An adult son commented:

> It [immigration] broke her…I mean being here, watching my dad, an engineer, drive a taxi. She having to spend long hours in a factory so we would not go without…We didn't help…well, I didn't help… I did not understand it then. I wanted things. You know, you go to school and the other kids have this and that…I wanted it…I didn't know we live in poverty. My mother had a nervous breakdown. She spent some time in the hospital… [Yani]

While a professional working with WI commented the following:

> …It chips away their confidence and self-esteem. I've met people full with hope, happy to be here and ready to start their life here and be active contributors. I've met engineers, teachers, doctors, and nurses. They try very hard to get their credentials recognized, but the system makes it impossible for them. Ten years later, they are working in something unrelated to their profession but still trying…But then, it gets to them and breaks them. They get depressed after years of trying…They can't function as mothers or wives anymore. The system brakes them. Some of them end up in disability. They get sick when they cannot push themselves anymore…

Another participant commented on her own experience dealing with anxiety:

> I just felt dizzy; my heart started beating really fast, and I felt like I was going to faint. And I was sweating, 'oh my god what is this'… I had to lie down for a while, so next day I went to the doctor and the doctor asked, 'what has happened in the past 5 years?'. And I told him, I said, well, we were deported, da da da, we were [family members] separated'… He just looked at me and he said, 'no wonder'. He goes 'you have been through a lot of things that could've happened in five years.' So, you packed five years in one year. So, then I just developed that [anxiety] and it lasted for a few years… I get it now. Once in a blue moon, but I know how to control it because I know what it is and it is just maybe I'm overly stressed, that just hits, and I am like, okay, but I know what to do like I don't. I always said it is not going to kill me because that's I am going to tell my doctor I think I am going to die. And because my heart, I am going to have a heart attack, because I feel my heart coming out of my mouth (laugh).

The above quotes indicate that accumulating stress, despair, disappointment, and loss of hope is an ongoing process and a lived day-to-day reality of WI to Canada. From anxiety attacks to hospital admissions due to a nervous breakdown, the impact on the body, mental health and wellbeing is evident.

Men's Mental Health

When asked about their, or their spouse or father's mental health, the subtext of the responses was fraught with an upward, improvement, and moving narrative. As one male participant explained, "yes its hard and it's frustrating. When you apply for and interview for jobs and don't get them, it gets to you. You don't feel good about yourself. But there's not time, you gotta keep moving and keep trying". There was a sense of time connected to mental health and wellness, that there was not enough of to properly address what was happening. Men, and from their family's perspective, believed that they chose to come to Canada to be well. Not keeping moving forward was associated with failure. The fear of failure activated the men's worries over disappointment

coupled with the desire to realize the collective family aspirations—particularly their children.

One child retold the story of their father quickly getting a job upon arrival, a "survival" job. They indicated "this is not what he wanted to do but you need a job straight away – so there is a loss? He's older now looking back, realizing there are other things. There is grief there. A grief no one talks about". These participants emphasized the stress and emotional toll of financial hardship, which generated an ideology that one cannot "give in" to depression or anxiety. This significant pressure was described by one participant: "I had a good job in [country], but I knew problems were coming with the government. So, I worked on my English to come here as an economic immigrant. I cannot be sad about things that happened – or why did I come?". One participant noted sadness about being an immigrant and the loss of home and identity. However, this loss was mediated by learning English pre-migration and gaining entry via the points system – in this way, he felt he was equal to being a Canadian. One adult child interviewed for the men's project said, "Canadians assume your journey, your trauma ends. Poof! When you get here, you should be grateful and question – why do you miss home?". In this way, many immigrants/forced migrants identified being denied the space for sadness. This generated significant pressure for men to succeed for themselves and their loved ones. Many men felt their obligation was to do well, connected to their 'choice' to move and for the overall wellness of their family.

Structural Racism: The Juxtaposition of a Better Life

Beyond the collective narrative of searching for a better life and safety was the disillusionment with Canada and their struggle to integrate positively – this was discussed by participants in both projects. Positive integration was correlated with stable employment, safety, and the ability to meet basic needs, as well as with building connections and navigating Canadian systems. One of the consistent messages was the lack of information about Canada and the resettlement process given prior to migration and during resettlement. This resulted in people feeling somewhat ill-prepared for Canada, which added an additional layer of struggle during settlement. Most participants noted that upon arrival, information was difficult to access, missing or incorrect, and some information remained elusive. Settlement workers also noted that this lack of information remains one of the central challenges. This meant that navigating the hazards of the Canadian systems posed an additional challenge by requiring them to navigate a new system without clear directions or a roadmap. Further, these experiences included trying to understand mainstream Canadian culture and humour, as well as traversing the education system amidst experiences of racism and exclusion. Perhaps the most damaging misinformation was the idea of multiculturalism and equality that did not materialize in their journeys.

Participants shared nuanced stories about exclusion based on race and identification as not 'from here' and what it was like for them and their families to leave their home countries and resettle in Canada as immigrants or refugees. For some participants, this narrative also referred to resisting stereotypes about their people, countries, and cultures. It also required negotiating systemic discrimination while being expected to show gratitude for being in Canada. For all participants, international credential recognition and institutional deskilling were prominent themes related to disappointment, disillusionment, and problematic information provided prior to migration that led to underemployment and experiences of living in poverty. Most importantly, this was one of the most significant structural barriers experienced differently by women. Many participants envisioned they would have the opportunity to work in their profession upon arrival in Canada. Acceptance into the country as a skilled worker class gave the indication that a person

would be able to work in their field. One woman spoke to this confusion, identifying that people "have no idea what they are doing after this because they are happy because they think Canada needs people. They give them a job". One service provider further elaborated:

> Skilled workers, they are coming here, usually, usually [with emphasis] [with] higher expectations that they can achieve here in Canada. Why? Probably because of lack of information they getting when they are coming here. Because they think, 'I am a skilled worker. I am accepted as a skilled worker.' So [the] expectation is, 'I will work according to my education.' Then you have it, that doesn't happen when they come here. When they come here, they are very frustrated. For example, somebody mentioned in the past before he came here, he was "delivering babies", and when he came to Canada, he was "delivering pizza".

Participants spoke about the frustration that they did not know Canada would not recognize or give them credit for their education and experience in their countries of origin. Further, immigrants/forced migrants are told they need "Canadian experience" with little explanation or guidance as to the reasoning behind it. One woman stated:

> If I want to get a job, I need Canadian education, Canadian job experience. How can we get Canadian job experience? They do not accept, if I do not have a Canadian education and Canadian job experience. They do not allow us to work. How can I get experience? Where do I start?

Not acknowledging previous education and experience was viewed as placing immigrants/forced migrants at a disadvantage and creating a significant hazard while trying to navigate systems and recreate their lives in a new country. Women had to decide who (they or their partners) could be retrained, often due to financial restraints and childcare needs. The costs were a significant burden, combined with unclear information, which created significant pressure and stress on women and their families. This process secures a low-wage workforce, and in many ways, this lack of information shaped the acculturation and integration process, pushing those who had migrated to the margins of Canadian society.

Racism and Discrimination

Many participants indicated that Canadian people "are not open to immigrants." Being closed also meant a refusal to acknowledge exclusionary and discriminatory practices. Racist encounters challenged not only their belonging but exacerbated their marginalization. A range of experiences was brought forth in the interviews and focus groups. Stories ranged from having to change surnames to qualify for interviews, being told their education and experiences were "less than" Canadian, to discrimination in health care as some doctors "Do not want to deal with patients with an accent." A male participant recounted questions he received as he advanced in his company around "affirmative action policies." One woman summarized their struggles in the following example, "Immigrants are trying and not treated right because of colour or race. How did it impact me? It made me angry." There was a range of stereotypes that were operationalized, from assuming the majority of women could not speak English, immigrants are here to steal jobs, they are uneducated, to stereotypes concerning culture such as, "you KNOW how Latinos are."

For example, a number of service providers spoke about the stereotypes surrounding women who wear hijabs. Many women had encountered Canadians who correlated the hijab with

extreme gender oppression and intimate partner violence. A service provider attributed the lack of information, the challenges faced in navigating Canadian systems, and stereotypes to "… the systemic racism we are talking about. Without that, I think many of these things would change. Because then you would have more flexibility, and we would have more people being open-minded towards immigrants". Most participants, including adult children, workers and women, identified that the migration journey was often accompanied by a decline in mental health and well-being. This decline was related to a number of factors: pre-migration trauma, losses, and marginalization, including barriers to information and experiences of racism.

Discussion

The stories of migration, as told by immigrants/forced migrants themselves, their families and immigrant serving agencies, brought forth accounts of trauma and loss, resiliency, and the struggle to leave one's country of origin and stay in Canada. There was an emphasis on relationships and economic stability, coupled with the hope that their family would be successful, safe and happy in Canada. Men often had a labour focus on their narrative, accessing employment, learning English and earning to support immediate and extended family. Beyond the dialogue of labour market entry, the analysis revealed the gendered ways men felt were the ways to support – financial and stability being primary drivers. The hope of integration was often met with a sense of exclusion, racism and refusal of recognition.

The participants indicated that the lack of validation of international credentials and employment presents a significant barrier to immigrants' economic and social integration into Canada. Furthermore, underpinning this barrier is the predominant *tabula rasa* or blank slate discourse stripping immigrants from everything that has meaning to them—including their professional identity or questioning their grief due to their loss of home. Coming from the Global South to the North signifies being placed as lacking and/or having inferior knowledge. Accordingly, Said (1979) posits that the West constructed the East as different and inferior and, therefore, in need of Western intervention. Within this framework, the "recognition" of international credentials can be understood as a *well-crafted* intervention from the West wherein policing knowledge produced by those constructed as inferior has led to patrolling the professional competencies of immigrants to Canada. Based on the need to 'protect' the public from less advanced knowledge, this discourse has gained much support and credence in Canada. Professional colleges enact and/or enforce such discourses. Arduous processes and expensive fees force immigrants/ forced migrants to Canada to abandon their professional careers and aspirations. This outcome serves elite neo-liberal groups—as immigrants become a disposed group willing to engage in economic subjugation for the sake of the family's well-being and/or safety.

Knowledge policing significantly impacts immigrant families—particularly women. Under the umbrella of 'choice,' WIs' bodies and souls are coopted by the discourses of the West/Global North. As migration is increasingly feminized, there are new ways to manifest exploitation – the racializing of women along the lines of gender. As gender is considered to manifest itself and be performed differently across the Global South and the North, women enter a new colonial encounter upon arrival. A new, imposed system controls not only their bodies but also their citizenship and hopes for a 'better life' while attempting to erase their past lives. Perhaps the most prominent example of this erasure is the denial of foreign credentials while creating a mechanism for men to more easily access—as spoken of by the women in this study. As women were socialized and reinforced in Canada to care for the family-more space was opened for men to retrain. This barrier also exists for men, but there are differences in who can access the few opportunities gracefully provided.

In Canada, immigration policy favours a pluralist approach, which means that programs and services are intended to assist the integration or 'catching up' processes of immigrants/forced migrants. Policy and legislation boast a gender-neutral approach and, when necessary, a focus on the family. Many women and their families did not experience a 'welcoming community' in Canada. WIs experienced barriers located at the juncture of gender and race, which often left them at the margins. Women bear these disparities in their flesh and soul—as their 'choices' are born out of necessity, hence compromising their mental health and well-being. **Womanhood** and **motherhood** are at the core of their decision-making processes. Thus, WIs carry the emotions and stresses of their families on their backs. In turn, they, too, carry the core of Canada's economy, that is, a cheap, abundant and readily available immigrant workforce. They do so in the shadows and silence, at the expense of their mental health, well-being and, during the COVID-19 pandemic—their lives.

CASE: Nolah

- What are the mediating factors in Nolah's case?
- How does colonial gratitude emerge or not?

Nolah's partner was persecuted and killed in her country of origin. As a result, she and her children went into hiding. After some time, she and her three children, devoted Catholics, arrived in Canada sponsored by a specific religious faith. Their sponsors provided much-needed support once in Canada, i.e., housing and networks that led to secure employment, clothing, monthly allowances for food and monthly bills for up to a year. Nolah stated they were welcomed in their community as "one of their own." They were treated with kindness and respect and felt that in comparison to other immigrants/forced migrants they met while learning English as a second language, they were living their lives with dignity among people who they considered both friends and family. In fact, all three of her children had scholarships to attend private schools in this faith denomination.

Nolah reported feeling incredibly grateful for everything the people in the congregation had done for them. They even welcomed them in their faith, which they decided to convert. She faithfully attended their weekly services and was very involved in preparing rituals and the altar. However, she recused herself on special occasions to attend the Catholic service. "It's not the same", she said. "I grew up in the Catholic church. My mom took me and my siblings every week. The smell of palo santo during *Semana Santa* [Holy Week] transports me to my church… to happy times when my mom was living before the civil war in my country. She talked about how the sermon and the songs sung by the choir in Spanish touched her soul in a way that the English sermon didn't. She expressed feeling guilty and disloyal to the people who had helped her so much. She said she couldn't help it—as she found herself missing a piece of herself. She kept this a secret, stating that she could not bring herself to tell members of the congregation who had helped her and her children when she needed it the most.

Conclusion

In migration discourse, gender has become a historically, geographically, and now transnationally constructed, specific, and changeable element (Amelina & Lutz, 2019). The Canadian state also reinforces this gendered stratification and is dependent on the manufacturing of gendered labour. The forcible parts of displacement are often rooted in gender, as are migration streams in Canada (e.g. *Caregivers Program* vs. *Temporary Foreign Workers*). As research flourishes on the nuanced experiences of migration as they intersect with gender, this chapter details these as they intersect with race and acculturation. Despite the benefits to Canada, one being a supply of 'low wage' labour,

immigrants/forced migrants women and men continue to be racialized and gendered as inferior and endure systematic violence(s). Indifference has characterized Canada in terms of how people navigate these terrains. This indifference is insidious and is often played out in nuanced ways (Lugones, 2016), as participants recounted here. It maintains the barriers created to racialize men and gender women within this process. It is found in daily life and at the level of theorizing oppression. This is evidenced in the separation or erasure of women from the immigration discourse and masculinizing narratives (Lugones, 2016). The meta-narratives speak to upward mobility, progress, advancement and mobility- the male experience, often white (Carranza, 2019).

Discussion questions:

- How does gender construct the Stranger?
- How do social policy and immigration policy construct gender?
- What are some of the discourses on gender binary migration?
    - How have these played out in your experiences in social work and the helping professions?

11

Appendix: List of Projects

Examining the Intersection of Immigrants' Integration/Acculturation and Child Welfare

Project Overview: This research considered how involvement with the child welfare system (CWS) plays a role in the integration and adaptation of those who have immigrated. The purpose of this project was to use multiple perspectives, not only to identify gaps in the child welfare and settlement sectors, but also to explore protective factors. To ascertain how the intersection between immigrants' acculturation and involvement with child welfare services is experienced, the goals were: To draw on findings of the research and community consultation to inform child welfare practices and protocols that included the voices of racialized groups.

The Research Questions were: What are the perceptions of newcomers about CAS? What are the contributing factors of CAS involvement with newcomer families? How do CAS' processes/protocol support newcomer families?

In total, 84 people participated, including 11 child welfare workers, 16 settlement workers and 53 members of immigrant communities (i.e., community leaders, concerned parents, and members from the general community), and four parents who had involvement with child welfare.

Examining the Intersection of Immigrant Women's Acculturation and Mental Health

Project Overview: The purpose was to understand the complexities of Women Immigrants to Hamilton and the intersections of migration, gender and mental health. In recognizing the multiple and intersecting identities of participants, as they were women before they migrated, the term Women Immigrant was used – to not privilege the narrative of immigration as defining identity. The overarching goals of the study were: (a) to contribute to building a healthy, caring and inclusive community that fosters the social and economic integration of Women Immigrants to Hamilton, and: (b) to engage in a formal partnership between McMaster University and community organizations. To achieve these goals, the following

objectives were developed to define the area of inquiry: to learn how the intersection between (i) acculturation and integration, (ii) gender relations and intimate partner violence, (iii) intergenerational tensions, (iv) trauma, loss and ongoing political fear, and (v) how economic exclusion impacts mental health.

The research asked: How do migration, acculturation and past traumatic experiences impact the mental health of women immigrant to Hamilton? What are their experiences when accessing services? What support systems are in place/needed?

In total, 77 people participated, including 4 adolescent/adult children, 35 professionals involved in service provision to Women Immigrants (e.g. settlement workers, counsellors, case managers, home visitors, public health nurses and community workers) and 38 Women.

A multi-pronged knowledge mobilization plan was developed to ensure research uptake in the community, including a popular theatre play called "**We are not the Others**" was developed. The play (re)told stories of the process of becoming the "other" during their journey, due to racism and marginalization. The play was written from the transcripts, to humanize and tell the stories of women in ways and venues where they are often not represented.

Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zutVAUlC_T4

Intimate Partner Violence in the Diaspora of Hamilton and area

Project Overview: During the data collection for *Examining the Intersection of Immigrant Women's Acculturation and Mental Health* participants spoke the complexities of migration and intimate partner violence. Intimate partner violence in newcomer communities did not occur because of migration, or culture as it is often discussed from a Western lens. As with all migration experiences, violence exists along the axis of the colonial grid, including accessing services. Resettlement is only one of the contextual factors. Barriers remain for people finding the fabled "better life". As social work recognizes that this is in part, a result of an immigration system that is based on the white, European migrant, understanding the lived experiences of newcomers is required. For example, people who are racialized in their journey to Canada and coded as newcomers or immigrants often face multiple and added oppressions such as racism, discrimination, and unequal access to services that are reflective of their identities. Similarly, conceptualizations of intimate partner violence are rooted in Canadian, often white, women's experiences, excluding those who have migrated. This research sought to work with Women Immigrants and their families to un-silence their voices in research. To address the silencing of Women Immigrant's voices in relation to intimate partner violence the project was developed.

The research asked: how do Women Immigrants make sense of their experiences? How do service providers engage with newcomers and violence? What are the best practice interventions and support services provided?

In total there was 41 people interviewed, 21 service providers and 20 women who had knowledge of intimate partner violence in newcomer communities.

Men's Integration and Resettlement

Project Overview: The purpose of this project was to contribute to building healthy and inclusive communities by enhancing the mental health of newcomers. Arising out of discussions of gender along

the colonial grid with participants' in *Examining the Intersection of Immigrant Women's Acculturation and Mental Health* the *Men's Integration* project focused on masculinities in the context of migration. By examining migration through the lens of masculinity, it enhances our understanding of how immigration, acculturation and resettlement is a deeply gendered process and experienced. Further, this research provided insights into how masculinities are (re)constructed during the resettlement process that also racializes people in their journey to Canada. To understanding the range of masculinities the research spoke with men, their partners, and their children.

The research asked: Could you tell me a little bit about your immigration experience? Could you tell me a little bit about your experience in integrating? About experiences accessing services? What have been some of the challenges/successes on the path to integrate to the community?

In total there were 13 interviews, 9 men, 2 partners and 2 children all of which had migrated.

Rights for Children and Youth Partnership: Immigration Dynamics

Project Overview: This project looked at young people's experiences of migration alone, or with one parent as mediated by their race, identity as a newcomer and age. The study was part of a larger, multi-country research project that was developed to increase knowledge and evidence around the factors that support or hinder the protection of children and youth rights in Central America and the Caribbean, and their diaspora. The research is comprised of six sub-themes,

including **immigration dynamics**—discussed in this book. Utilizing situated knowledge(s) and

the lived circumstances of those migrating, the goal was to recognize the complexity of power-

differentiated communities in increasingly globalized social spaces to expand the scholarship on

young people on the move. 'Young people' was defined as 15- 24 to align with international definitions and statistics for the Government of Canada. This theme focused on young people's experience of violence in Central America and the Caribbean as a driver for migration and how they made sense of this within the diaspora.

In total, 52 people participated. 24 were young people who migrated alone, 8 were parents who had migrated with their children, 7 were service providers (including clergy, lawyers, advocates, educators and social workers) and 13 were members of the Central American and caribbean diaspora.

The research asked: What are the shifts in migration discourses informing Canada's reception to young people from Central America fleeing alone? What are young people's perspectives on their own migration and the realities that they face?